

The International School of Macao

Settling Your Child Into TIS



To new members of the TIS community who have enrolled children at the school, we extend a warm welcome!

Moving your family from one country to another and settling your children into a new school can present huge challenges. The task of building a child's sense of belonging in his or her new environment is important to the well being of the family. It is also critically important because a settled and happy child is in the best state of readiness to learn and develop.

Expatriates potentially face the task of settling their children into a new school every three or so years, so it is important to get it right. However, parents should not feel that they must manage the transition alone. At TIS, both the parents and the school share the responsibility for a successful settling-in period.

All children are different, but when starting a new school, most children are concerned about making new friends and finding their way around. In relation to these and other worries, we have found that these practices help students settle quickly into TIS.

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1. Give children plenty of notice about the relocation.

Students settle in better if they are informed of a relocation well in advance, have said goodbyes and are prepared with people's contact details so they feel that they can stay in touch with their friends.

2. Make arrangements for pets.

Children need to be reassured that their pets are well cared for. If possible, place pets in the care of a relative or friend so a child can possibly visit the animal on a holiday.

3. Help children visualize themselves in the new environment.

If possible, bring your child to the school well before he or she is due to start. Make arrangements with us for your child to tour the school when it is in full operation, or show them photos from the prospectus or the website.

4. Provide information about the school and listen to your child's concerns.

Answer any questions he or she has and talk about the school and the new host country in a positive way. Talk to your child about the Code of Conduct for students at TIS so they know what to expect.

5. Arrive in Macau well in advance of school starting and get used to new wake-up and bedtime routines.

Ensure that your child or children are well over jetlag before starting school and are used to drinking water throughout the day (Macau can be very hot and humid and staying hydrated is very important).

6. Have familiar things around.

Many children start at TIS while living in temporary accommodations before a new home has been located. Children feel more comfortable when they have items that are special to them close by. Make sure special photos or toys are bought with you on the plane.

7. Get uniforms, shoes and all materials needed for school well in advance.

Reduce anxieties by buying everything that a child needs to start school early.

8. Help your child make new friends.

Provide your child with opportunities to be with other students from the school. Invite children to your home and consider enrolling your child in an after-school activity.

9. Focus on routines.

Focus on your child's daily and weekly routine. Help your child to become very familiar with his or her new schedule.

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10. Settle the family into the school community.

Volunteering to help in the classroom and becoming active in the TIS Parents' Association (TISPA) is the best way for parents to develop a sense of belonging in the school community. Attend TISPA coffee mornings for newcomers to help make new friends.

11. Communicate with the class teacher.

Provide and seek early feedback on how your child is doing.

12. Emphasize the familiar things in your child's life.

In times of great change, stress the constant, such as family traditions and upcoming holidays to familiar places.

The tips above are especially relevant for students entering kindergarten and elementary grades. However, students entering middle and high school often have additional concerns. Teenagers prefer less parental involvement in their settling-in period and look to their peers for guidance.

Here are some tips to help senior school students settle in quickly:

13. Set up an e-mail address.

Check it is working from the first day of school. Seniors frequently communicate about class work and special activities via e-mail. Be "in the loop" from the start through e-mail.

14. Before starting, spend time at the school when other students are on site.

Meeting others informally before starting can help make the first day much easier.

15. Communicate with your teacher.

Senior school students should communicate effectively with their assigned teacher and inform the teacher of any academic, logistical or social difficulty before it develops into a problem.

16. Take advantage of opportunities to meet people.

Participate in a co-curricular activity, travel on the school bus and introduce yourself positively to others within the school.

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17. Give everyone and all activities a chance and avoid superficial or quick judgments.

We are pleased to say that by far the vast majority of students settle into TIS very quickly. However, there are always some children who need a bit more time to adjust. When starting a new school, every child needs support and understanding and this is best provided by the school and parent partnership.

18. Take advantage of school's counselors.

TIS has two counselors able to meet with students and parents as necessary. Counseling is available in English and Cantonese and is confidential. Many students and families have found his service to be very beneficial.