



## SCHOOL MISSION STATEMENT

*“Le Verseau” International School believes that all students have the capability to learn and progress, and aims for the success of all students by using harmonized teaching methods used by all members of the educational team. They are aware of the social and cultural background of its students and support them by taking into account their personality and development throughout their schooling.*

*The members of the school staff strive to fulfil the school’s mission to allow all students to reach their individual potential at their own pace through a privileged relationship with their teachers, whilst respecting the government’s educational directives.*

*The school’s working environment encourages students to be responsible for their own development and where they are motivated and inspired by a love for learning.*

*All students are given the same opportunities to reach their goals and overcome any shortcomings.*

*Every effort is made to create an environment favourable to learning. This is achieved thanks to a strong collaboration between teachers who are conscious of the different learning abilities in their students. There is also a concerted focus on the development of good study habits.*

*Students’ efforts are recognised and they are encouraged to do their best. As they make progress, achieve goals and surmount difficulties, their confidence increases.*

*A high priority is placed on the human dimension and interpersonal relationships. Students and teachers are invited to work together, investing time and energy with the ultimate goal of developing the students’ knowledge and enhancing the creativity of the teacher.*

*Teachers are constantly invited to reflect on their own role and the contribution they make to the school and to their students.*

### **1. A multi-faith and multi-cultural school**

The school welcomes all students regardless of their philosophical or religious beliefs and does its best at all times to transmit positive values.

The school is not only a place where one acquires knowledge but it also provides a space where citizenship is developed and students are taught to value and participate in the democratic process. These values permeate the day-to-day life and objectives of the school. “ Le Verseau ” International School challenges students to refute egocentrism, intolerance and negativity. In learning to view the outside world with a critical eye, students can better prepare themselves to provide future solutions and alternatives for the improvement of society and mankind.

The school is also an environment where the student learns autonomy and independence.



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“Le Verseau” aims to provide a context where the values of solidarity, democracy, mutual tolerance and openness to those who are different to themselves are affirmed and exemplified.

Teachers strive to educate the students to acquire autonomy, responsibility and tolerance. In this way they are encouraged to develop critical thinking skills, defend their opinions and overcome their own prejudices.

Both teaching and non-teaching staff members share the following objectives:

*“We can teach our children to carefully understand and reflect on their lives with the full understanding that they have multiple choices to make and that each of these choices has consequences which should be taken into account when leading one’s life. We can then assist them in learning how to evaluate their lives and judge for themselves whether or not they are exemplifying in their daily lives the values that they hold. We can explain to them the importance of defining, after thoughtful reflexion, their own values and not simply being influenced by their peers or impulsive thought.”* Simon OLDS, Aidez votre enfant à choisir, Actualisation, Montréal, Québec, 1981.

Primary school students have two Ethics lessons per week. This initiation into the main principles of morality allows young people to develop a more objective and human perspective on others, on their past and present. In addition, a lesson in Education in Philosophy and Citizenship allows the student to confront ethical and moral discussions. These lessons allow him to appreciate difference and also to make responsible choices. They also allow him to reflect on the experiences of humanity, to criticize them and to form his own judgment. They inspire his fundamental commitments and daily actions.

These positive values are furthered in the school by a pedagogical approach to social cooperation and by promoting altruistic behaviour: the students have the opportunity to put these values into action by participating in a variety of humanitarian projects and causes. By encouraging the students to think of others and to act accordingly, the school helps to build a strong feeling of solidarity. The students participate in school projects such as “Bol de Riz” (bowl of rice), which raises funds to support local humanitarian causes such as the “Restos du Coeur” as well as organisations which address the needs of the developing world, and in support of actions such as the “Fauteils Volants” (Flying Wheelchairs,), the Escalpade, ...

## 2. The International Aspect of the School

“Le Verseau” has an international aspect, welcoming students from all nationalities. There is a particular emphasis placed on keeping an open dialogue and taking into consideration the background and past experience of each of the students. Classes are taught in French, as the primary school-leaving certificate, the Basic Studies Certificate (C.E.B.), is approved by the Wallonia-Brussels Federation (F.W.B.).

