



**VICTORIA
INTERNATIONAL
SCHOOL OF
SHARJAH**

Learning and Teaching that “recognises and responds to diverse student needs”

On any given day, students at the Victoria International School of Sharjah, participate in learning and teaching experiences that enable them to be tenacious and resourceful, imaginative and logical, self-disciplined and self-aware, collaborative and inquisitive.

1. How was the Victoria International School of Sharjah established?

His Highness Sheik Dr. Sultan Bin Mohammed Al-Qassimi, Member of the Supreme Council of the UAE Ruler of Sharjah, approached the Minister for Education of the Australian state of Victoria regarding the Victorian school system. His Highness had heard about and admired Victoria's curriculum, teaching and assessment methods, use of flexible learning and teaching spaces and creative use of technology.

As a consequence of the request and the advice provided the Ruler visited Victoria and signed an agreement with the Victorian government to provide educational services for a new school that the Ruler wished to establish in Sharjah. The Agreement provides for the Victorian curriculum, assessment and reporting practices and a quality assurance mechanism based on the Victorian Effective Schools Framework to ensure that the highest standard of strategic planning, accountability, learning and teaching occurs at the school.

The school was opened on the 2nd September, 2007.

2. Where is the school?

The school is located on an 85,000 square metre site in the prestigious Al- Mamzar Lagoon area, behind Al Tawuun Mall, close to the new Sharjah Expo Centre. The entrance is off the Al Mamzar Corniche.

3. How do I contact the school?

The postal address is	:	Victoria International School of Sharjah P.O. Box 68600, Sharjah, United Arab Emirates.
Phone	:	+971 6577 1999
Fax	:	+971 6577 1888
Email	:	admin@viss.ae
Web	:	www.viss.ae

4. Who is in the Principal team?

Executive Principal

Mr. Gordon Pratt, the Executive Principal, is one of Victoria's most renowned educators. Gordon is an experienced Principal who has led a high profile International school in Melbourne for the past 11 years. Recently appointed to VISS he is looking forward to working with the students, teachers and parents on the next stage of the VISS journey.

Gordon believes that every child can learn. He is committed to equipping students with both the academic and life skills to enable them to become responsible global citizens in an ever changing world.

Principals

Working alongside Mr. Gordon Pratt, are two Principals who together form a cohesive and dedicated Principal class team that collectively have in excess of 100 years of experience in education.

Ms. Jan Senior Principal of the Junior School brings to the role a passion for individual student excellence through effective learning and teaching practise. Ms. Senior has worked in a range of culturally diverse settings in Australia and has most recently been Head of Junior School at Lauriston Girls College in Armadale, Victoria.

Mr. Craig Lamshed Principal of the Middle/Senior School and brings to the role a commitment to the continuous engagement of students and selection of appropriate pathways, particularly in the senior years of schooling. Mr. Lamshed has most recently been the Principal of Kurnai College Morwell Campus in the Latrobe Valley, Victoria.

5. Who makes up the staff and what are their qualifications?

Most of the teachers at the Victoria International School of Sharjah are being employed from the Victorian system. They are highly qualified and selected for their demonstrated competence and quality of performance in the classroom. In addition every Victorian teacher at the school is a fully registered member of the Victorian Institute of Teaching. Full registration is granted on the following four criteria:

- a) a four year university teaching qualification
- b) the qualities and competencies to be a teacher
- c) competence in speaking or communicating in English
- d) the provision of evidence that they satisfy the standards of professional practice which include:
 - knowing their students and how students learn
 - knowing how to teach students effectively and the content they teach
 - planning and assessing for effective learning
 - creating and maintaining a safe and challenging learning environment
 - using a range of teaching practices and resources to engage students in effective learning
 - reflecting on, evaluating and improving their professional knowledge and practice
 - being an active member of their profession.

Teachers at the Victoria International School of Sharjah draw upon the expertise of others by forming professional learning teams to develop and implement learning and teaching programs and constantly review and analyse content, resources and teaching techniques.

Partnerships are encouraged, where appropriate, with agencies, organisations and members of the wider community to broaden learning and teaching opportunities for students. All teachers at the

school undertake to enhance their skills by active involvement in personal and school wide professional development programs.

Local Arabic teachers have been employed to teach Arabic Language, Islamic Education and Arabic Social Studies which are a compulsory for native Arabic speaking students.

