



**Parent Handbook
2010**

A message from the Headteacher.

Dear Parents,

Thank you for choosing Acacia School for your child. I am proud to be the Head of this caring and happy school. In this Parent Handbook, you will find all the information you need on the curriculum and the day to day running of the school.

Should you need clarification or further information, please do not hesitate to make an appointment to see me.

Kathryn Stephenson

Our Mission Statement.

Acacia School will offer a broad and balanced curriculum which aspires to the highest levels of International Primary education. We are committed to educate, encourage and challenge all pupils to fulfil their emotional, social and physical growth. As a multicultural school, we will show no bias towards religion, race or gender. Acacia School sees its role in ensuring students not only benefit from being in Zambia, but also from the opportunity of learning alongside children from various parts of the world.

About Acacia School.

Acacia School is a non-profit making international school in Livingstone, Zambia. The school was originally started by a group of parents and in its early days, lessons were given under a tree at Zigzag. We are now teaching children from over ten different countries. We offer small class sizes.

Our current premises on Flamboyant Lane are now becoming too small as our numbers increase and we are currently building a brand new Acacia International School, the first International School in Livingstone.

The school is run by a Board of Governors who are advised by the Principal on educational matters.

The school has a Friends of Acacia School Association which fosters links with the local community and organises functions and fundraising events.

Elections take place every year so that parents can nominate a Parent Representative for each school department. Meetings are held with the Principal to discuss issues and ideas that parents may have.

In addition, a monthly bulletin goes home to parents giving important information.

The Principal, teachers, Board of Governors, PTA and Parent Representatives ensure that effective links of communication with parents is of primary importance.

Currently, we have 94 children on roll.

The Acacia School Departments.

Our Early Learning Centre consists of:

Playgroup. This caters for children between the ages of 18 months and 3 years. The ratio of children to teachers is 1:6.

We offer a safe, secure and happy environment for your children.

EARLY LEARNING CENTRE



Developmental characteristics of the infant/toddler

In order to create an appropriate programme for infants/toddlers, educators and carers must be aware of the universal patterns of development that all children go through i.e. children will crawl before they walk.

Each child, however, is unique and has their own timing of growth and goes through stages at different rates. The characteristics outlined below are therefore universal and educators and carers must take into account that young children have different ways of approaching new experiences and different ways of interacting with others.

The period between birth and age two is a period of startling change, probably more rapid than other stages in the child's development. Young children reach half their adult height and move from a state of total helplessness to being able to move around freely. They begin to learn to do things for themselves and start to communicate their feelings, needs and thoughts. Through exploration they begin to understand the world around them. We also know that during infancy the brain has the greatest capacity to grow, developing synaptic connections that affect lifelong development.

Children under the age of two:

1. Learn by experiencing their environment through all their senses i.e. they taste, touch, look, listen to, and smell whatever they come into contact with.
2. Develop motor skills quickly and in an orderly sequence e.g. from lifting their heads to rolling, sitting then crawling and so on.
3. Learn to trust themselves and others. Young children become aware that adults are there to cater for their basic needs in terms of food, warmth and comfort. This results in a feeling of trust in the world outside themselves.
4. Develop strong attachments to others. The strongest attachments are to the parents and research now shows that infants can form attachments to several other people.
5. Learn to become competent and independent as their ability to control their bodies increases.
6. Begin to develop language skills.
7. Learn how to get along with other children.

A developmentally appropriate programme

An appropriate programme for infants and toddlers must take into account the universal developmental characteristics of children in this age group. The goals of the programme are therefore based on knowledge of the physical, emotional, social and cognitive abilities of infants and toddlers.

Goals for the infant/toddler programme should:

1. allow for maximum interactions between children and caregivers
2. allow for time to be spent on routine activities e.g. feeding, washing and dressing
3. allow for parental involvement to adequately manage anxieties faced by parents about placing their infant into care
4. allow for the development of attachments to caregivers and begin the resolution of separation problems
5. foster communication through a variety of methods between parents and caregivers
6. provide a safe environment which encourages the maximum possibility of exploration by the infant/toddler
7. allow for many types of play
8. encourage children to use language skills
9. have a caring, dedicated staff to cater for the needs of the young child

The daily programme:

The Playgroup will begin at 08:15 and end at 11:30. Please note that the start time is flexible and parents may bring their children at a time that is suitable. (Staff will be on site from 7.45 am). We also offer an extended day for the benefit of working parents. Children may stay until 13.00 for a small fee.