As far as language lessons are concerned, children learn English from the age of 2 and a half, in small groups. All lessons are taught by native speakers. Children whose mother tongue is English take ENL (English as a Native Language) courses, and children who do not speak English at home take EFL (English as a Foreign Language) courses. In ENL, reading is the foundation for teaching English and



writing is encouraged from an early age. Thus, children develop multiple linguistic and creative skills. In EFL, the main goal is to teach students to communicate with confidence. By helping them develop listening and reading comprehension, while expanding their vocabulary and knowledge of English structures, they can understand what is said and written, and are able to express themselves, both orally and in writing.

### 3 . Specific Teaching and Learning Methods

#### 1. Motivation

In 1969, the founder of our school, Mrs. Suzanne van der Straten, wanted to create a place of education and teaching in a climate open **to different cultures, in a spirit which prioritizes language learning, sciences, artistic activities, creativity and personal research.**

Her concern was to make students think and to allow each and every student to be recognized as a person. In this perspective, she had found it important to leave them a space of freedom and to encourage teachers to take a positive view of the students which builds up their confidence in forming **their personality.**

In parallel to the teaching of academic subjects, several disciplines are an integral part of the curriculum so that everyone can develop all of their abilities: art lessons, music lessons, language lessons, physical education and swimming lessons, sports days, computer lessons (P5-P6). It is a set of elements that children value.

There is no real learning unless the student is positively engaged in the learning process. The use of cross-curricular teaching as well as project-based learning creates a dynamic, which encourages students to be actively involved in their own education. This style of interactive learning educates through educational activities, games and group research projects which, in turn, have the advantage of further developing not only the intellectual abilities of the students but also their empathetic and social skills.

Thanks to this methodology, teachers and students are encouraged to decide together which conditions and basic principles should apply to the time and space they share with one another. Where possible, the teacher bases the learning process on the students' own experiences, answering their questions or awakening their interest by asking thought-provoking questions. In return, the teacher's answers provoke new questions. Theory is not taught as an end in itself, but learned through problem-solving.

This learning process, encouraging practical application together with a vital understanding of theory, enables students' individual talents and interests to blossom in a holistic approach where each one is forced to take risks, make suggestions and choices, be enterprising. Knowing that their opinion counts and that everyone is counting on them, each student gradually acquires an increasing sense of responsibility and independence.

When students feel valued by their teachers, they benefit from the constructive criticism given in a caring and encouraging manner in the form of advice. Students are strongly encouraged to take part in school life; they have their own place for making suggestions and taking decisions.

In our school, students regularly participate in different discussion groups, including talking circles and philosophical workshops. These allow each child to develop on the one hand their socio-emotional side and on the other hand critical thinking, creative thinking and attentive thinking. Each



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child can speak with confidence in a caring environment where everyone's views can be expressed and heard. Everyone is invited to listen to the other to understand him. The Children's Forum is the place where young people transform their proposals into projects, their knowledge into actions and where they become personally involved in their development. This group work, participation in discussions and the development of new rules encourages them to get involved in the management of their school.

The educational team is caring and gives positive reinforcement as soon as the opportunity arises, highlighting the strengths of each and every student.

It is important to the school that every child feels good here, can develop their talents and flourish regardless of their abilities, strengths or weaknesses. Teachers strive to adapt to the needs of each student in order to allow them to develop their potential as best they can.

### 2. Preparation for secondary studies

“Le Verseau” International School is committed to preparing students for secondary school leading them to develop work and study skills, which depend upon them understanding the material rather than merely reiterating what they have learned.

Whilst leaving considerable room for initiative, “Le Verseau” provides a high level of academic teaching.

Gradually, the students acquire **knowledge, skills and attitudes**. They learn to summarize, to use reference tools. Different presentation and memorization techniques are taught to the children (mind mapping, sketch-noting, summaries, charts, ...)

**The research process** is used throughout the schooling of our students. This research allows, among other things, the student to master a subject in an increasingly in-depth way, to develop his critical mind and to ensure the quality of the information by using different sources, books, internet, interviews, ... The P6 pupils work on a research project called “Masterpiece” which they present in front of several teachers and P5 and P6 students. This work aims to encourage the curiosity and enthusiasm of the student, but also to teach him to question himself, to plan a piece of work, to seek information and to question it and to have the confidence to speak in public.

This process also familiarizes the student with all the communication techniques that he can try out and use at his leisure in the documentation center made available to him (BCDR, Computer room).

