

## Are you considering sending your son or daughter to Dalat International School?

We invite you to do so! Here are some frequently asked questions and answers that will help you understand our school.

### What makes Dalat unique?

Dalat International School uses an American curriculum to prepare students for colleges and universities in North America and worldwide. We emphasize education for the whole child, incorporating Christian values, a solid foundation of learning in all subject areas and enrichment in various disciplines. Students learn how to explore their world, to think critically, evaluate and reconcile, and become problem-solvers. At Dalat we value small group learning, along with interdisciplinary and activity-based content learning. An emphasis is placed on character development, social interaction, teamwork and life skills. Students learn to “think outside the box” using creativity, resourcefulness and accountability in all areas of their lives. Students are encouraged to reach out to others with compassion and are inspired to make a difference in the world. Within the context of a supportive, non-threatening environment, we prioritize finding each individual’s giftedness and how to use those unique skills in fulfilling God’s purpose and design for his or her life.



Our student body is comprised of students from around the globe, representing over 18 countries. Parents of our students work with relief organizations, mission agencies, business ventures and local companies in Malaysia and throughout Southeast Asia. Currently approximately one third of our students reside in the boarding program located on the school campus. Dalat graduates have enrolled in colleges and universities in the United States, Canada, England, Australia, Hong Kong, Japan and Malaysia. Graduates have enrolled in prestigious universities in the US and Canada such as Vanderbilt, John Hopkins, Hong Kong University and the University of British Columbia. Many graduates have been able to advance their class standing by successful completion of Advanced Placement (AP) exams, taken while students at Dalat.



Dalat International School represents more than classroom learning – it’s a living, energetic community. We offer an extensive array of extra-curricular activities including instrumental and vocal music, drama, student government, class activities, outreach ministries, and individual and team sports. The middle and high school academic day includes time for elective courses in art, computer, journalism, industrial arts, food science, choir, band and more. Students enjoy non-academic “P period” options ranging from kickboxing to investing in the stock

market. Elementary students have ample opportunity to enroll in after-school clubs that range from student government to swimming. For a more complete listing of activities, phone the school office or consult the school’s *Student and Parent Handbook*

(<http://www.dalat.org/handbooks.html>) or the Student Activities & Clubs page (<http://www.dalat.org/activities.html>).

The Parent Teacher Organization operates to provide family activities that celebrate various holidays and special events throughout the school year.

## How Do I Apply?

When students express a desire to enroll in Dalat International School, we request them to go through an application process that provides us with the information necessary to find the best fit for each individual and to maximize the use of our educational resources. Application materials may be downloaded from the school's website (<http://www.dalat.org/studenta.html>) or by contacting the school's registrar ([registrar@dalat.org](mailto:registrar@dalat.org)). Steps to follow:



1. Complete an application form, include a recent photo, and submit them to the school with the application fee of US \$25. Follow the instructions for having the supplementary forms completed and sent to the school (reference form, health form, physical evaluation, and copies of specified documents).
2. For those applying to the boarding program, complete the supplementary boarding information and documents for student visa.
3. Ask your son's or daughter's current school to issue a complete transcript (for high school) or school records with most recent grades and have it sent to Dalat.
4. If transferring from a North American school, submit a copy of your child's most recent standardized test scores.

Depending on your son's or daughter's written and verbal abilities in English, he or she may need to take an English language exam which is administered on our campus prior to admission. If your child is transferring from a non-English speaking educational system (such as Taiwan, Korea, Japan or Thailand), he or she may need to sit for additional exams that will help us determine his or her appropriate grade level.

## When should I apply?

The North American educational system runs from August through June. The school year is normally divided into semesters or trimesters. At Dalat we use the semester system with the first semester running from mid-August to mid-December and the second semester from late January to early June. The best time for a student to arrive is at the beginning of the school year in August. An alternate acceptable time would be at the beginning of second semester in January.

## How is my child's grade level determined?

Grade placement is determined by age, academic record and which grade level your child just completed. The last four years of school are considered *high school* in North America. In high school, your child's grade placement will be determined by number of credits. Credits are the number of hours he or she has spent studying certain subjects in school. Your son or daughter will need 24 of these credits in order to graduate from Dalat International School and receive his or her high school diploma.

Many educational systems, including the British and the North American systems, use numbers for identifying grade levels. However, the numbers do not always match up and this is often confusing for parents. The chart below is designed as a guideline to assist you in determining the relationship of the American grade level system to other grade systems around the world. For example, when your son or daughter is transferring from a British school, subtract one number from the year they are studying to be the equivalent in the North American system. If your child is in Year 6 in a British school, this is equivalent to Grade 5 at an American school. At the end of Year 6, if your child transfers to Dalat and is placed in Grade 6 for the new school year, which is the normal case scenario, he or she is **not** repeating a grade, but actually progressing to the next level. The school, in conjunction with the parents, reserves the right to place the child in the grade in which he or she will achieve emotional, physical, spiritual and academic success.

