Frequently Asked Questions

Common Questions

- **What sets your school apart from other schools in Shanghai?**
  SCIS is notable for its supportive learning community characterized by small classes and a diverse student body. We have over 40 different nationalities and we keep each class as diverse as possible. We provide a truly international experience for our students, with qualified and internationally experienced teachers. We pride ourselves on our strong community spirit; we encourage parent involvement and create a nurturing learning environment. Our class sizes are among the smallest in all of Shanghai, allowing us to provide individualized support to each student—the way education is meant to be. Our supportive environment and culture for encouraging student involvement in the arts, athletics, leadership and service allows students to discover their strengths and build a positive self-image.

- **What is the makeup of your student population in terms of nationality?**
  We are proud of our diversity here at SCIS and believe that we have something rather unique amongst the international schools in Shanghai. Our nationality breakdown is around 35% from North and South America, 30% from Europe, 30% from Asia, and 5% from Africa and Australasia. This broad diversity, matched with the fact that we have students from over 40 countries represented within our system, creates the international dynamic that makes our community exceptionally vibrant.
- **How many students speak English as a second language?**
  Due to the diversity in our school, over 50% speak English as a second or possible 3rd language. However, only 20% are not fluent in English.

- **How do you accommodate for children with low English ability?**
  We have highly qualified learning support specialists and ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) teachers available on our campus to fully support those students. We offer ESOL support ranging from push-in support to pull-out ESOL classes.

- **How long has the school been open?**
  SCIS opened in 1996 with 7 teachers and less than 50 students. Since then, the school has grown to include multiple campuses and over 2,000 students. Our current Pudong Campus was built in 2009 and has gone through upgrades each year since.

- **Where do your teachers come from and what are their qualifications?**
  The majority of our teachers come from North America, with some coming from Australia, New Zealand, the UK and South Africa. All of our teachers are certified in their home countries and come with an average of over 10 years of related teaching experience; many have previously taught at other international schools around the world. Over 70% of our teachers hold postgraduate degrees in education.

- **What is your school’s philosophy?**
  At SCIS, we focus on developing the whole student. Aside from the emphasis we place on academics, we also believe it is important to focus on the Fine Arts (music, visual arts, drama), physical education and community service. Our education is individualized whereby we respect that each student has certain strengths and weaknesses, which need to be highlighted and improved upon respectively. We make the school fit the student, not the other way around. To support these goals we focus on creating highly interactive classrooms and offering a wide variety of art, sports and leadership activities as part of our extracurricular program, as well as annual service projects.
What facilities do you have on campus?

Our campus facilities have everything a student needs to grow academically, physically, and socially. We have large, spacious classrooms equipped with developmentally appropriate resources and technology. We have over 85,000 books in our beautiful library, and a cafeteria designed to make lunch a wonderful time for social development. As far as sports and recreation, our campus offers the following spaces:

- Full size gymnasium for basketball, volleyball, and other court sports
- Lower school and practice gymnasium
- Dance studio
- Fitness centre equipped with both free weights and machines
- Multi-level indoor playground and multi-purpose play space
- 6 lane, 25 meter length swimming pool
- All-weather soccer pitch
- Indoor rock climbing gym
- Outdoor playground for lower school students
- Covered outdoor playground for early childhood students

Interested in the fine arts facilities? We have those too:

- 650 person capacity Performing Arts Theatre
- Black box theatre, complete with a full light and sound system
- Expansive art classrooms with equipment to explore a multitude of artistic mediums
- Upper and lower school music rooms with a wide range of instruments and sound proof music practice rooms
- Enormous art gallery to display student work
- 3D printers for design and technology
Can you tell me more about the curriculum?

Our philosophy to educate globally minded citizens in a diverse environment is reflected within our curriculum. SCIS has been offering the International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma Program to our Grade 11 and 12 students since 2010. We are now transitioning to adoption of the IB Primary Years Program and IB Middle Years Program, making SCIS the only IB Continuum World School in Pudong.

- **Primary Years Program (PYP)**
  - PYP is designed for students aged 3 to 12. It is an inquiry based curriculum that promotes the development of the whole child both inside and outside of the classroom.
  - PYP is guided by six transdisciplinary themes that are explored using the knowledge and skills derived from six subject areas, as well as transdisciplinary skills. The program culminates with students undertaking a collaborative inquiry project that involves them identifying, investigating and offering solutions to real-life issues or problems.