### 3. Evaluation

“Le Verseau” applies a formative and individualised assessment, keeping parents and students informed about the student’s own progress, without comparing his/her skills or behaviour with those of his/her classmates. At all times, “Le Verseau” avoids competition amongst students.

Formative evaluations are carried out throughout the process and are an opportunity for the teacher and the child to take stock of what has been acquired or still to be acquired. They end with a certificative evaluation, the objectives of which are defined in advance with the children. With older children, an evaluation grid is used from time to time to communicate expectations.

Three times a year, information about assessment is communicated via the school report and within this framework, two parent-teacher meetings are scheduled by the school. This is an opportunity for parents, student and teachers to discuss the child's education.



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If necessary, other meetings can be organised during the school year, in addition to the scheduled parent-teacher meetings.

To this end, parents can request an appointment with the teacher via the class diary or the secretariat, either by phone or by email: [fondamental@eiverseau.be](mailto:fondamental@eiverseau.be)

If necessary, with the consent of the parents, the P.M.S. can provide assistance in complete confidentiality.

### 4. Learning Support

Our school welcomes each child as an individual. The Governing Body attaches particular importance to supporting each student by strengthening the educational team, giving them the opportunity to train and providing the necessary educational material.

In the Kindergarten section, in the morning, each teacher is accompanied by a classroom assistant who supports the children during different activities. This makes it possible to pay more attention to each child, in terms of learning, understanding the language, or their well-being.

In addition, M2-M3 classes work vertically, which gives children the opportunity to collaborate and help each other. The little ones are stimulated by the older children and the older children deepen their knowledge and use their acquired skills with the younger ones.

At the Primary section level, several teachers give periods of **support, remediation and French as a language of learning (FLA)**. In addition to the periods offered by the F.W.B., the Governing Body also supports the students by funding a certain number of hours of remediation.

Remediation consists of specific help for children in difficulty at a given time in a subject. This can take place by co-teaching with the teacher in the class, in a half-group, in a specific needs group or individually. During this period, it is possible to help with a particular difficulty, to explain and show again, or to discover a new topic.

The school benefits from many resources and teaching aids as well as a library.

**A buddy system ("parrainage")** between the classes of P1 and P6 brings together children, sometimes sharing similar origins or a common language. This creates cooperation, recognition, and bonds that unite and help children to grow up and it helps support a child whose mother tongue is not French. Pupils who have already experienced entry into primary education accompany younger children in order to support them in their integration and learning.

We take great pride in valuing each child as an individual. We work in synergy with the educational team, children, parents, but also with stakeholders outside the school in a spirit of collaboration and benevolence.

We meet regularly with the PMS which provides follow-up and / or a link with parents and professionals. **Multidisciplinary meetings** are organized if the parents so desire or if the educational team feels the need.

We keep student files up to date in order to centralize and record everything related to the child's development. These contain minutes of meetings, reports from specialists, advice, strategies implemented during the child's schooling, documents shared by the family, reasonable options for improvement or a protocol if necessary. These documents are centralized in the Headteacher's office and all teachers concerned can ask to consult them.



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A priority for our school is the collaboration with each family in order to support the child and provide the best possible framework throughout his schooling, in conditions conducive to his development and well-being. This collaboration is built up over time with families.

### 5. Partnership and meetings with parents

The **secretariat** is often the first point of contact between parents and the teaching team (absences, forgotten equipment or meals, last minute changes for journeys, etc.). The secretary redirects the information to the people concerned. The entire educational team (teachers and management) can be contacted by email by parents if necessary.

**Several meetings** are organized throughout the school year. In September-October, a meeting to present both the school and the class provides a first meeting with all the parents. To monitor the development of the children, individual meetings, face-to-face or remote, are scheduled twice a year so that parents can meet with teachers and English teachers. These meetings are scheduled after the school reports are handed out. (November and June)

At any time, as necessary, teachers might contact parents to organize a meeting about their child. In some cases, a multidisciplinary meeting with the management team and / or other people involved may be scheduled.

Occasionally, during the year, parents are invited into class for an exhibition, a project, a play, etc.

Parents also have access to the school's website where there is a link to the journalistic blog, as well as a parents' area where documents can be downloaded.

Parents also have access to an online payment platform for all authorized school fees, petty cash (visits, school trips, etc.), swimming pool as well as the reservation of meals.