The pace of each day will be slow and based on the requirements of the children and not the adults who care for them. A leisurely, flexible schedule will allow infants to explore their environment at their own pace and adjust slowly to new situations.

Specific areas will be designated for sleeping, playing, quiet activities, toilet, washing and feeding. Activities will include: sensory activities (touch, hearing, seeing), motor activities e.g. block play, pull toys etc, social activities e.g. water play, soft toys etc.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

All caregivers within the ELC are aware of the importance of safety. They have also received training in basic first-aid.

- **Please note that children who are not yet potty trained must be accompanied by their nanny.**
- **Children should wear hats and be protected by sunscreen in the summer months.**

Exclusion Policy

In order to protect the entire group of children, as well as your own child, we ask that parents assist us in keeping sick children at home if they experience the following symptoms (in the past 24hrs):

1. a fever
2. signs of newly developing cold or uncontrollable coughing
3. diarrhoea, vomiting, or an upset stomach.
4. unusual or unexplained loss of appetite, fatigue, irritability, or headache
5. any discharge or drainage from eyes, nose, ears or open sores

Children who become ill during the day with any of these symptoms will need to be picked up and taken home. We have a fully qualified first-aider on site. If you have any questions on whether or not your child is well enough to return to group care, please call us before bringing your child in. It is our prime concern to limit the spread of communicable diseases within the centre and especially among the infant and toddler group.

At Acacia we are committed to providing quality early years care and education and in order to do so we realise the importance of parental input. The success of this, and any other educational programme, depends entirely on the partnership we establish between ourselves. If you have any concerns or queries, please speak to your Parent Representative who will bring any concerns to monthly meetings with the Head.

Nursery. This caters for children between the ages of 3 years and 4 years. The Nursery syllabus follows The Foundation Programme which has six defined learning areas and goals.

Reception. This caters for children between the ages of 4 years to 5 years. Children also follow The Foundation Programme but with extra emphasis on Literacy and Numeracy.

Both departments have up to date resources from the UK.

Areas of learning in the Foundation Stage **(Nursery and Reception years)**

(taken from Curriculum Guidance for Foundation Stage)

Aspects of personal, social and emotional development (PSED)

1. Dispositions and attitudes
2. Self confidence and self esteem
3. Making relationships
4. Behaviour and self control
5. Self care
6. Sense of community

Aspects of communication, language and literacy (CLL)

1. Language for communication
2. Language for thinking
3. Linking sounds and letters
4. Reading
5. Writing
6. Handwriting

Aspects of mathematical development (MD)

1. Numbers as labels and for counting
2. Calculating
3. Shape, space and measures

Aspects of knowledge and understanding of the world (KUW)

1. Exploration and investigation
2. Designing and making skills
3. Information and communication technology
4. A sense of time
5. A sense of place
6. Cultures and beliefs

Aspects of physical development (PD)

1. Movement
2. A sense of space
3. Health and bodily awareness
4. Using equipment
5. Using tools and materials

Aspects of creative development (CD)

1. Exploring media and materials
2. Music
3. Imagination
4. Responding to experiences and expressing and communicating ideas

Themes in the Foundation Stage

| NURSERY YEAR | RECEPTION YEAR |
|--|---|
| TERM 1 | TERM 1 |
| Me and my body Homelife / eating Clothes Celebrations | All about me Cultural studies |
| TERM 2 | TERM 2 |
| Families Buildings Local environment Animals | Water and weather Food, health and growing |
| TERM 3 | TERM 3 |
| Food Plants Journeys Holidays | Spring / Animals Vehicles |

* the topics are subject to change

Nursery and Reception children follow the Jolly Phonics Programme, a system whereby each letter of the alphabet has a sound and an action to help the child remember them. The programme teaches the sounds, letter blends and strings needed to aid emergent reading. Letters are not learned alphabetically.

Key Stage One.

This is our Infant Department and caters for children between the ages of 5 years to 7 years.

The Curriculum is British based but has been adapted to suit the diverse nationalities at Acacia School. Emphasis is placed on Zambia in Geography and History and we celebrate cultural festivals, including Independence Day activities.