- **Middle Years Program (MYP)**
  - MYP is designed for students aged 11 to 16. It provides a learning framework that encourages students to become creative, critical and reflective thinkers.
  - MYP is a learner-focused curriculum built upon eight core subjects that are delivered by teachers with focus on conceptual understanding and teaching & learning in context. MYP emphasises intellectual challenge, encouraging students to make connections between their studies in traditional subjects and the real world.
Diploma Program (DP)

- DP is an academically challenging and balanced program of education with final examinations that prepares students, aged 16-19, for success at university and life beyond.
- DP students choose one subject each from among the core five subject groups listed below. Additionally, students choose one subject from the Arts group, or a second subject from among the core five subject groups. Students will work closely with a counselor and their principal to choose the subjects that will best prepare them for their future educational goals.
- DP also features three core elements that broaden students' educational experience and challenge them to apply their learned knowledge and skills; the extended essay, theory of knowledge, and creativity, action, service (CAS).

The International Baccalaureate is an internationally recognized and acclaimed program whose mission is to develop inquiring, knowledgeable and caring young people who help to create a better and more peaceful world through intercultural understanding and respect. It fosters the development of skills for communication, intercultural understanding and global engagement - essential qualities for young people who are becoming global leaders. All levels of the program are externally authorized and evaluated, for more details on the IB curriculum please visit www.ibo.org. For more in-depth information concerning course offerings, we would be pleased to provide a course handbook available from our campus office as well as our school website: pd.scis-his.net
• Do students use technology in the school?
Yes, lower school students have fully integrated technology programs and use of both laptops and desktop machines in their classrooms. Middle and upper school students are enrolled in our MacBook 1-to-1 program and are issued a laptop for their own use. Our teachers have access to state-of-the-art teaching technology including SmartBoards, sophisticated science labs, 3D printers, and much more.

• What is your student turnover?
Students generally stay between 3 to 5 years, with some enrolled much longer. This is dependent on family circumstances, as many expatriates are hired on contracts for a specific amount of time.

• What is your teacher turnover?
All of our teachers are hired on initial two-year contracts, with a continued option to renew. Generally, teachers stay between 3-5 years, with some as long as 8 or more.

• When do the students start focusing on reading and writing?
Early reading and writing skills begin in Nursery and are systematically taught according to developmental readiness and age-group norms. In general, by the end of Pre-kindergarten (4 year olds), students should be able to recognize and write the letters of the alphabet, display strong letter-sound correspondence, read and write their name and other familiar words, and a willingness to explore language in their environment. By the end of kindergarten (5 years old) students should be able to recognize and read common words, express simple concepts through writing using inventive spelling, and read simple stories. By the end of first grade (6 years old), students should have a solid understanding of the English language, be able to read and write simple to complex sentences, and be able to communicate through writing in various forms. Literacy and writing across the curriculum remain a primary focus throughout one’s school career at SCIS.
• **How does your Mandarin program work?**
  Students receive Mandarin class everyday (unless the student has English language needs, and will then attend ESOL during this time). Classes are leveled from beginner to native speaker, and students can progress through the levels at their rate of development.

• **How does your school promote host country awareness?**
  SCIS promotes a strong Mandarin language program. The overwhelming majority of our student body chooses to study Mandarin as part of the foreign language requirement. Upper school students are assessed to determine which level of Mandarin would best suit them best and can be placed in any of the more than 10 different Mandarin levels we offer.

  We also promote host country awareness by providing opportunities to truly experience Chinese culture. The most exciting way for our students to get this is through the school’s China Trips program. For one week, our entire upper school student body abandons the classroom and travels to different parts of China. These trips last four or five days and range in a variety of locations depending on the grade level and the theme of the expedition.

  Our High School students are involved in a variety of service programs to aid the local community through our Interact Club, a subsidiary of the Rotary Club. Students volunteer at migrant school, orphanages, and grassroots foundations serving the community. The school conducts annual student led clothing and school supply drives to assist these establishments as well.

  In addition, our Chinese New Year celebration is one of the highlights of the year. Mandarin language students participate with the lower school students to present a much-anticipated event.
We are planning to go back to our home country after our stay here. How will the transition be back into our school system?

