



CDNIS

UPPER SCHOOL

OVERVIEW

Our Upper School at CDNIS is a vibrant teaching and learning community of just over 1,000 students and 120 staff that prioritizes opportunities for students and seeks innovative ways to prepare students for their exciting futures. One of the unique features of the CDNIS Upper School is the intentional threading together of two very strong and highly complementary programmes: the IB programmes at both the Middle Years Programme (MYP) level and the Diploma Programme (DP) level, together with the Ontario Secondary School Diploma (OSSD).

The way these programmes work together and support each other in a highly developed continuum of learning is represented in the diagram below:

CDNIS Upper School Learning Pathway						
Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8	Grade 9	Grade 10	Grade 11	Grade 12
Upper School International Baccalaureate (IB) World School						
Transition Years						
IB Middle Years Programme (MYP)						
			Ontario Secondary School Diploma (OSSD)			
					IB Diploma Programme (DP)	

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Please note: The information in this brochure was accurate at the time of publication, August 1, 2026. As programmes, policies, fees, and other school information may change from time to time, we encourage families to visit the CDNIS website or contact us for the most current information. CDNIS reserves the right to make changes without prior notice.



GRADES 6-8 TRANSITION YEARS

The Transition Years Programme at CDNIS is a unique feature of the Upper School programme for students in Grades 6 to 8. Our faculty explicitly teach foundational learning skills alongside important content and concepts that allow students to become independent learners. Some highlights of the Transition Years Programme include:

BLENDING CORE SUBJECT AREAS

A blending of several core subject areas up to and including Grade 7 taught by one teacher replicates the rich learning experience of the Primary Years Programme and also prepares students for increased subject specialization over the coming years; an example of this would be that students in Transition Years Grades 6 and 7 will see English and humanities timetabled together and taught by the same teacher. Math and science will also be taught in a similar way by the same teacher in a focussed complementary and interdisciplinary way. This strategy means fewer teachers for students to work with, more comfortable routines and the ability to adapt skills from one class to another. In Grade 8, the teaching becomes more specialised as students begin to focus on more discrete subject areas and learning outcomes that carry them into Grade 9 and beyond. Students begin to have some choice in their fine arts courses.

DEDICATED HOMEROOM TIME

Our dedicated homeroom programme at the beginning and end of each day builds routine for our students. During this time teachers support students by ensuring a positive start to the day, that daily work and home learning is correctly recorded in student planners, sharing announcements and bringing closure to the school day. Homeroom teachers are central in our home to school partnership and are the first point of contact for any parent questions or concerns related to their child's learning and daily life in the Transition Years.

COURSES

Transition Years students study a variety of courses, including English, humanities, mathematics, science, geography, physical education, design, Mandarin, French, music, visual arts and drama.

RICH LANGUAGE LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

Students continue their Chinese language development and the Upper School Transition Years marks the first time CDNIS students begin the formal study of French.

EXTENDED HEALTH & PHYSICAL EDUCATION

In the Transition Years, more opportunities are given for students to be active and to learn about health matters which are vitally important to students at this developmental stage.

FINE ARTS IN THE TRANSITION YEARS

In the Transition Year's, students express their creativity in new ways. Formal classes include theatre, instrumental music, and visual arts. Students will also have opportunities to engage in the arts through clubs, ensembles and theatrical productions.

UNIQUE SPACE

Students in Grade 6 have their own unique space on the 8/F of the CDNIS campus. Home to a common area and surrounding lockers, students can experience a high school environment without the pressure of actually being in high school. Folding doors and whiteboard walls allow teachers to integrate classes and keep students' attention through a range of teaching styles and strategies. By providing each year group with a designated floor, CDNIS allows students to bond with their peers in an independent and safe environment.

STARTING “HIGH SCHOOL” GRADES 9-10

Grade 9 and 10 are exciting years in the CDNIS Upper School as students begin achieving their Ontario Secondary School Diploma (OSSD) credits in Grade 9 and complete their IB Middle Years Programme in Grade 10. Students in these grades experience a “high school” experience with these unique CDNIS features:

COURSE OFFERINGS

CDNIS stands out for the number of course offerings in the arts, sciences, and humanities.

INCREASED ACADEMIC RIGOUR

In Grades 9 and 10, students are expected to apply the learning skills that were developed in early grades to increasingly challenging and sophisticated problems. Students demonstrate their learning through project work as well as tests, culminating in comprehensive final exams in all academic courses at the end of the school year. Students also take the standardized Ontario Assessment of Mathematics in Grade 9 and the Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test in Grade 10.

Note that both mathematics and science are integrated in the Ontario curriculum. This means that Grade 9 and 10 mathematics courses include topics in both Algebra and Geometry, with Trigonometry and Functions also introduced in Grade 10. The integrated science courses include topics in Biology, Chemistry and Physics in both Grades 9 and 10 along with additional topics in Astrophysics and Environmental Science.

