



Nordic
International School



Welcome to Nordic International School

At Nordic International School we work to create a learning environment and social culture that provides the best opportunity for learning.

Through removing distractions, communicating clearly and setting ambitious goals we can increase every child's likelihood of success in school.

Our students are taught by caring teachers who create and lead engaging lessons, where students know what to expect and what is expected of them in return.

Our classrooms are designed with focus in mind, so we keep them clean and simple with carpeted floors.

Students and staff wear a school uniform. The uniform removes another distraction element from our school day, ensures that all students, regardless of background, are dressed the same and functions as a reminder that there is an important purpose behind coming to school.

We strive to prepare each of our students as thoroughly as possible to thrive in an

increasingly globalised world, so up to 50 percent of our teaching is conducted in English.

We have a zero-tolerance policy when it comes to bullying and a consequence system that helps us ensure a structured learning environment. Our House-system gives our students the space to build lasting relationships and take on leadership roles among their peers.

Naturally, these goals require a lot of our students. Together with our teachers and staff, they share responsibility in creating a culture of learning. The social life at our school is based on self-respect and respect for others.

We are committed to making every Nordic International School the best version of what a school should be: fun and challenging, warm and structured, a safe and familiar place that is also full of adventure.

Every child has the right to a bright future and our students have a golden ticket to it by learning to *work hard* and *be kind*.



An emphasis on knowledge



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 provide a structured school environment and traditional teaching methods. Research shows that a strong focus on knowledge, teacher-led education, more time for teaching, and classroom discipline have many positive effects on student's academic results and behaviour¹.

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 a prerequisite for learning. This also creates an atmosphere that is conducive to gaining new knowledge. Our students know what is expected of them and are also aware of the consequences if they break any rules.

Our teachers, students and guardians are met with high expectations with regards to their attitudes towards their school, their studies and one another.

We value frequent contact with guardians and expect them to work with us to ensure that the students have the support they need to achieve their full potential. ■



Our emphasis on knowledge entails:

- Measuring and evaluating knowledge accumulation
- Teacher-led education with clear instructions, interaction, and continuous feedback
- Standardised routines before, during and after lessons
- Rules of conduct and a clear and fair consequence system
- High expectations
- Regular contact with guardians
- A school uniform for staff and students

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 where national boundaries are becoming less prominent.

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

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
Vice Principal

» *Many 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:

- The encouragement and support given to our students to express themselves in English, both in the classroom and during break time
- Certified teachers with a broad spectrum of backgrounds and experiences outside of Sweden.
- Up to half of all teaching for older students is conducted in English
- International elements and traditions, including a 'house system' and celebration of world festivals.

Evidence-based education



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 elements in education - not for ideological reasons, but because research has proven that such elements have positive effects on students' results.

At the same time, we know that science never stands still. Teaching methods and resources are constantly evolving. 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 progress².

We aim to constantly develop and improve. This requires us to stay up-to-date on 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 implement 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 implementation.
- A professional development programme for continued training in 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.





Performance & quality assurance

Results

The average merit ratings for the school year 2022-2023 among Nordic schools with year 9 students show that they perform well compared with national and municipal averages. Year 9 students from Nordic International School Norrköping earned the highest average merit rating in the municipality and year 9 students from Nordic International School Kalmar earned an average merit rating that was 20 points higher than the municipal average.

Moreover, nearly every year 9 student who graduated from Nordic International School Karlstad and Nordic International School Norrköping was eligible for upper-secondary school studies.

Our students exceed expectations

Our year 9 students achieve much better results than expected according to the **National Agency for Education's SALSA-tool**. The SALSA tool was developed to give a more balanced assessment of a school's performance than what can be gleaned from grades alone. On top of students' grades, SALSA measures three factors: the level of education attained by parents, the share of students who qualify as recently immigrated (including students whose background is unknown) and the ratio of boys to girls.

Quality assurance

We have a rigorous quality assurance process through which we measure and evaluate satisfaction rates among students and guardians on a regular basis.

In an annual survey, students and guardians are asked about their overall experience as well as the classroom environment and our work in upholding core values. Questions are centred around topics such as safety, classroom discipline, and behaviour, as well as students' and guardians' overall satisfaction with the school.

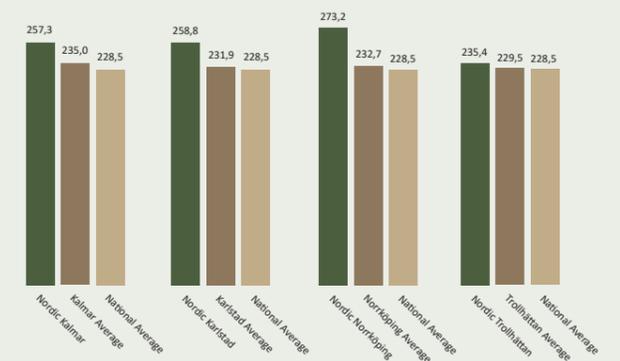
In this year's survey, students gave our schools an average rating of 4,2 out of 5 when asked if they agreed with the statement "I feel comfortable and happy at my school." Guardians gave an average rating of 4,1 out of 5 when asked if they agreed

with the statement, "Nordic International School lives up to my expectations."