6. What are the Grades and school entrance age?

The school entrance age at the Victoria International School of Sharjah is in line with ages recommended for Victorian Essential Learning Standards.

	Grade	Entrance age requirement - by 15 th September the student needs to have turned
Early Learning Centre has a two year program of early learning to prepare students for formal schooling.	Early Learning (KG1)	Three years of age
	Kinder (KG2)	Four years of age
Junior School	Grade 1	Five years of age
	Grade 2	Six years of age
	Grade 3	Seven years of age
	Grade 4	Eight years of age
	Grade 5	Nine years of age
Middle School	Grade 6	Ten years of age
	Grade 7	Eleven years of age
	Grade 8	Twelve years of age
	Grade 9	Thirteen years of age
	Grade 10	Fourteen years of age
Senior School	Grade 11	Fifteen years of age
	Grade 12	Sixteen years of age
	Grade 13	Seventeen years of age

7. What curriculum is offered at the school?

The Victoria International School of Sharjah provides a high quality comprehensive, developmental curriculum that is challenging and stimulating, engaging and extending all students in their learning and personal growth. It acknowledges prior learning and 'adds value' to this learning to enable them to achieve their full potential.

The curriculum delivered at the new school is based on two frameworks from Victoria, Australia. From Grade 1 (5 year-olds) to Grade 11 the curriculum framework followed is the Victorian Essential Learning Standards, whilst at Grades 12 and 13 the framework used is the Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE).

The **Victorian Essential Learning Standards** are organised around three general categories of learning called strands:

- Physical, Personal and Social Learning
- Discipline-based Learning
- Interdisciplinary Learning

Within each of the general categories of learning listed above there are a number of subjects called domains which describe the essential knowledge, skills and behaviours students need to prepare for further education, work and life.

The subjects (domains) offered at the school from Grade 1 to Grade 11 are as follows:

Physical, Personal and Social Learning:

Health and Physical Education
Interpersonal Development
Personal Learning
Civics and Citizenship

Discipline-based Learning:

The Arts
English
The Humanities (Economics, Geography, History)
Languages other than English
Mathematics
Science

Interdisciplinary Learning:

Communication
Design, Creativity and Technology
Information and Communications Technology
Thinking Processes

The **Victorian Certificate of Education** is a two year qualification that recognises the successful completion of a student's secondary education at the Victoria International School of Sharjah. Within the Victorian Certificate of Education, the key knowledge and skills and relevant learning outcomes are organised into areas of content known as subjects. The Victorian Certificate of Education is a highly regarded credential internationally and is recognized for university entrance.

Students at Grades 12 and 13 will be able to construct a course from a selection of the broad range of subjects offered in the Victorian Certificate of Education noting that the number of subjects actually offered on the timetable will be dependent on a critical mass of students having selected a particular subject.

The completion of the VCE (Grade 13) allows students to enter most universities and complete a normal degree (example Arts, Science) in three years. Those entering universities in the UAE after Grade 12 take a minimum of four years to complete a degree. At the end of Grade 10 Students may elect to continue into the Senior School and do the VCE in Grades 12 and 13 or undertake Grades 11 and 12 elsewhere for local university entrance. An equivalent Grade 12 for local university entrance will be provided at VISS in the future.

The subjects offered at the school through the Victorian Certificate of Education may include:

Accounting, Agricultural and Horticultural Studies, Art, Biology, Business Management, Chemistry, Classic Societies and Cultures, Dance, Drama, Economics, English Language, Environmental Studies, Geography, Health and Human Development, History (Applied, Australian, Conquest and Resistance, Indigenous Australian, Renaissance, Revolutions and 20th Century), Industry and Enterprise, Information Processing and Management, Information Systems, Information Technology, International Politics, Legal Studies, Literature, Languages Other Than English, Further Mathematics, General Mathematics, Mathematical Methods, Media, Music, Outdoor and Environmental Studies, Philosophy, Physical Education, Physics, Psychology, Sociology, Specialist Mathematics, Studio Arts, Technology (Design, Food or Systems), Theatre Studies, Visual Communication.

As the school population increases so will the number of subjects on offer in the VCE.

8. What Languages Other Than English are offered?

The study of Arabic is offered at the school according to Ministry of Education requirements. Please note that Arabic language is compulsory up to Grade 9 for all Arab students. This study is taught using a range of teaching practices and resources to engage students in effective learning.

Students who have never studied Arabic language before may study it via a special curriculum and standards prescribed by the Ministry of Education after being subjected to an examination to determine their level.