REGULAR STUDENT ADVISORY

Regular Student Advisory sees smaller groups of students interact with their teacher advisor on important non-curricular matters connected with growth and development: character, health and wellness, citizenship, building positive relationships.

EXTRA-CURRICULARS

CDNIS has distinguished itself in the number of offerings of arts, sports, and community service clubs for a school its size. For example, the CDNIS Timberwolves compete in over 20 sports offered at most age and gender levels, both within Hong Kong and in the region through SEASAC. We also host a regional MUN conference along with an international Sustainable Development Goals Summit which attracts participants from high schools and universities from around the world. In our fabulous Leo Lee Arts Centre we have hosted the South East Asia Band Festival for several years as well as numerous International Schools Theatre Association (ISTA) events.

TWO DIPLOMAS

The opportunity to graduate with **two diplomas** means students have extra scaffolded support and evidence of progress when it comes to applying for top universities. It is not double the work doing **two diplomas** because both the IB and the OSSD programmes work with interchangeable coherence, but it does provide an advantage for CDNIS students when highly selective universities are making their critical admissions decisions.

EXPLORATION OF CAREER PATHS AND FUTURE STUDIES

At this stage in their CDNIS education, students start to consider their personal interests and strengths in the context of potential careers and the post-secondary pathways that lead to them. The InterQuest careers assessment provides early insights into their talents and interests and suggests possible careers to consider. In Grade 10, all CDNIS students take the Career Studies course, in which they make connections between their skills, interests, and values and their post-secondary options, set goals and create a plan for their first post-secondary year.

Students are supported in this early planning through one-on-one academic counselling through our Guidance department. In addition, CDNIS’s dedicated University counsellors reach out to students and parents in Grades 9 and 10 to introduce the university application process and provide additional resources to families who are targeting highly selective university programmes worldwide.

We hope that you share our excitement and enthusiasm for our CDNIS Upper School! Should you wish more information about the Upper School, please do not hesitate to [send us an email](#).

ONTARIO SECONDARY SCHOOL DIPLOMA (OSSD)

The Upper School is inspected annually by the Ontario Ministry of Education and is authorized to grant credits for the Ontario Secondary School Diploma (OSSD). From Grades 9-12, students follow academic credit courses leading to the OSSD. The Ontario Minister of Education, on the recommendation of the principal, awards the OSSD to a student who has earned a minimum of 100 hours of instruction.

In order to earn the Ontario Diploma, a student must:

Earn 17 compulsory credits, including:

- 4 credits in English (1 credit per grade)
- 3 credits in mathematics (Grade 9, Grade 10, and 1 credit in Grade 11 or 12)
- 2 credits in science
- 1 credit in technological education (Grade 9 or Grade 10)
- 1 credit in Canadian history (Grade 10)
- 1 credit in Canadian geography (Grade 9)
- 1 credit in the arts
- 1 credit in health and physical education
- 1 credit in French as a second language
- 0.5 credit in career studies
- 0.5 credit in civics and citizenship
- 1 credit from the STEM-related course group

Earn 13 optional credits by successfully completing courses from the school’s program and course calendar.

In addition, each graduating student must also:

- Successfully complete the Ontario Secondary Schools Literacy Test (OSSLT)
- Successfully complete the financial literacy graduation requirement (taken during the Grade 10 Career Studies course)
- Complete 40 hours of community involvement activities*

* This requirement can be done at any time during the student’s secondary school programme. Students completing the Grade 9 Civics course as well as the CAS requirements of the IB Diploma will meet and exceed these requirements.

GRADES 11-12 DIPLOMA PROGRAMME

Canadian International School of Hong Kong is the only school outside of Canada where students can graduate with both the International Baccalaureate Diploma (IBDP) and the Ontario Secondary School Diploma (OSSD). Some universities prefer the OSSD earned credits and final scores term by term rather than the IB Diploma Programme's predicted grades, with final IB Diploma Programme grades issued only in July after a student has completed their final year of study. In this way, the dual diplomas give students a distinct advantage when applying to top universities around the globe. Students who join CDNIS at anytime from Grades 9-11 will have their transcript reviewed and are eligible for transfer credits.

INTERNATIONAL BACCALAUREATE DIPLOMA

Independence and critical-thinking skills gain more focus and students plan their own Diploma Programme of six subjects - choosing from a range of courses in Humanities, Mathematics and Sciences, plus Arts and electives options, with the DP Coordinator and Guidance Counsellors providing support every step of the way.

Students' work in Grades 11 and 12 is marked externally against established, standardized criteria. It is one reason CDNIS graduates are highly sought after by the world's leading universities and it is why they often receive university credit for their IB Higher Level courses.