Nine subjects are taught in Key Stage One. These are; Literacy, Numeracy, Science, History, Geography, Art, Design and Technology, P.S.H.E (Personal, Social and Health Education) Physical Education. In addition, Nyanja is taught to Year One and above.

Key Stage Two.

This is our Lower Junior Department and caters for children between the ages of 7 years to 11 years.

Again, the curriculum is based on the British Curriculum with nine subjects but has been adapted to include further in depth studies of African History and Geography.

The Curriculum Framework.

The Literacy Strategy is a fairly new concept from the UK. One hour of literacy is taught every day. The structure is based on a whole class introduction and participation session followed by group or individual work. A plenary session brings the children back together to report on what they have learned. Lessons are balanced between text, sentence and word level work and covers reading, writing, handwriting, grammar, fiction, poetry and non-fiction activities.

The Numeracy Strategy follows a similar pattern with investigations done in groups. We use New Heinemann Maths as our scheme. Work covered is Number (addition and subtraction), Shape, Space and Data Handling, Money, Fractions, Multiplication and Division.

QCA Documents are schemes of work for each of the nine subjects. Teachers may use them or adapt them to suit the needs of the children. Lesson objectives and lesson outcomes are clear and concise and offer opportunities for all the children to experience a wide and varied approach to subjects.

Our curriculum is ongoing, continually being adapted and refined by the Acacia School staff.

Reports

Reports are sent home twice per year. An interim report at the end of the first term (December) and an end of year report the following August. Parent Consultation Evenings are held the week following distribution of reports so that parents can discuss any concerns they may have with the class teacher.

Assessments are on-going at Acacia. Evidence of childrens' work is collected and levelled against a benchmark to show progression. Children are encouraged to set their own targets and suggest how they could improve.

The School Calendar and teaching days. Acacia School provides 180 teaching days for your child.

If children are taken out of school for extra holidays, please write a letter to the Head informing her of the dates of absence.

The School Day/Timetables

Children should be at school at 8.00 hours.
Registration is at 8.15 hours.

Playgroup: 8.15 - 11.30 (break time 10.00 - 10.30) Monday to Friday

Nursery: 8.15 - 11.30 (break time 10.00 - 10.30) Monday to Friday
We offer an extended day for children in Playgroup and Nursery until 13.00 for a small daily fee.

Children are supervised at both break time and lunch time. Please ensure your child brings a healthy packed lunch. Please do not send your child with sweets . Chewing gum is not allowed. No glass bottles please. The school provides bottled, cooled water should children need more than you send them with. It is school policy for all our children to sit at a table to eat with their friends and to learn good table manners.

Reception and KS1 - 8.15 - 14.00 hours (break time 10.00 - 10.30.
Lunch 11.30 - 12.30) Monday to Thursday
Key Stage Two - 8.15 - 14.00 hours (break time 10.00 - 10.30.
Lunch 11.30 - 12.30) Monday to Thursday

School closes at 13.00 hours on Fridays

Safety at Acacia.

All fire extinguishers are in working order and are certified as such once a year. Fire exits are clearly marked and all staff and children have regular fire drills to ensure a quick and calm exit from the school buildings.

Fees.

Playgroup

Kw 20,000 per session, or Kw 75,000 per week based on 5 mornings per week.

Nursery

One-off Registration fee of US\$50 (Balance of US\$250 when child enters Reception)
Term Fees: K1,000,000 per term, 3 terms per year
Resource fee: K250,000 per term.

Parents not wishing their children to attend 5 mornings a week are welcome to bring them on a daily basis. Please see the Headteacher.

Extended sessions cost K5,000 per day.

Reception

One-off registration fee of US\$300 (US\$250 if child has already paid US\$50 for registration at ELC)
Term Fees: K1,850,000 per term, 3 terms per year
Resource fee: K250,000 per term

Primary (Key Stages One and Two)

One-off registration fee of US\$300 (if not previously enrolled in Reception class)
Term fees: K2,750,000 per term, 3 terms per year

Resource fee: K250,000 per term.

Please note that there is a 10% discount for subsequent siblings. Fees not paid on the due date will incur a 5% charge added to the bill. If fees are not paid by a given date, a letter will be sent asking you to keep your child at home until they are paid.

* As a non-profit making school, we need fees to be paid on time so that the school runs efficiently.

The Teaching Staff.