From Grade 1 to Grade 5 non Arabic students are taught Cultural Arabic as a Language other than English (LOTE). This gives the students opportunity to learn about the culture of the UAE and develop some basic Arabic language. French is offered from Grade 6 through to the Senior School.

All language studies have a comprehensive set of standards by which student achievement and progress is measured.

9. Does every student have to take Islamic studies?

Islamic Education is compulsory at all levels at the school for Muslim students whether Arabic or non-Arabic speaking. It is optional for non-Muslim students.

10. Where does the Islamic studies curriculum come from?

The Islamic Education curriculum is offered at the school to accurately reflect that curriculum prescribed by the UAE Ministry of Education.

11. Who teaches Islamic studies?

The teaching of Islamic studies is taught by highly qualified teachers who have been selected for their demonstrated competence and quality of performance in the classroom. It is expected that teachers of Islamic studies use a range of teaching practices and resources to engage students in effective learning as per the Victorian model.

12. Is Islamic studies taught in Arabic?

Islamic Education is taught in Arabic for the native Arabic speakers and in English when the class consists of non-Arabic speaking students or a combination of Arabic and non-Arabic students.

13. How does the Victorian Certificate of Education compare to the British 'A' levels?

The Victorian Certificate of Education is the culmination of a two year course, typically undertaken in Grades 12 and 13, that recognises the successful completion of a student's secondary education at the Victoria International School of Sharjah.

However rather than sit a further set of 'A' level examinations above and beyond the British General Certificate of Secondary Education examinations, the Victorian Certificate of Education acts as an all in one mechanism to determine a student's tertiary entrance ranking. This ranking is based directly on a student's performance whilst in their final year of study, as measured by both internal coursework and external examinations (centrally set tasks by panels appointed by the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority and that are externally assessed by that Authority).

The quality of the Victorian Certificate of Education is internationally recognised. Students take 6 subjects in their first year of the Victorian Certificate of Education whilst with the British 'AS' level,

students take 4 subjects in their first year. In each subject of the Victorian Certificate of Education there are three assessment tasks, as is the case with the British model. In the second year of the Victorian Certificate of Education students take 5 subjects whilst with the British 'A2' level, students take

4 subjects in their second year; Students undertaking the Victorian Certificate of Education are graded on an A-E scale in both their internal coursework and external examinations.

The coursework ceiling limit is typically 33% with a comparable coursework ceiling limit of 30% in the British model.

14. How does the Victorian Certificate of Education compare to college admissions processes used in the United States?

The Victorian Certificate of Education acts as an all in one mechanism to determine a student's tertiary entrance ranking. This ranking is based directly on a student's performance whilst in their final year of study, in both their internal coursework and external examinations (centrally set tasks by panels appointed by the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority and that are externally assessed by the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority). For many universities around the world, performance in the Victorian Certificate of Education in itself will give the student's opportunity to enter directly into university.

In the United States, there will be universities and colleges that will require all students, irrespective of the type of secondary certificate undertaken, to also sit the SAT (standardised test) or ACT (American College Test). Subjects studied through the Victorian Certificate of Education enable students to achieve the knowledge, skills and behaviours needed to successfully complete the SAT or ACT; including being critical thinkers, critical reading, effective writing ability, and understandings in mathematics, science, arts, literature and social studies.

15. How does the Victorian curriculum compare to the International Baccalaureate?

The Victorian curriculum is relevant, engaging and challenging for all students and focuses on the total growth of the developing student, encompassing their social, physical, emotional and cultural needs in addition to their academic development. This approach clearly reflects the intention and spirit of the International Baccalaureate. The Victorian curriculum serves as a solid foundation for any student, who because of personal circumstances, needs to take up the International Baccalaureate in the future.

The Victorian Essential Learning Standards encourages learning through an integrated approach with a focus on the studying of major topics, key themes and key concepts that capture knowledge, skills and understandings from a cross section of subject areas. All learning at the school encourages students to participate actively and responsibly in a changing world. Teachers at the Victoria International School of Sharjah assess students by selecting or designing methods of assessment appropriate to the learning outcomes they intend to capture. The International Baccalaureate's approach to learning and teaching has a synergy with the Victorian model.

The Victorian Certificate of Education offers a much wider range of subjects for students to choose from than the International Baccalaureate whilst at the same time reflecting all of the six subject groups and core of the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme. Similarly students undertake both internal assessments that are overseen by the teacher and verified by external examiners and assessments that are set and marked exclusively by external examiners.