**The Participative Council** is made up of four parents including a member of the APPA (Association de Parents - Parents Association), four teachers, the management team, members of the Governing Body, an external person and a secretary. It meets four times a year. The topics of discussion are varied: approval of the annual activity report, organization of the school in general (parking, access to the school, etc.), project management (school trips, English lessons ...). Minutes of the meeting are drawn up, communicated to the members of the Participative Council and posted on school notice boards.

**The APPA (Parents Association)** works with the school and organizes various activities within the school during the lunchtime break as well as more ad hoc activities. Its representatives meet with the management team and the Governing Body several times a year depending on the projects. The APPA aims to be very active and participatory in the projects it proposes and supports. With the management team, it acts with the aim of creating positive relationships between all the school's partners in order to build a true educational community.

### 6. Communication of Information

The **communication of information** plays a pivotal role in a school. Students and teachers have various tools at their disposal to keep them informed as much as possible on a daily basis.



**Pedagogical information** about homework assignments and teachers' instructions is communicated through the school diary, via the intranet or school e-mail address. (...@eiverseau.be). Information for parents is sent by letter, either given to the student or sent by e-mail or by post.

**Administrative and cultural information** is communicated to students and parents via the TV screen in the entrance hall of the primary section, their e-mail address or the appropriate notice boards; it is sent to teachers via the notice boards located in the Teachers' Room, via e-mail and via intranet.

## 7. Social and Environmental Awareness

A **charter** specifying the rights and duties of each student appears in each student's Class Diary, which must be signed by the student and by his parents.

In order to develop in the pupil a series of skills and operational capacities which are added to the mastery of the disciplinary contents, the students are made aware of all the themes which can nourish their reflection and create a link between the school and the outside world. Outside, they are made aware of environmental problems, good personal hygiene, a healthy and balanced diet that respects the environment, waste management, ethics and solidarity.

This environmental awareness does not only take place during lesson time but also through participation in projects and competitions, through a topic developed throughout the school year, themed activities and workshops with outside organisations and charities, or through first-hand witness accounts.

Teachers develop environmental projects with students, setting up and maintaining a vegetable patch, a pond, plants,.... The school is equipped with solar panels. The school aims to reduce waste through various actions (water fountains, reusable water bottles, paper packaging or lunch box, etc.) and participates in the "Cleaner Wallonia" project.

The P.S.E. offers various workshops: Teeth and body hygiene, a balanced diet, self-esteem (P4), birth (P5) and initiation into Education in Relational, Affective and Sexual Life (P6)

## 8. Cultural and Sporting Activities

In our international school, students come into contact with children from different cultures (multiculturality) and with different languages (English, Spanish, Russian, Polish, Romanian, Italian, Serbian, etc.) This cultural diversity is valued across the school from the reception class up to P6.

**Culturally**, students experience at least one school trip of one or more days during the year. It could be an outing to an educational farm, a museum visit, a week of either environmental, sport or cultural activities. We also invite professionals from the world of art and culture to meet our students and share their experience.

**Several shows**, offered by outside organizations, are scheduled within the school or outside in a cultural center.

In Kindergarten, **artistic activities** and projects are developed. From P1, art lessons are given on a weekly basis in small groups. From Kindergarten to Primary school, there is a weekly lesson of **"Music**



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in” (Poussins - M1) or “**Musico-Motricité**” (M2-M3) or **music** (P1 to P6). The Art and Music teachers are trained and specialized in their discipline.

**A Library, Documentation and Research Center, “BCDR”**, mainly grouping together books in French is accessible to children. It contains many picture, fiction and non-fiction books, and magazines, accessible from Kindergarten to adults. Each classroom is also equipped with libraries of **books in French and English**.

In addition, students have access to a **computer room** where computer lessons are given from P5. This room is accessible to all teachers who wish to develop a project with their students or, for the younger children, working together with their P6 “buddy”.

The entire English department is equipped with interactive whiteboards, while the primary classrooms are equipped with projectors with whiteboards, which facilitate access to culture, reading or research.

**In terms of sport**, in addition to the weekly gym lessons, physical education teachers organize opportunities to go further in a particular sport through small tournaments, held within the school. Sports days are organized for the whole school each year in addition to participation in optional external activities.