### Comparison of American Education with Other Systems<sup>1</sup>

Age of Child <sup>1</sup>	Placement U.S./Canada		U.K.	Australia (Jan.-Dec.)	Taiwan	Malaysia	Korea
3+	Preschool	Preschool 3	Nursery				
4+		Preschool 4	Reception	Kindergarten			
5+	Elementary School	Kindergarten	Year 1	KG/Prep	Kindergarten	Primary	Kindergarten
6+		Grade 1	Year 2	Year 1	Standard 1	Standard 1	Elem School 1
7+		Grade 2	Year 3	Year 2	Standard 2	Standard 2	Elem School 2
8+		Grade 3	Year 4	Year 3	Standard 3	Standard 3	Elem. School 3
9+		Grade 4	Year 5	Year 4	Standard 4	Standard 4	Elem. School 4
10+	Intermediate	Grade 5	Year 6	Year 5	Standard 5	Standard 5	Elem. School 5
11+	School	Grade 6	Year 7	Year 6	Standard 6	Standard 6	Elem School 6
12+	Middle	Grade 7	Year 8	Year 7	Junior 1	Form 1	Middle School 1
13+	School	Grade 8	Year 9	Year 8	Junior 2	Form 2	Middle School 2
14+	High School	Grade 9	Year 10	Year 9	Junior 3	Form 3	Middle School 3
15+		Grade 10	Year 11	Year 10	High School 1	Form 4	High School 1
16+		Grade 11	Year 12	Year 11	High School 2	Form 5	High School 2
17+		Grade 12	Year 13	Year 12	High School 3	Form 6	High School 3

<sup>1</sup> = For admissions at Dalat International School, the child must be the designated age by date of birth on or before September 30.

### What kind of curriculum do you use at your school?

Dalat International School uses US standards of education that have been compiled by



*McREL Compendium of Standards and Benchmarks for K-12 Education* (<http://www.mcrel.org/standards-benchmarks/>). Textbooks and resources are purchased from the US and all teachers (with the exception of Mandarin) are trained in the US or Canada.

Teachers use the Expected School-wide Learning Results (<http://www.dalat.org/goals.html>) as the foundation for their teaching. There is flexibility in employing teaching methods that focus on

<sup>1</sup> Adapted and used with permission from the International Community School, Bangkok, Thailand.

cooperative learning, multiple intelligences, current brain research, learning styles and activity-based content learning (<http://www.kaganonline.com/>).

More detailed information about what students learn at the various grade levels and in specific subjects may be found on the school's website. Elementary grade level expectations and topics covered are presented in "Classroom at a Glance" (<http://www.dalat.org/glance.html>). All course descriptions for middle and high school are available in "Programs of Instruction" (<http://www.dalat.org/handbooks.html>).

## **What are the characteristics of a North American education? <sup>2</sup>**

### **1. *Focuses on the student as a whole person.***

Dalat International School is a university preparatory school and academics are considered very important. However, the school remains dedicated to educating the whole child – academically, spiritually, socially, emotionally, and physically. North American education tries to balance all aspects of education. We challenge our students to strive for their God-given potential, to develop strong character and leadership qualities, to learn to live in a global community and to accept responsibility.

### **2. *Emphasizes higher order thinking skills.***

Although some memorization and rote memory of content will always be required in a course of study, the integration, synthesizing, and application of material will be more emphasized in a North American educational system. Students are expected to have the ability to recall certain facts and knowledge, but his or her ability to analyze, and synthesize information is much more important. The emphasis is on manipulating these facts, to problem-solve and apply information to real life situations. In a North American school, emphasis is not only on how much you know, but on knowing where to find information and applying it to solve a problem. Students are encouraged to take risks and mistakes are learning experiences.

### **3. *Involves parents as team members in the educational process.***

In North American schools like Dalat, teachers and parents are viewed as a team working together to educate children. Teachers need the support of the students' parents in order to be successful. Parents are invited to communicate often with their children's teachers, become involved in the Parent Teacher Organization, and attend school events and special programs. The school will communicate regularly with parents via the Dalat News e-mail letter, class newsletters in the elementary, PowerSchool comments, e-mails, and phone calls.



### **4. *Places a realistic emphasis on grades.***

In a university preparatory school such as Dalat International School, nearly 100% of the students go to colleges and universities primarily in the US and Canada. Although a student's grades are important, leadership skills and school involvement have a high

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<sup>2</sup> Special thanks to Taejon Christian International School, Korea, for the information presented in "Understanding a Western Education – A Guide for Parents and Students." Used with permission.

value placed on them. Colleges and universities desire students who are well-rounded, have a variety of experiences and give their contributions back to the school and their community. Collaboration, leadership, integrity, creativity, and service don't always translate into a high grade point average (GPA), but are life skills with intrinsic rewards. Learning is a rewarding activity and not solely a means to achieve "good grades." Overemphasizing numerical and letter grades places undue stress on a student and may sacrifice true learning and the acquisition of far more important character traits.