16. How does the UAE Ministry of Education view the Victorian Certificate of Education?

The Victoria International School of Sharjah has been established by His Highness Sheik Dr. Sultan Bin Mohammed Al-Qassimi, Ruler of Sharjah and has the full support of both the Government of Sharjah and the Government of Victoria, Australia. Consequently the curriculum offered at the school

through both the Victorian Essential Learning Standards and the Victorian Certificate of Education is fully endorsed by both governments.

17. Is the Victorian Certificate of Education accepted for entry by universities in the UAE and internationally?

The Victorian Certificate of Education is accepted for entry to all leading Australian and international universities subject to the same conditions applied to local students. Top universities in the world accept the Victorian Certificate of Education and the tertiary entrance ranking it provides in applications for undergraduate admissions.

In particular the Victorian Certificate of Education is accepted by and provides an entry pathway directly to universities in the UAE. Partnerships have already been developed with universities in both Sharjah and Dubai.

In addition the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority which developed and manages the Victorian Certificate of Education is providing expertise internationally in:

- Examination development in South Africa
- General Ability Testing
- High Stakes examinations in China
- Program delivery in China and the Middle East.

18. What will my child do in the Early Learning Centre?

In the Early Learning Centre at the Victoria International School of Sharjah there is a commitment to ensure that the program offers a balance between the social, emotional, physical and cognitive development of your child.

Children at this level experience a purposeful curriculum that begins to expose them to a variety of English and Mathematics experiences that will help them when they commence the Victorian Essential Learning Standards from Grade 1 onwards. Field trips and excursions are encouraged to broaden their view of the world. Special events throughout the year provide a context for the learning, such as, festivals, religious holidays, celebrations and family days.

19. What co-curricular activities are available to my child?

At the Victoria International School of Sharjah, we believe that all activities undertaken by our students contribute to improved knowledge, skill development, a passion for learning and a positive engagement with the world. As the school develops, students will be offered a range of worthwhile and meaningful co-curricula activities both during and after school hours.

When our facilities are complete co-curricular activities will include a range of sports, theatrical productions, dance, choral and instrumental music but will not necessarily be limited to this list as other activities may be introduced in response to the interests, needs and backgrounds of the students.

20. What does learning and teaching look like in the school?

The Victoria International School of Sharjah is a supportive and productive learning and teaching environment where students' needs, backgrounds and interests are reflected in the learning programs and the design of the school. There are three main avenues through which this occurs, quality whole school and program based curriculum planning, strong school leadership and a rigorous Victorian based school accountability and improvement framework.

The organisation of the school is based on developing relationships through the concept of learning communities; teams of teachers along with learning and teaching coaches, responsible for approximately 100 students. The school's focus is on designing organisational arrangements to challenge and engage young people. For example, it may choose to have a concerted focus on multi-literacy across the curriculum in the Junior school, if that is called for, or a small group of teachers

working intensively with students for an extended period of time on complex and challenging integrated community-based tasks in the Middle school, or engaging in personal and group reflection practices in the Senior school.

Learning and Teaching programs are based in but not confined to the classroom. Multipurpose spaces, and weather permitting, outdoor areas, are used for large groups and both targeted and integrated activities.

Learning and Teaching programs provide opportunities for local, national and global community projects, ranging from sustainable environmental practices to providing for communities around the world to promoting cultural understandings.

Thinking oriented programs that focus on 'major projects', key concepts and key questions together with assessment and teaching practices form the basis of all whole school and program based planning. Sufficient time in teaching sessions is allowed for students at the school to properly and fully examine ideas.

Learning experiences are challenging, engaging, and involve practical 'hands-on' activities and first-hand encounters wherever practicable. Appropriate support structures are developed to encourage students to follow interesting and open lines of inquiry in projects and investigations where knowledge and skills gained can be applied to real world situations.

Learning opportunities at the school are open-ended, cater for the multiple intelligences of all students and are based upon cooperative 'student-centred' learning strategies with sequential courses of study developed in all program areas. Support is provided for students through mentoring and pastoral opportunities and organisation of extra activities.

Teachers enable students at the school to collaborate on meaningful tasks through multiple cooperative learning strategies and careful selection of groups, in order to establish an atmosphere of cooperation where the focus is on effective collective learning.