SUBJECT OPTIONS

LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

- Chinese A: Language and Literature SL & HL
- English Language and Literature SL & HL
- English Literature SL & HL

LANGUAGE ACQUISITION

- Chinese B SL & HL
- Mandarin Ab Initio SL
- French B SL & HL
- French Ab Initio SL
- Spanish B SL & HL
- Spanish Ab Initio SL

INDIVIDUALS AND SOCIETIES

- Business Management SL & HL
- Economics SL & HL
- Environmental System and Societies SL & HL
- Geography SL & HL
- Global Politics SL & HL
- History SL & HL

SCIENCES

- Biology SL & HL
- Chemistry SL & HL
- Computer Science SL & HL
- Design Technology SL & HL
- Physics SL & HL
- Sports Exercise and Health Science SL & HL

MATHEMATICS

- Mathematics Analysis & Approaches SL & HL
- Mathematics Applications & Interpretations SL & HL

THE ARTS

- Film SL & HL
- Music SL & HL
- Theatre SL & HL
- Visual Arts SL & HL

THE CORE

- Theory of Knowledge

HL: Higher Level, SL: Standard Level



UNIQUE FEATURES OF THE DP AT CDNIS

While the Diploma Programme at CDNIS is unique in many ways, here are our top six:

COMPASSION AND CARE

While the challenging Diploma Programme requires individual dedication and a tremendous investment of time and effort, what sets CDNIS apart is our commitment to encouraging feelings of compassion that are manifested in acts of care and kindness. With a robust CAS programme and our annual Grade 11 retreat focused on International Mindedness, our students are taught to care for not only themselves but for proximate and distant others as well. Our policies related to assessment, academic integrity and inclusive education demonstrate a commitment to understanding our students as unique individuals that require us to balance equity and equality.

OPEN ADMISSION

All students at CDNIS can access and find success in our Diploma Programme; we have open enrollment and all students begin Grade 11 fully enrolled in the Diploma Programme. We encourage students to set their own achievement goals in the programme and support every student as they aim toward their individualized goals. While our yearly whole-school statistics bear out the hard work our students put into performing well, we are committed to celebrating the achievements of all of our students, whatever their goals might be.

THE DUAL DIPLOMA

All students at CDNIS complete the Grade 11 and 12 Ontario Secondary School Diploma requirements alongside IB's Diploma Programme. With two widely recognized Diplomas, CDNIS students embark on two simultaneous pathways to accessing the best universities in the world. In other words, CDNIS students do not choose the OSSD or the IBDP path - they benefit from both of these robust programmes.

COURSE OPTIONS

CDNIS offers a Chinese A programme so fluent Chinese speakers have an opportunity to achieve the IB's Bilingual Diploma. In addition, we offer Chinese, French and Spanish programmes for students seeking to further their fluency in one of these languages. We also offer all of the Science options that are available from the IB, six Humanities courses, and a robust Arts programme with Film, Music, Theatre and Visual Arts all on offer every year. For a programme averaging just over 100 students in each year of the programme this is a remarkable breadth of course options that is available to our students.

BALANCE

It is a given that the Diploma Programme requires an investment of time, energy and hardwork; however, students are encouraged to look beyond the rigours of the Programme and ensure they have balance in their lives. All Grade 11 and 12 students participate in an experiential leadership programme as well as our annual Experience Week where they engage in team building activities, enjoy some exercise and have an opportunity to explore the beauty of Hong Kong. Finally, throughout the two-year programme, students are provided seminars on time management, managing stress and healthy living, all in an effort to ensure students come out of the programme healthier than they were when entering it.

EXTRA COUNSELLOR SUPPORT

Each student in Grade 11 and 12 has a dedicated University counsellor who gives valuable input and guidance in the university application and selection process along with a Guidance counsellor who knows them well and gives support to their social and emotional development.

CORE IB REQUIREMENTS

CREATIVITY, ACTIVITY AND SERVICE PROGRAMME

The CAS programme exposes students to new experiences outside the classroom, develops leadership potential, and supports the development of an ethos of service. Students in Grades 11 and 12 devote approximately three hours per week to CAS activities.

EXTENDED ESSAY

The EE is a 4,000-word essay that all IB Diploma Programme students write on a topic of special interest drawn from their studies. With the guidance of an advisor, each student conducts independent research, prepares their ideas and organizes material for their essay. The skills and techniques honed in creating the Extended Essay provide valuable practice for university work.

THEORY OF KNOWLEDGE

TOK is an interdisciplinary course designed to stimulate critical thinking and reflection. It challenges to question the bases of knowledge, be aware of bias and learn to analyze the evidence used in presenting an argument. Students come to understand different points of view and how one's background can affect one's perception of truth.

CDNIS IBDP RESULTS 2022-2026

	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026
CDNIS Average IBDP Score	39	37	38	38	39
World Average IBDP Score	32	32	30	30.4	30.9
Scholarships offered	\$13M+	\$18.5M+	\$13.7M+	\$23.3M+	\$29M+

