



# MULTIPLE INTELLIGENCE SCHOOL HANDBOOK

SUVA, FIJI ISLANDS, 2025

Established and Recognised by Fiji Ministry of Education (SF:8239)

**Is this a brochure for a school or a dolphinarium?**

This is the handbook for a primary and secondary school. Please see the inside page of this handbook for an explanation for the dolphin picture.

# Welcome

“Civilisation is in a race between education and catastrophe”

H.G. Wells

We are excited to be working with your child at our primary & secondary school levels where we are involved in helping to lay down the foundations which will serve your child for the rest of her or his life.

The School is a privately owned & managed by the Senior Educators. It receives no financial assistance or subsidies from the government or any other organisations. However, we are an established and recognised primary school with Fiji's Ministry of Education from Class 1-8 (SF: 8239). We opened our doors in January 2008.

## Why is there a picture of a dolphin on our front cover?

Our logo at the top of this page, features a dolphin silhouette with the words 'MIS' forming part of the body. The dolphin sits on top of the points of a compass. We have chosen the dolphin as an animal that represents 'intelligence'. The compass represents teaching and learning, the compass directions emphasises our roles as facilitators and pointers in different directions for a child's own learning.

So our handbooks have always featured the beauty and majesty of dolphins and dolphin species.

Multiple Intelligence School Handbook  
Suva, Fiji Islands, 2019



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Multiple Intelligence Centre Handbook  
Suva, Fiji Islands



2010

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If you are a first time parent then this section is to help orientate you around our hand book.

The first section is administrative. You should find everything from our timetable, what uniform to wear, the costs, disciplinary procedures, and what tools your child (and you) will need. Don't worry there is a table of contents on the next page.

The second section is concerned with the educational aims of the Multiple Intelligence School. In this section there will be more information about our curriculum; the manner in which we teach; the way we know that your child is (or isn't) learning; and on overview of the broad aims across the whole school.

The third section is more to do with our approach and our philosophy. This is the something that you need not worry about immediately (although if you spoke with us prior to enrollment we probably spoke about this), but you can probably come back to it at a later date.

Finally the last section is a brief description on who we are and the final page should be summary information for quick and easy reference.

Dive on in!



# MIS in Brief

- A maximum of 15 children in a class.
- A strong family atmosphere in which to learn.
- A theoretical frame work that acknowledges different ways of knowing about the world, which guides our teaching practice. giving children different pathways to understanding.
- A curriculum that is constantly evolving but has an original basis in benchmarks developed by New Zealand Qualifications Authority.
- A hybrid teaching & learning environment. Students spend time face to face, and complete their schooling every day in a distance learning (online) environment.
- Incorporation of ‘*synthetic phonics*’ for faster and superior performance in reading & writing.
- An emphasis on learning for ‘*real world*’ or *authentic activities* with appropriate assessments that grade the real world or authentic performance.
- A strong emphasis on ‘survival’ particularly for our younger pupils in: swimming; road awareness and crossing; as well as bush walking.
- Customised activities that engage the senses for learning, either individually or in groups.
- A secular school that nevertheless places high value on strong ethical and moral behaviour both socially and in the environment.
- Extended (more than a few nights away) field trips on at least three distinct occasions in their thirteen years schooling with us.
- Staff trained in basic First Aid
- Fiji’s first school to have a child protection code policy.
- Instilling a love of learning, as well as ‘learning to learn’ skills.

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## Administrative Staff

### Annual Forms to Sign

Every year parents are asked to sign two forms at the beginning of the year.

#### Generic Waiver Form

This waiver form essentially states that MIS will not be held accountable should an accident occur to your child **IE**, we have taken reasonable precautions to ensure the wellbeing and safety of your child. The waiver forms covers both within the school and moving around the Suva and Greater Suva area including Nausori and the Nausori corridor. This enables us to go on trips in and around Suva and Nausori and not have to annoy you with waiver forms every time that happens.

If we go outside of these areas though, another waiver form will be presented to you.

#### Mandatory Curriculum & Willing to Try and Learn

The other form to sign covers two areas.