21. What does assessment look like at the school?

High quality assessment practices from Grade 1 to Grade 13 are characteristic of the Victoria International School of Sharjah. These practices involve gathering, analysing and reflecting on evidence to make informed and consistent judgements to improve future student learning.

A wide range of assessment practices are used in the school that achieve three overarching purposes:

- Assessment **OF** learning - when teachers at the school use evidence of student learning to make judgements on student achievement against clear and rigorous standards.
- Assessment **FOR** learning - when teachers at the school use information about student progress to inform their teaching
- Assessment **AS** learning - when students at the school reflect on and monitor their progress to inform their future learning goals.

Prior to each unit of work, students are assessed to clearly establish their individual needs and the teachers support students to develop individual student plans containing learning goals in each subject. This process is assisted by designating teachers as Leading Teachers at each level. Progress towards learning goals are reviewed and reported by the teachers. Teachers use a variety of assessment strategies in each subject to provide multiple sources of information about student achievement which then underpin all decision making and are used to identify future directions for each individual student.

A snapshot of the types of assessment practices at the Victoria International School of Sharjah includes:

- a range of measures for each student to demonstrate what they know, giving a more accurate picture of their learning and growth
- student self assessment and student to student peer assessments which promote a deeper understanding of what the student is learning
- assessment tasks that apply student's skills, knowledge and understanding to real-world challenges
- some negotiation of assessment with students to ensure shared understanding of standards, purpose and the criteria to be applied to their work
- development of individual learner profiles, showing the progress made by individual students and providing a sound basis of evidence for reporting progress to parents
- differing forms of testing
- honest but constructive feedback as an ongoing part of the classroom experience.

Furthermore, for satisfactory completion of the Victorian Certificate of Education, a student must demonstrate satisfactory achievement of the set of outcomes specified in each subject undertaken.

Results of school-assessed coursework and external examinations contribute towards a student's study score in each Victorian Certificate of Education subject and ultimately towards the student's tertiary entrance ranking for entry into university.

The school provides parents with periodically distributed and ongoing reports on student achievement, indicating progress against clearly stated criteria, strengths and areas requiring additional assistance, suggestions for support and extension strategies and a student self-assessment.

22. Is there an entry assessment?

Assessment is seen as integral to the learning and teaching process at the Victoria International School of Sharjah. Assessment is used **as** learning, **for** learning and **of** learning.

Assessment of students entering the school will be used as the initial basis to understand the learning needs of the student to ensure the school is the correct fit for the student. When enrolled the assessment **for** learning is used to support the development of personalised individual learning plans.

23. Are there examinations in this school?

The Victoria International School will offer examinations in all subjects of the Victorian Essential Learning Standards as the student's progress from Middle through to Senior School. Examinations are only one of a wide range of assessment practice and are used to make judgements on student achievement against clear and rigorous standards, provide information about student progress to inform subsequent teaching of the student and for students to reflect on and monitor their progress to inform their future learning goals.

24. How are students with special needs supported at the school?

At the Victoria International School of Sharjah we believe that all students have the potential to learn. Both extension and intervention opportunities are provided for students according to need. Before the student is enrolled an initial assessment **for** learning will be conducted to see if the school fits the needs of the child.

All teachers at the school are fully experienced in a range of strategies and in using a range of resources required to achieve improved and enhanced learning outcomes for all students. In

particular teacher practice at the school focuses on student-centred planning based on an understanding of each student's existing strengths and abilities, their personal history and individual identity.

Teaching at the school will adapt standardised curriculum and assessment processes to suit individual student learning needs and goals, together with the development of individual learning and behavioural plans for all students at the school, including those at risk of developing, or currently exhibiting problems in their learning.

In developing short and long term goals for the student, a supportive group of people come together with a common objective to understand and address an individual student's needs. This supportive group will be led by the student's Home Room Teacher (who is responsible for the pastoral care and well being of a group of students under his/her care), and include all the teachers of the student, family members and support staff and the student themselves.

25. How are gifted and high potential students supported at the school?

In every class there are gifted and high potential students who will require the curriculum to be modified to ensure the provision of appropriate challenge for their learning. The Victoria International School of Sharjah is committed to meeting these student's educational and social development needs across all aspects of schooling.

Differentiating the curriculum for all students including gifted and high potential students is an integral part of the school's learning and teaching approach. All students are given the opportunity to develop their full potential. For most students the regular classroom program will provide appropriate challenge. For gifted and high potential learners special provision is made in the regular classroom through enrichment activities so as they experience the same exciting and challenging learning opportunities as their classmates.