Principal. Miss Kathryn Stephenson BA (Hons) Eng. Lit. Q.T.S. Miss Stephenson has over twelve years experience in International Education as a Head of Juniors and Principal. She is a full-time class teacher and a teacher trainer, holding in-service training for all Acacia Staff on up to date teaching practices. Miss Stephenson is also responsible for the delivery of the Literacy curriculum throughout the Junior department.

Deputy Principal. Mr Mbangu is an experienced Zambian teacher. As Deputy, he is responsible for the teaching of the Juniors and the Pastoral Care of all our students. In addition Mr. Mbangu is responsible for the delivery of the Maths Curriculum. Currently, Mr. Mbangu is studying for a B ed. in Primary Education.

Miss Hellen Moyo is our Reception teacher and ELC Coordinator. Miss Moyo is a qualified Primary teacher.

Miss Mwila and Miss Shirley team teach the Nursery class. Both are qualified teachers. .

Miss Kaoma Mayembe is responsible for the Playgroup and is assisted by Miss Mavis.

Miss Mayembe holds certificates in secretarial work and social work. She has recently qualified as a teacher.

Miss Tanya Wienand holds a BSc (Hons) in Microbiology and is also a qualified teacher. Miss Cindy is also a qualified teacher. Miss Tanya and Miss Cindy will be team teaching Years 1 and 2. In addition, Miss Tanya is also responsible for the delivery of the Science Curriculum.

Extra-Curricular Activities.

Acacia School offers a varied selection of after school clubs. The clubs run for a ten week period from 14.30 - 15.15 hours. Activities are fun based, rather than educational. Different activities are offered each term. Some examples are, Sports Fun, French, Drama and Performance, Swimming, Cookery for Kids, Art Club, Board Games, to name but a few.

House Teams.

Children are placed into houses on their acceptance at Acacia School. Our houses are, The Blue Lions, The Yellow Elephants, The Red Leopards and the Green Zebras.

Reward System and Discipline.

Our philosophy is that praising and rewarding children (positive reinforcement) will ensure that any discipline problems are minor. At Acacia our reward system is based on 'smiley faces'. Children receive a chart on which stickers are placed for a variety of reasons, trying their very best, helping others, good improvement in a particular subject and excellent work. When 30 smiley faces have been collected, the children receive a certificate in a special Assembly. Parents are invited to come along for the presentation.

Discipline problems which may occur are dealt with by the class teacher. Severe problems will be dealt with by the Principal and sanctions may include loss of privileges such as cancellation of break time play or after school clubs. Parents may be asked to meet with the Principal.

Uniform.

Our uniform consists of a pale blue-shirt or blouse worn with navy blue shorts or skorts. Pale blue and white dresses are offered as an alternative for the girls. Our winter uniform is a dark blue track suit. We also supply hats for during the hotter months and also for sports. Uniforms sport our new Acacia School logo. The uniform must be

purchased from Acacia School. The uniform shop is open Mondays at 8am and Fridays at 12.00 hours. Please ensure children bring their kit for PE lessons. Trainers must be worn for sports and athletics.

Library and ICT.

We have a fully stocked and stimulating library in three sections. Firstly, our Oxford Reading Tree guided reading scheme which is levelled and monitored by the class teachers. Secondly, a free reading section for fluent readers. This contains books by well known and well loved authors such as Roald Dahl, Enid Blyton, Hans Christian Anderson etc. Thirdly, a non-fiction section for reference and research as well as for pleasure.

Each class has access to a computer. Children will be taught keyboard skills, how to save work in their own folder, how to compile charts and graphs, as well as practising their Maths and English skills with our software. Older children will experience research via the Internet.

Resources.

Our resources are bought via the UK and are vital for the childrens' education. We teach the children to take care of them. As parents, you can help by ensuring reading books are not lost or spoiled when they are brought home.

Homework.

From Nursery to Year Two, homework will consist of guided and shared reading. Below is a quick summary of the seven stages of reading progression which may help you when you read at home with your child. Twenty minutes is the maximum amount of time for homework. From Year Three upwards, revision or extra work for reinforcement of lessons may be given. Thirty minutes is the maximum amount of time for this. If your child is taking longer to complete homework, please speak to the class teacher.

Stages of the Reading Process.

The first stage is at home, where children listen to stories at bedtime or during a 'quiet time'. Parents should ask questions such as, What do you think happens next? Would you be scared if that happened to you? Choose bold illustrated books, not just stories but non-fiction too.