1. The first is that all parts of the curriculum are mandatory. We have had to include this because some parents feel that, for example, that it is unfair to ask that their child does swimming if they do not feel in the mood, or be 'forced' to take part in drama sessions etc. Our programme is a holistic one that educates all parts of a student's personality and development.
2. The second is that your child has to be willing to try and learn. Children sometimes do not feel motivated or attempt to want to engage in the learning process. If, after repeated attempts, it is clear that a student simply does not want to learn – or learn with our approach – then we feel it is wasting the student's time, the parent's resources and of course our efforts. At this point we invite the students to leave MIS. Signing this part of the form tells us that you have stated that you

understand this part of our process

### School Term and Holidays

There are 39 weeks of instruction for the year spread over four terms. Three of the terms (1, 3 & 4) have 10 weeks and one of the terms (2) has 9 weeks. The current dates for 2021 are:

- Term 1: 29th January – 5th April
- Term 2: 15th April – 14th June
- Term 3: 1st June – 6th September
- Term 4: 2nd September – 29th November

### Weekly Timetable

We actually have quite a full timetable. For one thing, our main face to face activities occur in the mornings. There is a pedagogic reason for this which is try and avoid the hottest part of the day.

We start early (8:00 am) and we finish at 13:00 pm. There are two mini breaks during the morning, so we suggest packing enough for two wee snacks. After pick up from school, there is a schedule that expects that children will be working at home for at least between 20 minutes and up to 2 hours depending on the **Pod** (our name for 'class') level that they are at.

### Students' Tools

We expect your child to come with the following items:

#### Pods 1-3

- Pencil case
- Pencils & Pencil sharpener
- Eraser
- Ruler
- Crayons

#### Pods 4 – 6

- Coloured pens (twist top)





- Medium sizes scissors
- Paper glue stick
- Ink fountain pen

### Pods 7 – 10

- Dictionary & Thesaurus
- Atlas

### Pods 11 – 13

- Scientific calculator
- Access to internet after school.

All other materials will be provided by the school.

## Uniform

We do have a school uniform, but it is not completely rigid.

### Upper Body

It is a cotton (not nylon, or other synthetic material) T- shirt, V-neck, polo-neck, or collared shirt. Short or long sleeves. No holes or tears (please repair these as soon as possible, and before they become too big to repair them). Children have the choice of five plain colours upper garments to choose from.

- Sea Blue
- Purple
- Sun Yellow
- Grass Green
- Rustic Orange

### Lower Body

This is accompanied by shorts, trousers, skirts or pocket-sulus (no colour specified). No lower body garment should be shorter than the mid-upper thigh.

### Shoes

Sensible shoes that have a proper strap around the heel such as shoes, sandals with heel strap, 'canvas' or 'trainer' sports shoes & 'Croc' shoes. Essentially we want shoes that children can run and play in

without tripping over, or hurting their feet.

Your child might have to bring along specialised shoes for special occasions such as doing a field trip to a farm or a mangrove swamp, or engaging in sporting activities.

If your child wants to wear a flip-flop at school inside the classroom, they can bring this along and even leave it at school BUT they must enter and leave the school with their strapped heel shoes. If they play outside they must put their heel strapped shoes on.

## What we Do NOT Allow

As 'loose' as our uniform is, there are certain things that we do not want children to wear at school. Please be advised that these are really for the safety and comfort of your children whilst they are at school.

- No high heeled shoes.
- No shorts, or skirts that are above the mid-upper thigh.
- No 'outfits' which expose the midriff.
- No exposed dangling, or hooped adornments (earrings, necklaces, bracelets) even if they are part of a student's religion.
- No make-up.

We want your children to feel that they are part of our school, on the other hand we want children to acknowledge their individuality, hence this rather 'loose' uniform. Please as parents, ensure that your child comes in clothes that are practical and 'smart' (no holes or tears please).

Exercise common sense when dressing your children. If you child comes in expensive 'designer label' clothes do not expect that (i) our teachers will recognise them as such and; (ii) that your child will be any more careful with them, possibly with the result of them being hard to clean or repair from the rough and tumble of the normal school day.





Evening performance leads to a NZ *haka* by the boys.

## Additional Clothing Required

### Swimming

Our survival swimming days tend to be quite intensive in terms of getting in and out of the water and especially getting in and under the water. We would highly recommend that your child has a good pair of swimming goggles.