5. ***Uses a variety of assessment tools.***

North American schools assess student learning with a variety of tools. Assessment is done internally, frequently, and is not dependent on just one test to measure a student's success or achievement. In addition to paper-and-pencil tests, teachers use verbal, anecdotal, portfolio, project, and presentation forms of assessment. One test is rarely the sole measure of success. It should also be noted that advancement to the next grade level in high school is based upon units of credit as opposed to a single test score. This also applies to college application where grades and test scores are not the sole factor for acceptance. Letters of recommendation and involvement in co-curricular activities and student life are also very important in the acceptance to quality colleges and universities.



6. ***Emphasizes a realistic university selection process.***

In the North American educational system, the goal is to prepare students to be successful in college rather than merely be accepted into a prestigious university. Dalat International School willingly works with students and parents on an individual basis to set realistic goals and to emphasize education and learning rather than prestige. The college counselor is available to work with the student to find the "best fit" for him or her.

## **Will my child adjust to a different school system?**

Students at Dalat International School are exceptionally friendly and absorb new students readily. The school provides new student orientation, New Kids Groups, and buddies for younger children. Staff are trained and experienced in working with diverse groups of children.

When transferring from one educational system to another, there are occasions for both overlap and gaps in a child's learning. This is not cause for concern, but is expected and considered normal. Your child can makeup for those deficits and will experience success in areas of learning that are already familiar. Different educational systems emphasize different areas of learning and your child will quickly notice these differences. At Dalat International School your child will notice less emphasis on rote learning, repetition and memorization and more emphasis on analytical skills, creativity and critical thinking. As a parent, you will notice differences in school values, philosophies and educational goals.



## **How does my child progress through school?**

Dalat International School has three educational divisions. Elementary school encompasses the preschool through grade 4. Middle school includes grades 5-8 and high school consists of grades 9-12. Students progress to the next grade level based on satisfactory completion of requirements and mastery of certain skills. To receive a high school diploma, students must complete 24 credits in specified subject areas. The Advanced Merit Diploma (AMD) offers a rigorous course of study that requires integration of learning similar to concepts used in the International Baccalaureate program. To receive the AMD diploma, students must be active in community service, keep a high grade point average, complete the various portions of the Senior Exhibition, and successfully pass two or more Advanced Placement (AP) exams. Students may also opt for the AP International Diploma by enrolling in and completing exams in certain subject areas. Students prepare for college and university placement by taking the SAT I/II (Scholastic Aptitude Test and Subject Tests) and/or the ACT (American College Tests) in grades 11 and 12.

In addition to their classroom teachers, Dalat International School has specialists who teach courses in a variety of disciplines. The school is staffed with special services teachers, counselors, and a spiritual life director to assist your child in the academic, social/emotional, and spiritual aspects of his or her life. The school director oversees the entire school program, two principals oversee the divisions, and a residence life couple oversee the boarding program.

## **What makes Dalat a Christian school?**

Dalat was founded in 1929 as a Christian School. Over 75 years later, our Christian heritage remains an integral component of our identity. At Dalat International School, we use a Christian perspective as the framework for the educational environment and our personal interactions. We believe that each student is unique, special and created with purpose and meaning. The school staff model characteristics of integrity and compassion, working to create an atmosphere of love, acceptance and encouragement. Students learn about morals, ethics and valuable principles taught in the Bible. Students are not coerced to accept Christian beliefs, but are taught about the Christian world view and how to use it as a basis for evaluating perspectives and decision making. Opportunities to discover and evaluate Biblical principles and study world religions are provided in Bible classes. Weekly chapel assemblies highlight student activities and achievements. It is also a time used to teach on topics related to life issues that students face as they are growing up. Interested students may choose to become more involved in the spiritual life of the school by participating in a music team, community relief projects, special missions trips, and a variety of outreach ministries.



## **Who can answer my questions?**

If you have any further questions regarding the admissions process at Dalat International School, please contact our school registrar ([registrar@dalat.org](mailto:registrar@dalat.org)) or one of the school principals (04-899-2105). We believe you'll find Dalat International School to be a vibrant,

colorful, rich learning environment that will impact your child's life for eternity! Come visit us and find out for yourself!

For more information on the comparison between American and British educational systems, refer to the following sites:

- <http://www.tckworld.com/expated.html> - TCK World offers an explanation of the difference between English-language schools
- [www.britishcouncil.org](http://www.britishcouncil.org) – British Council offers an explanation of the American use of credits in high school
- [www.nc.uk.net](http://www.nc.uk.net) – British National Curriculum