The second stage is when children begin to look at the pictures and 'make up' the text. This is called emergent reading and it is an important step towards the child using their imagination and acquiring vocabulary.

The third stage is word recognition. This is a difficult concept for a child. They do not see a connection between the words we speak and words in print. Parents can help by pointing to each word in the text as they say it. In class, we use Big Books. The teacher points to the words as she says them.

The fourth stage is the phonetic spelling of CVC words (consonant, vowel, consonant). This is reinforced at school through the use of our 'Jolly Phonics' scheme. This is not done in alphabetical order. Children are exposed to the sounds and an associated action of letters. The actions help the children to remember a particular sound. At the same time, the Oxford Reading Tree scheme introduces the children to the names of the characters in the books and uses simple CVC words. At this stage we often give children word cards so that they can become familiar with the 100 High Frequency Words.

The fifth stage is the gradual recognition of the above so that they can recognise 'cat' without having to sound out c-a-t, and the introduction of letter blends, ee, ea, oo, ch, sh, th, oi, ou, and so on. Word banks can be then built up such as sh-ip, sh-op and m-oo-n quite early in the scheme.

The sixth stage is the introduction of words which cannot be spelled phonetically, such as thought, would, knee, said, came, beautiful, came, use of magic e.

We introduce letter strings to aid learning of these more difficult words. Children are encouraged to 'see' the words as a picture in

their mind. Groups of similar words are introduced such as would, could, should etc.

The seventh stage is acquisition of fluidity and fluency. We work on 'reading ahead', punctuation such as exclamation marks, question marks and bold type words to encourage expression. Children should also read different types of genre and non-fiction. They should be encouraged to read print all around them, not just in books.

Performing Arts.

Each year, Acacia School puts on a performance of a play. We have had great success so far. The children thoroughly enjoy performing. The curriculum also uses role-play and drama as part of the Literacy Strategy.

Special Educational Needs.

This term can mean gifted children or children who require a little more help. Lessons are differentiated so that all children have access to the curriculum according to their ability. At this moment in time, Acacia School does not have the facilities or resources to teach physically or mentally impaired children. Children identified as having a learning difficulty will be assisted in class.

Events and Community.

A school is not just a place for lessons. It is part of the wider community and as such we celebrate events from all over the world. We have 'Crazy Face and Hair Day, Dinner Dances, Discos, Sports Days, Pancake Day, World Book Day and International Day as social events on our calendar.

Please help us know your child by completing the information below. If you change your mobile number, please inform us so that we can update our records.

Acacia School

6 Flamboyant Lane
PO BOX 60283
Livingstone
acaciaschool@zamnet.zm

Telephone: 03 322950
Mobile: 0977 318553
Email:

Parent/Guardian Essential Information

1.Name of
parents/guardians.....

2.Name of Child.....

3.Date of Birth of
Child.....

4.Your physical
address.....

.....

5.Home Phone numbers.....

6.Work Phone
numbers.....

7.Mobile number/contact
name.....

8.Mobile number/contact
name.....

Back up person in case of emergency:

Name.....

Phone number.....

Relationship to Child.....

AUTHORISATION FOR OTHER PERSONS TO PICK UP MY CHILD/CHILDREN FROM SCHOOL

Names.....

Do you have any other children?.....

If yes, how many and their ages.....

Has your child received any previous schooling?.....

If yes, please provide details.....

.....

SIGNATURE OF PARENT/GUARDIAN

.....

Acacia School

6 Flamboyant Lane
PO BOX 60283
Livingstone
acaciaschool@zamnet.zm

Telephone: 03 322950
Mobile: 0977 318553
Email:

MEDICAL INFORMATION FORM

1. name of child.....

2. Date of Birth.....

3. Height.....Weight.....

4. Physical address.....

5. Contact numbers.....

Describe any allergies (food/other) your child has, and any treatment your child is receiving:

Has your child any of the following?

- | | |
|------------------------|--------|
| 1.Hearing difficulties | YES/NO |
| 2.Eye Problems | YES/NO |
| 3.Speech difficulties | YES/NO |

Is there anything further the school should know about your child's health?

Name and phone number of preferred doctor in the event of an emergency

Name.....Phone no.....

Does your child have medical insurance?.....

If so, please name insurance provider.....

SIGNATURE OF PARENT/GUARDIAN

.....