If the swimming costume is not a full sleeved 'rash vest' and shorts, then in particular for the girls we think that the best swimming costume to have is a one piece swimsuit with crossed shoulder straps. No bikini or 'designer' swim wear.

For girls that are menstruating we advise a shammy cloth or towel. Please talk to our staff if you or your daughter has concerns about swimming during the time of the month, we feel that this is no impediment to doing the swimming training. We should know as our own female staff still swim and some of us have been training in swimming clubs and this has not stopped up from continuing our training (and no we do not advocate using tampons). have done so

We would also recommend a high sun screen swimming top (60PF) to protect against our tropical sun.

It's not necessary but also a pair of flippers can help enormously to gain the survival skills the children learn with us.

### Walking Shoes & a Hat

Your children learn to walk next to roads and cross them safely, as well as learning how to do some basic bush walking. For that some sensible walking shoes are required. They do not need to be state of the art walking shoes, but they do need to be comfortable to walking in for at least 40 minutes of walking across terrain that will be 'off road', and therefore liable to get a bit muddy and wet.

### "Dressing Up"

Occasionally we ask the children to dress up in a theme of one sort or another but this is optional and we inform the parents in advance.

## Safety, Medical Emergencies & Health Policies

### Drop off and Pick-up Safety

The drop off and pick up of children represents to us the biggest safety issue, please use extreme caution when entering and leaving the drop off and pick up area.

**PLEASE BE CAREFUL PICKING UP & DROPPING OFF YOUR CHILD**

Children may even under the supervision of their parents, suddenly dart out into the road.

### Medical Emergencies

MIS has basic first aid kits and a defibrillator and our staff are trained in first aid. However, in the event of a medical emergency, and should the school be unable to reach the parent (or if the child needs emergency medical attention that cannot wait until the parent or guardian is contacted), your child will be taken for treatment. Costs of any emergency treatment are to be paid or reimbursed by the parent.

### Health

Please be considerate to your child, the other children at the school and of course the school staff if your child appears to be ill or sick. Please make arrangements to keep them at home, particularly if he/she has:

- A fever or has had one in the past 24 hours.
- A constant cough, wheezing, green nasal discharge, vomiting or diarrhoea.
- The symptoms of communicable diseases are usually *sniffles*, reddened eyes, sore throat, headache, or abdominal pain plus fever.



And then ...

... there was a guitar lesson. This was prompted by the students rather than formally set up by the teacher.



Remember that we live in the tropics where it is quite easy to transmit what might be affectionately known as unwanted 'pets' such as mites (scabies), fungi (ringworm), head lice, contact viruses (verruca) and other undesirables. If your child has contracted these unwelcome travelers (there is no shame in this, just a fact of where we live) please be considerate to the other children in the school and take appropriate measures to ensure that they do not pass them onto the other children.

### Post COVID-19 World & Masks

The global pandemic of COVID-19 throughout the world in 2020 hit us just like it did the rest of the globe. Fiji has been very fortunate to have not had community transmission enter into our population. One of the reasons it did not do so was partly by ensuring that the population maintained social distancing rules in strict lock down; wore masks; and wiped down surfaces. MIS practiced this during 2020 too.

In 2021 despite the rapid development of vaccines, the need to maintain vigilance remains strong. Nor do we predict that this will be the last of these kind of health emergencies.

For this reason we ask that all students have access to face masks. From time to time we will practice having our face masks on in school so that the children are used to moving and operating around with facial masks on.

### Discipline

Despite the best of intentions, it would be impossible to teach more than four children in any class without the ability to impose some sort of structure or order. We provide timely and appropriate instruction to maintain self control, mutual respect and a reminder to listen to instructions.

The school does not believe it is our job to be giving out punishments to students. Therefore we do NOT subject your child to corporal discipline; nor do we deliberately try to embarrass or belittle your child.

However, if your child does not respond to our instructions and we feel it is necessary to take it to the next level, we will hand over to you the parents to discipline appropriately. Some actions we may take include (in increasing order of severity):

- The child's attention being diverted to a new activity.
- Talking to the child and giving reasons for doing things another way.
- Privileges denied by withholding something relating to the inappropriate behaviour;
- A visit to a co-Director for a talk
- Parent, teacher, and/or co-Director interview.