### 9. Teachers’ In-Service Training

“Le Verseau” encourages its staff to follow in-service training courses not only on subjects related to their teaching but also in areas of personal and psychological development. This training is an excellent way of improving the quality of teaching, developing more professional practices and introducing vital new teaching methods.

The management team and the Governing Body encourage everyone to learn and expect everyone to be able to question themselves, and to progress by deepening their pedagogical, professional and inter-personal practice.

The management team also encourage teachers to work as a team, which creates a climate of positive and fruitful exchange. Teachers are expected to take part in training courses run by organisations across the educational spectrum, from within the school’s own sector as well as by the school’s Governing Body.

Each school year, one week before the start of the school year, members of the educational team are invited to a training week, with five days devoted to different themes. This week is punctuated by reflective, educational, and fun activities.

### 10. What is expected of the parents

“Le Verseau” International School considers that a determining factor in a child’s academic success is **the interest and confidence** that the parents show in the school and in its teachers as well as the priority that the family places upon the child’s education.

“Le Verseau” depends upon the continued contribution made by the Parents’ Association. The school believes that the thoughts and feelings of the parents have an essential role to play in helping them to meet the needs of each pupil and to ensure **good cohesion between teachers, students and parents**.





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Both parents and the school should consider themselves to be working together to contribute to the student's upbringing and to lay down the rules for interpersonal relationships between students and all members of the school staff. To this end, the school has put in place a charter of rights and duties so that everyone can work and live together in a climate of respect, trust and physical and psychological security. To support the teaching and educational team, parents have an essential role to play with their children, by explaining to them the merits of this charter.

The school is strictly NON-SMOKING.

### **11. What is expected of the teachers**

The teacher takes care to listen to each student and to reply calmly to each and every one. The teacher acts in accordance with the school's educational philosophy and mission statement as well as supporting its students. He/she upholds the decisions taken collectively and supports the management team and the Governing Body in their attempts to run the school effectively and, where possible, to improve the school still further.

A teacher encourages all of his/her students, whatever their level, making no distinction between students, whatever their origins or their cultural and social standing. Through their words, attitudes and the content of their lessons, a teacher promotes courtesy, open dialogue, good relationships and respect for individuals as well as optimism, a positive outlook on life and a desire to progress.

Teachers keep up-to-date with new professional practices and technology and integrate such tools into their teaching methods.

The teacher must show himself at the same time, to be proud of his profession and ready to undertake his responsibilities. He shows himself to be benevolent, professional, honest in his behaviour and deeply imbued with the ethics specific to his profession, towards his students, parents and colleagues.

### **12. Role of the Management Team**

The management team undertakes to apply a hands-on approach to support their colleagues and to maintain a close relationship with students.

By organising General Assemblies, working groups and individual meetings, they ensure that colleagues are consulted and that academic decisions are taken collectively.

They are open to change whilst maintaining good relations with all members of the educational establishment and preserving the high quality of teaching in the school.

### **13. Transition from Primary to Secondary School**

The school is fortunate to be able to offer all years of schooling under the same roof, from the first year of Kindergarten to the final year of secondary education, when students are awarded the Secondary Leaving Certificate, the CESS (Certificat d'Enseignement Secondaire Supérieur). This enables the same academic and personal development objectives to be gradually introduced throughout the student's time in the school.

Coordination between the Nursery, Primary and Secondary sections is organized jointly by all teachers.



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The school organizes a welcome morning for new students and colleagues at the start of the school year. New students and colleagues have the chance to meet others and to find their own place in the group and in the new school.

### **Conclusion :**

#### **The main objectives of the school's mission statement are :**

- to arouse in the student the need to study, compare, criticize and focus on what is essential;
- to open students' minds by encouraging them to reflect in an objective way;
- to allow each student to surpass him / herself and fulfil his / her own potential;
- to encourage an attitude of listening, respect and solidarity where the team spirit allows everyone, students, educational team and parents, to unite their efforts to reach the same goal;
- to open students' hearts by encouraging relationships between students of different nationalities thanks to the emphasis placed on what they have in common;
- to open students up to the society in which they live by involving them in social and humanitarian work;
- to introduce students to modern technologies and media;
- to prepare students for secondary education by giving them the necessary knowledge, skills and aptitudes;
- to develop students' creativity through their participation in artistic and cultural activities;
- to build the personality of the pupils by allowing them to develop their talents.



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