In particular, the Victorian Essential Learning Standards are set at a challenging level rather than a minimum level of competence and are intended to stretch students in their learning.

By planning programs at the school that centre around a major topic, key concept or key question, gifted and high potential students are challenged to integrate their knowledge and learning across subjects and to study topics from multiple perspectives.

26. How are students with limited English ability supported at the school?

The Victorian International School of Sharjah provides an 'English as a Second Language' support within both the Victorian Essential Learning Standards and the Victorian Certificate of Education. This 'English as a Second Language' support provides processes and practices for assessing student achievement and developing learning programs for those students with no or limited English ability.

Students needing 'English as a Second Language' support will receive explicit English language teaching, support and exposure to English within the classroom program.

27. How does the school provide for effective pathways, careers and transition advice?

In the Victoria International School of Sharjah, the Managed Individual Pathways program ensures that all students from Grade 10 and over are provided with individual pathway plans and associated support as a means to continued university or college education, training and/or employment.

Providing a broad range of educational pathways is important in improving student outcomes. However, our students need support to understand the options and navigate the pathways from the Victoria International School of Sharjah to further university or college education,

training and/or employment. There are a range of programs and tools available at the school to support students in their transitions.

A comprehensive career education program is offered at the Victoria International School of Sharjah that consists of the following components:

- Self awareness - to help students identify their personal attributes
- Opportunity awareness - to involve students in investigating, exploring and experiencing the world of work and the various pathways within it
- Decision learning - to enhance informed decision making
- Transition planning - to develop skills that students that effectively move into new situations.

28. What support staff are employed at the school?

A range of staff are employed at the Victoria International School of Sharjah to support the educational development and well being of your child. These include a pastoral role taken by Home Room Teachers, teacher assistants and a fulltime nurse who operates out of a fully serviced and resourced on site medical centre. Where required, access to other relevant support services such as speech pathologists and guidance officers will be sought.

In addition, the school has employed a range of qualified administration and technical support, maintenance personnel, community centre staff and security officers to ensure the smooth and safe daily operation of the school.

29. What are the facilities like?

The Victoria International School of Sharjah has been purpose designed by the Victorian firm Taylor Dixon Architects. The school was built by the Government of Sharjah through the direct support of His Highness Sheik Dr. Sultan Bin Mohammed Al-Qassimi, Ruler of Sharjah. The beautiful and unique design of this school incorporates the latest international research and thinking of how school layout adds to student learning.

The facilities include four separate but interdependent schools: a kindergarten, junior school, middle school and senior school all on one site in separate but linked areas. A state of the art Science-Innovation and Technology Centre, modern Library and Resources Centre and a VCE Centre enhance the school's learning environment. Additional facilities include a five hundred seat theatre and purpose built Performing Arts Centres, fully equipped music and art spaces, outdoor presentation areas and an amphitheatre, a swimming pool, four basketball courts, a soccer field and safe and engaging play equipment.

Throughout the school site are comfortable covered outdoor seating areas and grassed courtyards. The school also provides a large cafeteria and indoor eating areas. The school is fully air-conditioned and there are many covered walkways for students to move from one area to another.

Learning spaces throughout the school provide flexibility to support individual student learning styles and the accessing of expertise from a broad team of teachers. The most contemporary information, communication and digital Technology is integrated throughout the school and can be accessed by all students and teachers.

Learning and Teaching programs are based in but not confined to the classroom. Multi purpose spaces and, weather permitting, outdoor areas, are used for large groups and both specialised and integrated learning activities.

30. What Information and Communications Technology does the school have?

Technology is used throughout the school to support and develop student learning. Educational based programs form a major component of planned activities, together with “on line” access and feedback to students and parents on a regular basis.

The Victoria International School offers students and teachers access to the very latest ‘cutting edge’ digital technologies including laptops and desktops across the entire school site, wireless access, broadband internet, digital multimedia equipment, interactive software for science and technology, data logging devices, computer based microscopes, interactive whiteboards, swipe card security, digital portfolios of student work and 24 hour secure electronic access to student information and work by students, teachers and parents through the student learning portal.

31. Is there a nursery available?

At present there are no nursery facilities. The Victoria International School of Sharjah has an Early Learning Centre with an Early Learning Group for students who turn 3 by 15th of September.