### Student Romantic Relationships

We have a strict policy that no romantic relationships are to occur between the students. If there is a romantic relationship that develops, then one of the students will have to leave MIS.

### Child Protection Policy

MIS was the first school in Fiji to have a child protection policy. We developed ours in conjunction with expertise from Australia. All our staff members sign up to this policy. You can download a copy from our web site.

### Leaving MIS Early

There are a few instances in which students leave MIS other than either coming to the end of their natural learning career with us, or because parents have to move away from Suva. It is worth being mindful of these things:

- Parents just feel that MIS is not right for their child's education. We can assure you that if this is the case, no ill will or bad feelings are incurred. As much as we bond to the children at school, they are of course your children and you are in the end, responsible for your child's





education.

- Parents sometimes recognise only later after the child has been enrolled, that they do not feel comfortable for the values and criteria that we support and promote. For instance one area where this has happened is when we make it clear that all parts of the curriculum are mandatory and then the parents realise that their child is doing something that they feel is against their personal family values.
- A child simply refuses to engage or does not want to learn.
- Students at school have a romantic relationship and they are not prepared to discontinue the relationship.
- Criminal activity.
- Non payment of fees.

## Respect & Manners

At MIS we think it is essential that students show respect to their fellow students and the rest of the MIS community as well as to guests that come to MIS. However, we also feel that respect is earned and not awarded or given. The key then is *mutual respect* that should be demonstrated.

On the one hand if we say 'Good Morning' to your child and they do not respond, then we will usually hop in front of them and explain that we would appreciate a 'Good Morning' back to us. We are not telling anyone off here, we are just explaining the idea of mutual respect.

On the other hand you will find that students address the adult staff members of MIS by their first names: not 'Ma'am' or 'Sir', nor 'Mr. John', or 'Mrs. Sara' but simply 'John' or 'Sara'. We feel that if we are entitled to call them by their first names, then they should be entitled to the same. Some parents are confused by this apparent 'lax' attitude but we can assure you that the children are in fact learning about mutual respect and if anything our outside guests have often commented on how polite and respectful our students are in contrast to other school children.

An old phrase we advocate is 'With your cap in hand, you can travel through the whole land', meaning essentially to show polite manners, people will normally go out of their way to help you. So we do insist on good manners as we feel that it helps our students later on in life.

We also have a policy of not encouraging 'swearing' which developing students like to explore as a way of apparently being an adult. We are not so puritan to state that it is immoral to swear, but rather have the rather pragmatic approach that have rather colourful speech too frequently, means that the power of such an expletive is lost. Some parents from our middle and senior years have raised an eyebrow that we don't specifically 'ban' swearing. However, we do question it's usefulness if it's used just a filler to apparently sound adult.

Having said that, we do NOT tolerate any sexist, racist, ageist or other discriminatory language.

## School Meetings & Restorative Justice

Every week, the school meets and is run by a selected panel of students who take on the role of *Facilitator* (aka Chair), *Scribe* (aka Secretary) and *Ombudsperson* ('Co Chairperson?'). As well as 'Fidget police'. One element of this innovative school meeting is that children may bring up issues or complaints against another student - and even potentially teaching staff, at MIS. If a student or teacher accepts the charge or issue, then they may suggest a restorative action to try and 'make good' their relationship with the relevant party. If they cannot find a suitable act, then the panel may suggest something that is agreeable to all parties. If the issue is not resolved at the school meeting, then it may move into the Disciplinary Committee. In 14 years of operation we have rarely had an issue moved from the 'Restorative Justice' section of the school meeting, onto the School Disciplinary Meeting.





Our swimming programme is based on survival swimming rather than on competitive swimming. We encourage our children who are keen swimmers to join any of the swimming clubs that exist in Suva



## Meeting MIS Staff Members

If you need to speak to an MIS staff member, you are invited to chat to them at school either during drop off, or pick up, or during the designated breaks. Coming in during the actual teaching times is not advised simply because they will be working with the students. However, it is always possible to set up a meeting by talking to the office and setting up a mutually agreeable meeting time. You can also try setting up a direct time with the teacher via email as long as it is a few days ahead – in other words do not be disappointed if you email requesting a meeting in 30 minutes on the same day – and you do not seem to get a positive answer.

## Meeting the Principal

MIS does not have a Principal!