Our curriculum is designed to meet the needs of transient families. Students generally have no difficulty transitioning back to US, UK, European, or Asian school systems upon their completion of our program. Our small class sizes and individual student attention help meet the needs of all of our students and prepare them for future transitions. In addition, our various accreditations serve as official endorsements to help facilitate transition from our school to the next. SCIS Pudong is fully accredited by:

- Western Association of Schools and Colleges (www.acswasc.org)
- International Baccalaureate (www.ib.org)

School Program

What are your class sizes?

Our target class sizes are as follows:

- Nursery: ratio of 1 teacher for every 5 students, typically in classes of 10-15 students.
- Preschool: ratio of 1 teacher for every 6 students, typically in classes of 12-18 students.
- Pre-Kindergarten/Kindergarten: 18 students to one licensed teacher and aide
- Grade 1 to 5: Maximum 22 students to one licensed teacher
- Grade 6 - 12: Typical class size is generally under 20 students per section. The number of students in elective classes generally tends to be significantly lower. Some of the highest-level courses may have just three or four students per teacher.
- **When does the school start and end each day?**
  Students’ school day begins at 8:00am and ends at 3:00pm each day. After-school activities run no later than 4:00pm for Lower School students, 4:45pm for Middle School students and 6:00pm for High School students with the exception being a game day or late art performances. The school provides after school activity buses.

- **How do you communicate with parents?**
  We have many forms of communication to ensure parents stay up-to-date and involved with the school community.
  - Our interactive school web site and blog where parents can get 24-hour information. ([pd.scis-his.net](http://pd.scis-his.net))
  - Lower school teachers send out newsletters and updates their own online blog on a regular, sometimes daily basis.
  - Students and parents have access to assignments and grades through the internet using the PowerSchool, ManageBac and teacher website links found on our website.
  - Grades, as well as comments, from all of the student’s teachers are printed and distributed at each quarterly reporting period.
  - Our administrators send out a weekly newsletter informing parents of important information and upcoming events.
  - “The Dragon News” is a magazine published monthly by the school which features articles on the happenings at school.

Needless to say, communication is a top priority!

- **How do you help the new student’s transition into the class and school?**
  The transition process may begin long before your child’s arrival in Shanghai. New students are often paired with existing SCIS students through email after confirmation of enrollment and at the parents’ request. At the beginning of each semester we offer a ‘New Family Orientation’ to introduce you and your children to the school, as well as provide a comprehensive packet of information.
Once lower school students are in the class, we use proven methods to help children adjust, including assigning a ‘buddy’ and support from our student ambassador program. When upper and middle school students arrive on campus, they are paired with student leaders coaches in helping them adjust to their new setting. Once in the class, new students learn the ins and outs of the school with the guidance of peer leaders who have previously experienced the same transition.

Our teachers have a wealth of experience in helping new students transition into the class and school. We also have counselors on staff who are able to help if there are any transitional issues.

- **Do students take field trips?** Yes, all students will have the opportunity to take multiple field trips during the school year. Lower school students often travel and explore the many great opportunities in and around Shanghai, while upper school students have travel opportunities throughout China.

### Other information

- **What is the school uniform?** The school uniform is comfortable and casual.
  - Lower school students wear a dark blue trousers/shorts/skirt and the blue SCIS shirt.
  - Upper school students wear either a school issued polo shirt or an oxford button down shirt with SCIS school logo, depending on their grade level.
  - For physical education days, students where a green top with shorts or pants also provided by the school.
  - There is also a blue fleece for winter and additional jackets from home can be worn during recess.
  - Socks and shoes can be home provided and need to be appropriate for physical education class and outdoor play.
  - One uniform set is provided with tuition.
How do you select a class for my child?
Much thought, attention, and time goes into creating class lists each year. Administrators and teachers work together to create balanced classrooms, taking into account gender, nationality, ethnicity, ESOL level, and academic level, along with many other factors. Our goal is to create classrooms that are equal.

Do you encourage parent involvement?
Yes, very much so! Parents can volunteer in the classrooms and we have a wonderful Parents and Friends Association (PAFA), which is a fundamental part of the school community. PAFA helps with school events, organize fundraisers, and promote social activities.