32. Which Grade levels will be co-educational? Do all classes combine males and females?

The Victoria International School of Sharjah is a co-educational school where classes at all grade levels include males and females. However where there is sensitive content taught in the Health and Physical Education subject, this will be offered to separately to males and female students.

Furthermore some practical activities undertaken in the Health and Physical Education subject may warrant being offered specifically to males and to females in separate groupings. All swimming based activity at the school will be offered separately to males and females from Grades 6 to 12.

33. How many students are in each class?

Wherever possible at the Victoria International School of Sharjah, class sizes will not exceed a maximum of 25 students per class. The school has a commitment to an individual learning approach and will aim to create classes that fall below this maximum. It is expected that most class sizes will be between 20 to 25 students per class.

It is worth noting that the school has a commitment to learning and teaching that places students in different size groups that best address particular set tasks and achieve positive student outcomes. For example, for some tasks it may be appropriate for the students to be put in groups of six with one teacher, whilst for a different task to have sixty students in a group working together with four teachers.

34. What are the hours of schooling and term dates?

The Victoria International School will offer three terms of schooling per year. School terms coincide fairly closely to common practice in other schools in the United Arab Emirates and the school observes all Islamic religious holidays.

Key Dates - Calendar Year 2008/2009

Term 3 : Wednesday 7 January 09 - Thursday 9 April 09 (13 Weeks)

Term 4 : Sunday 19 April 09 - Thursday 2 July 09 (11 Weeks)

Key Dates - Calendar Year 2009/2010

23 August - Formal Classes Grade 12 and Grade 13

30 August - Formal Classes ELC/KG to Grade 11

- Classes will conclude on Thursday 17 December for a term break.
- The Islamic New Year holiday is expected on Friday 18 December but could be on Thursday 17 December. This will be confirmed close to the time.
- Formal classes for all students will recommence on Wednesday 6 January, 2010.
- Classes will conclude on Thursday 1 April for a term break
- Classes will resume for all students on Sunday 11 April. The school year will conclude on Thursday 1 July.

The schedule will also include a number of other holidays, the dates of which will be confirmed closer to the time:

- Sunday 20 September, 2009 to Tuesday 22 September, 2009 – expected timing of Eid Al Fitr.
- Thursday 26 November, 2009 to Sunday 29 November, 2009 – expected timing of Eid Al Adha.
- Thursday 25 February, 2010 – expected to be a holiday for Prophet Mohammed’s Birthday

Student Work Semesters

- Semester one work will run from 30 August, 2009 till 4 February, 2010.
- Semester two work will run from 7 February, 2010 till 17, June 2010.

The two weeks Sunday 20 June till Thursday 1 July will involve students in a “flying start” program for the 2010/2011 school year.

The Senior School (Grades 11, 12 and 13) runs on the Southern Hemisphere timeline January – December in order to coincide with external assessments undertaken through Victoria.

School takes place from Sunday to Thursday inclusive. The school day commences at 8.10am and finishes at 2.55pm for all students from Grade 1 to Grade 13 to ensure students are on the bus by 3.05pm. The school day includes a 25 minute morning break and a 50 minute lunch break.

For students in the Early Learning Centre, the school day begins at 8.10am. The Early Learning Group(KG1) finishes at 12.30 and the Kinder(KG2) finishes at 1.30pm.

There are activities provided at a small cost for those students in the Early Learning Centre who need to stay at the school until 2.55pm to catch buses.

35. Is transport available for students?

The Victoria International School of Sharjah will operate an air-conditioned fleet of buses. The enrolment form has a section where parents may indicate their interest in this service. Information can be obtained from the School Administrative Office.

36. How do parents become involved with the school?

Some parents may chose to engage in aspects of a school’s program. Such involvement reinforces the student/family/school partnership and role models for students the importance of lifelong learning.

Involvement in the Victoria International School of Sharjah by parents helps our students achieve the best possible learning outcomes. You can participate in school life, both formally and informally, through the school board, parent associations, volunteering and staying up to date with news about what is happening in education.

The Victoria International School of Sharjah will encourage the development of volunteer programs where parents can directly participate in school activities. Opportunities will be available for parents who wish to volunteer, helping in school activities like: excursion and school events, assistance with reading and mathematics programs, and participation in committees and cultural groups.

Our school looks for enthusiastic parents who will work in partnership with teachers to help improve the learning outcomes for all students.

Parents have a key role to play in their child's career planning, and can have a powerful impact on their child's career development.