However, there is an 'Inner Management Circle' who consist of three co-Directors of the school. Each of them has as much discretionary power and authority as the others. If you need to speak to a senior staff member at MIS then please ask to speak to either of the co-Directors. In 2025 they are: Jieni Elaisa; Robin Taylor; Sofia Koroi.

## Visiting your Child at MIS

We have no problem if you feel you would like to visit your child in class at any time. If you just want to sit and observe what is happening, then please feel free to join the class. We do have one rule though and that is that if you stay longer than 10 minutes, then we request that you join the class with us, ie as an active participant.

Having said that, we have also found that for our youngest children just starting in their first year, that the presence of a parent does not actually help them settle. So in this case the Pod teacher might explain that it might be better for your child for you to initially not turn up to the classes, so that your child can get a sense of independence

## Fees

There are three types of fees:

1. an initial child deposit fee,
2. an annual administration fee,
3. and the actual tuition fees for each term.

## Child Refundable Deposit Fee

Every child admitted needs to pay a refundable deposit of \$1000. It is a one-off fee that occurs only on initial admission. When the child leaves, the deposit is returned at the beginning of the academic year following the child's permanent departure from the school.

## Administration Fee

An annual administration fee of \$700 is charged to secure a slot for your child year at the Centre's. The administration fee has to be paid in full even if the child does not attend or start in the first term of the year.

The fee is due in the November before the following year starts.

Normally no refund is given, even if the child does not attend or start in the first term of the year unless exceptional conditions apply.

## Term (teaching) Fees

We prefer it if term fees are paid in advance and certainly no later than the first week into the term. For those parents that are able to pay in advance of every term, we offer a 3.5% discount on the term fees. For those that can pay the whole year's tuition in advance, we offer a 7% discount.

The normal term fees are \$1047.50 per term for Pods 1-8, and \$1,235.00 per term for Pods 9-13.

Thus the total, inclusive of enrolment and four term teaching fees is \$4,890 (Class 1-8) and \$5,640 (Class 9-13).

## Refunds and Exemption of Fees

If during the child's first four weeks in the Centre, it is evident that the child is not well adjusted or happy at the centre and it is necessary to withdraw the child, a refund of all but a \$100.00 handling fee.

No fee reduction is made if a child is away for part of the school year. Some parents ask if they can travel abroad for a term and not pay for that term or part of the term. We do not do this. The splitting of the fees into term blocks is for convenience and/or easier financial management.

Every year we do have to turn away potential pupils whose parents would pay for the full fees.



# The Stuff Behind MIS's Approach



## Aims

The Multiple Intelligence School's philosophy can be summed up in two sentences:

1. Giving children a love of learning.
2. Teaching them how to teach themselves.

We believe that if our students have these two qualities then they will be prepared for a world that is constantly changing.

## Like (even love) Learning

In years 1-8 we aim to give your child a genuine ability to recognise that they are learning and that they enjoy it.

We believe that today's children will be '*lifelong learners*'. Not that it was not desirable or previously neglected before today's environment, but it seems inevitable that today's children will have to relearn and re-skill as the pace of technology and change in our global society has rapidly increased (and shows no sign of slowing down). Hence they need to be able to teach themselves even after they have left the formal education sector and entered into adult life.

Since they are going to be learning all their lives, it makes no sense that they do not inherently enjoy learning. If they actually have an aversion to learning, this will make their future adult lives, that much more difficult. Our teaching focus is on foundation building. We aim to instil in your child an understanding of the usefulness of 'learning'. If your child perpetually feels that they do not want to learn, then we feel we have failed her or him.

We're not suggesting that every learning opportunity will be or can be incredible fun, but we certainly strive to make as much of it 'fun' so as to exploit the naturally inquisitive nature of children at this age. If we can have children leave our primary school programme without thinking that school as a learning environment is a burden, and that the children themselves understand that there is value in learning, then they are in the perfect state to enter into a secondary school

system which teaches them more about 'learning how to learn'.

## Learning How to Teach Oneself

If a child grows up and knows how to teach themselves and they enjoy the learning process, then they are set up for a world that is changing in fundamental ways that is far faster than we have previously been used to.