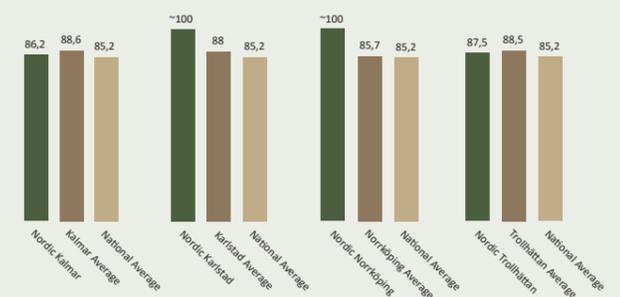
To support this process, all principals attend annual workshops to analyse school results and national tests as well as survey responses, focus groups, and academic achievements. These workshops serve as a valuable opportunity to exchange experiences and ideas for how to improve the quality of the education.

Nordic International School also participates in external quality audits conducted by the Swedish Schools Inspectorate, for example through surveys of students and guardians. ■

Average merit rating



Upper-secondary eligibility



Our targets

- All students shall meet the learning objectives in all subjects as well as receive the tools necessary to reach their full potential.
- All students shall meet the requirements for entry into upper-secondary school.
- All schools shall produce the highest average merit rating among students exiting year 9 in their respective municipalities, and shall monitor the correlation between results on national tests and school grades.



The teacher's role

Teachers play a central role at Nordic International School and every teacher goes through a thorough and selective hiring process. Our teachers are passionate about their profession, have a love of teaching and care deeply about helping students to learn and acquire relevant social-emotional skills.

Most teachers come to us already certified to teach in Sweden. Those that are coming as certified teacher in their home country, begin their certification process as soon as they arrive. All of our teachers are expected to have mastered the English language.

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

The most important responsibility of a teacher at Nordic International School is to educate the students and their most important role is as a leader in and outside of 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 and it is important that they possess the ability to earn students' respect and trust. One tool that we employ in creating a healthy dynamic between teachers and students in the use of a dress code for staff as well as students.

Another tool we use is our consequence system. When a student does something good, they receive recognition and encouragement. In the event that a student breaks the common rules or does not behave in an acceptable manner, they receive a negative consequence. An important part of being a role model is maintaining a posture of generosity and kindness, being able to show that one cares about their students and being mature enough to handle both minor and major issues that may arise.

Teachers at Nordic International School are also expected to be in regular contact with guardians. Guardians can expect continuous feedback and information about how the student is developing both socially and academically. ■

 Ms Lama Mardini
English Teacher

» I feel that it is very important to put the needs of the student first and to adjust the way that I communicate based on what is best for 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 are just as important.

Every student at Nordic International School is placed into one of our houses, and 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 is responsible for 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 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 debate, 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 rewarded with a prize.

OUR HOUSES



Learning environment & school uniform

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 experience suggest help improve learning³. We use carpeted floors and clean walls in the classrooms, which accommodates a disciplined learning environment. Social areas are characterised by more varied designs. Students are supposed to be able to be active during break time, both indoors and outdoors, and enjoy the company of their peers. There are also areas designated for more calm activities like reading and academic collaboration.

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 as well as indoor shoes or socks, all in dark colours. Outdoor clothes and shoes are kept in the student lockers.

The use of a dress code helps us to ensure equality among students by removing the competitive pressures related to clothing. 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 the teacher. 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 break time, rather than focusing their attention on mobile phones.

SCHOOL UNIFORM

- 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.



Join our student queue

Application

To register your child in our queue, please visit our webpage 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.

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 go through the rules of conduct so that everyone has a common understanding. 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 school uniform

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 students and guardians. With clear rules and a common system of consequences, everyone at the school is well aware of what applies and the adults at the school have a common approach when someone breaks the school's rules. Consequences are given to students when their behaviour hinders their own or someone else's learning, or if someone shows a lack of respect for other individuals or for the school.



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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).

Work hard, be kind.

Nordic International School has been helping children achieve academic greatness since 2017. We were founded with a mission to ensure that students can achieve the best possible academic progress and results, regardless of background.

We offer an evidence-based education, with an emphasis on knowledge, based on the belief that there are no shortcuts to achieve excellence. Many schools neglect factors that are fundamental to achieving high levels of academic performance. These factors include, for example, structure, clear communication and teacher-led education. At Nordic International School, such factors are key in what we offer our students.

Our schools therefore link back to an older Swedish school tradition, with a strong emphasis on classroom leadership, where teachers challenge students to deepen their critical thinking. In order to ensure that our students are equipped for a more globalised world, we place great emphasis on communication skills and cross-cultural perspectives.

We want to invite you to take part in raising the next generation of learners.