To help provide the best possible support and guidance for their child, the Victoria International School of Sharjah will on an ongoing basis provide to parents current information on the options and pathways that are available to young people.

37. How does the school involve the broader community?

The Victoria International School of Sharjah has a commitment to becoming a centre of activity for both the school and broader community. In the future use of the school's facilities and resources will be encouraged including access to the sports areas and swimming pool for community sporting teams, use of the theatre by amateur theatre groups and workshops for parents in the use of current technologies.

38. Is there a school uniform?

Every student at the Victoria International School of Sharjah will be expected to wear a school uniform. More information as to the type and cost of the school uniform can be obtained by contacting the Reception at the school's office.

39. What are the fees?

The School fees for 2009/2010 is:
(AED per annum)

Early Learning (KG1)	Kinder (KG2)	Grade 1 – 5	Grade 6- 9	Grade 10-11	Grade 12-13
25,000	30,000	35,000	40,250	45,500	50,750

Due to delays in construction and current economic conditions, the Interim Board of VISS have authorised significant discounts so that the fees will remain fixed at their current level for the new school year 2009/2010.

Payment of school fees must be made before the start of the Academic Year. Fees can be paid in a single instalment, by cash or cheque. An alternative payment method will require provision of a cheque in advance for the first term, together with post-dated cheques for the balance of the Academic Year.

40. Is there a fee discount when enrolling two or more children?

In all cases, the eldest child of a family enrolling in the Victoria International School of Sharjah will be subject to a full fee cost. However there is a discount arrangement available when enrolling additional children in the school as follows:

For the second oldest child in the family, a 10% discount is offered off that individual child's fees and for every child after that, a 20% discount is offered off each individual third child's fees and so on.

41. What do the fees cover?

The fees at the Victorian International School of Sharjah cover all curriculum instruction, student wellbeing and management support services and structures, co-curricular activities, some targeted incursions and excursions and all school owned learning and teaching materials and full access to the school's Information and Communications Technology infrastructure.

42. Will government funding be available for the school?

Student fees will provide the major revenue source for school operations. However His Highness Sheik Dr. Sultan Bin Mohammed Al-Qassimi, Ruler of Sharjah is contributing towards the set up and capital cost of the school, to ensure that the best quality learning and teaching facilities and curriculum are provided to every student who attends.

43. How do I enrol my child at the school?

During Term 3, the school will conduct organised school tours for parents on designated days. If you are interested call the school to make an appointment. After the tour, if you want to enrol your child the Registrar will make an appointment for your child to have an assessment **for** learning. On the day of assessment, you will need to bring your child's school reports and 200 dirhams. This testing fee is non-refundable, but is deducted from the first term's tuition fees of all successful applicants. If the assessment **for** learning indicates that the school is appropriate for your child's learning needs and future pathways an appointment will be made with the Principal at your child's grade level. Parents must bring the student's latest report to this interview. Parents will receive an official notification by email or mail regarding enrolment, after this interview.

Application forms for enrolment to the Victoria International School of Sharjah can be accessed from the school's website, emailed or posted to you. Signed hard copies with the appropriate registration fee and attached documentation are to be delivered to the school by hand or returned to the school's postal address or delivered to the school admissions office after you have received official notification of enrolment.

You will need to ensure that attached to the completed application form are the following items:

- Registration Deposit of 1800 Dirhams (which will be deducted from your first term fees)
- 4 Passport Sized **recent** photographs of the child
- A copy of the Birth Certificate or Passport (for International Students)
- Completed Immunisation and Health Records
- Transfer Certificate from the Ministry (for students who were previously enrolled in UAE Schools)

Following receipt of **ALL** these documents and your 1800 Dirhams registration deposit, you will receive a formal letter of acceptance from the school together with the following information:

- Appointed Grade
- Date of commencement
- Details regarding uniform order and supply
- Parent Handbook

You can express interest in enrolling in the Victoria International School of Sharjah by following these **three steps**:

- Step 1:** Obtain the an application form for the school by either;
- (a) Visiting Reception at the school's office.
 - (b) Emailing admin@viss.ae to request that an application form be sent to you directly
 - (c) Visit our website <http://www.viss.ae> and access the online form

Step 2: Fill in the application form.

Step 3: Send the completed application form to the school's address:
Victoria International School of Sharjah
P.O. Box 68600 Sharjah
United Arab Emirates

Or Hand deliver the completed application form to the school administration office.