What after school activities do you offer?
At SCIS we offer a wide variety of after school activities for all of our students. These activities cover a wide range of interests and hobbies: sports, arts and crafts, academics, technology, music, games, cooking, and so much more! See below for a small sample of the the activities we may offer:

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<th>SPORST</th>
<th>GAMES &amp; ACTIVITIES</th>
<th>ART &amp; CULTURAL</th>
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<td>• American Football (Flag)</td>
<td>• Ballroom Bonanza</td>
<td>• Dance Team</td>
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<td>• Badminton</td>
<td>• Battleship and Throwing Games</td>
<td>• Drama Productions</td>
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<td>• Basketball</td>
<td>• Beading Club</td>
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<td>• Tennis</td>
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<td>• Volleyball</td>
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<td>• Swim Teams</td>
<td>• Fun with Frisbees</td>
<td>• Guitar Club</td>
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<td>• Water Polo</td>
<td>• Memory Games</td>
<td>• LEGO Robotics</td>
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<td>• Cross Country</td>
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<td>• Classical Ballet</td>
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<th>MOTHER TONGUE</th>
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<tr>
<td>• Middle &amp; High School Student Council</td>
<td>• Calligraphy</td>
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<td>• Interact Club</td>
<td>• Chinese Spelling Bee</td>
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<td>• Model United Nations</td>
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<td>• Young Entrepreneur’s Club</td>
<td>• Paper Cutting</td>
<td>• Finnish</td>
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<td>• National Art Honor Society</td>
<td>• Chinese Story Time</td>
<td>• Portuguese (Brazilian)</td>
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<td>• Intro to Electronics</td>
<td>• Shanghai Language Club</td>
<td>• German</td>
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<td>• Project Aware</td>
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<td>• 3D Printing</td>
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Admissions Specific Questions

What is included in your tuition?

Included in tuition fees families will receive the full education program, basic supplies, free transportation between school and home, school lunches, and the first set of uniforms.

- **Transportation:** SCIS provides transportation to numerous areas across the city. We do all we can to minimize transportation time, including the use of smaller passenger vehicles and routes that limit the number of stops so that we may have faster transport times.

- **Lunches:** Daily lunches are provided by our catering company and the menu offers healthy western and eastern dishes. Our weekly menu can be viewed on our website.

- **Uniforms:** A ‘starter set’ of uniforms are provided to each family as a part of the tuition package. Likely, families will want to purchase additional items to supplement this set.

- **Technology use:** School technological resources including laptops, desktops, interactive whiteboards, and access to many online educational sites.

- **Macbook 1-to-1 Program:** Every student in grades 6-12 is loaned a laptop as part of our laptop program. A certified Apple technician is located on campus.

What extra costs over and above tuition fees will we need to pay?

Additional costs may include small, one-time amounts such as field trips, ESOL support, examinations or special events. For specific details please visit our admissions web site at:

https://www.scis-his.org/admissions/tuition-and-fees

Do you offer any tuition discounts for multi-student families?

We offer tuition discounts for families with 3 or more siblings. For specific details or questions on tuition payment, please contact our Admissions department directly: admission@scis-his.org

What medical and emergency procedures do you have in place?

We have a full-time certified nurse on campus and have direct connections to near-by hospitals where we would go in the event of an emergency. We also have a full manual of emergency procedures that staff review and practice each year.
- **Where can I find out more information about your school?**
  
  To learn more, make sure to visit our official school website at [www.scis-his.org](http://www.scis-his.org). Also, please visit the Pudong campus community website at: [pd.scis-his.net](http://pd.scis-his.net). There, you can access the daily school announcements, the lunch menu, school calendar, staff directory, the monthly Dragon News publication, and classroom pages. To get a glimpse of our facilities and learn more about our school, please visit the Information section of our website and watch our [Pudong Campus Video](http://www.scis-his.org).

- **We love your school, what is the next step?**
  
  In your admissions packet, or on our website ([www.scis-his.org/admissions/applying-scis-his](http://www.scis-his.org/admissions/applying-scis-his)) you will find instructions on how to apply online. You can prepare the form, with the other documentation—most importantly—the 2 years worth of school records. There is a RMB 2,000 application fee, which can be transferred or paid in cash at the school. The banking details are on the fees document in the admissions packet. Once we have received the completed online application, the process should take 5 working days, and then we will be able to give you the admissions decision.

- **Who should I contact if I have further questions?**
  
  Feel free to contact any of the people below.

  Derek Luebbe  
  Pudong Head of School  
  [dluebbe@scis-his.org](mailto:dluebbe@scis-his.org)

  Elizabeth Gale  
  Pudong Lower School Principal  
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