The way that we teach this (for years 9-13) is to put the onus on the student to manage their own time, their own schedule and their own self discipline to complete their work. We start off in year 9 gradually giving more autonomy to the students so that by year 11 they are pretty much doing something far closer to a study schedule that is found in tertiary education.

We often hear of a metaphor that children need to be 'pushed' through their school. We do NOT push our students. But we do '*pull*' the students and, if they want, we '*pull*' them very hard. It is up to them.

Students will set the timetable when they want lessons, how long for and often either with others in their class, or by themselves.

If a student does not complete their work (such as projects) for a particular year, that work carries over to the next year. If they do not finish the work before they leave MIS, then their transcript will state that this year has not been completed.

Our rationale is that students need to understand the consequences of not wanting to engage in the learning process. MIS is a relatively 'safe' place to learn consequences of not engaging in managing their own learning; unlike a tertiary institution, where one may be asked to leave if work is not completed, or a paid job where one's position maybe terminated.

## MIS Values

In addition to the educational values that we aim to give our students, we also have strong values that we aim to give our students. Despite being a





secular school, we are very strong on humanistic values. We believe that courtesy, grit, honesty, honouring your word, helpful without being prompted and so on, are all elements that will help your child in their future adult lives.

Two qualities we are especially keen on for our student (it is the closest that MIS has to a motto).

1. The first is to be a responsible citizen. We feel that as much as human rights are important, we notice that rarely do we speak of human responsibilities. There are two specific areas where we target responsibilities. They are:
  - a. Being environmentally responsible. Our actions as responsible citizens of the world should not willfully or deliberately harm our environment.
  - b. Being socially responsible. We could count this as part of the environmental responsibility, but we feel it is important to specifically state that we strive to not cause significant harm to our societies. An example may help to clarify this. There is no doubt that the senior executives of the huge energy company Enron from the 1990s, were smart individuals. Were they ethical though? We do not want our students to become the future versions of Enron executives.
2. The second quality is the feeling that overall one is content with life. This concept is easier to explain but harder to write down succinctly. One way that we have found to describe our intent is that we do not want any of our graduating students to be a 'candidate for a mid life crisis'. We think one way to this can occur is if any person feels that they can positively contribute in their chosen sphere of influence (family, village, province, nation, globe - take your pick). We engage in conversations that help our students recognise and acknowledge the arenas that they enjoy and are strong in, versus those that would need additional support and help.

## What a Curious Name for a School!

Our name comes from the theory of *Multiple Intelligences* developed in the early 1980s but Harvard developmental psychologist Howard Gardner.

This theory states that people are not assessed as 'intelligent' by a single dimension such as an IQ score; instead we all possess different ways of understanding and processing information from the world. Some of us can think well with words, whilst others think well with numbers or logic. Yet others understand people very well and some of us have a good understanding of orientation and spatial features. Some of us can move our bodies very well in sport, or dance, whilst others are naturally musically inclined.

*Multiple Intelligence Theory* **does not** dictate an educational practice, but rather it gives us a framework with which to guide it. Children are given multiple ways of understanding topics and expressing their understanding of their topics.

Most educational practices (ie the 'normal' educational approaches) give priority to understanding and expression of understanding through only two 'intelligences: language and mathematical skills. If you're not skilled in these two areas, then regardless of your people skills, or spatial awareness, conventional schools tend to rate these students as being far more 'deficient' than they really are.

One way to think of this is we invited people to consider their own time in school in a class. Often people can remember class mates who were very 'C' grade or average; yet when they leave school they often flourish as a leader; and entrepreneur; an artist etc. We think that often these are the students that were not recognised because they did not have sufficient maths and language skills at that time in their childhood.

## Different Intelligences

There are eight / nine intelligences. They are:





Sofi takes the children for a discovery walk along the beach on Leluvia Island.

1. Musical Intelligence.
2. Kinaesthetic Intelligence. Body awareness.
3. Logical-Mathematical Intelligence.
4. Language intelligence.
5. Spatial Intelligence. Orientation & the use of space.
6. Interpersonal Intelligence. Ability to 'read' people,
7. Intrapersonal Intelligence. Ability to know one's self.
8. Naturalistic Intelligence. Ability to see systems and their inter-connections (such as an ecosystem).
9. Existential Intelligence. Ability to 'ask big questions'.

## Curriculum

Curriculum refers to what we teach.

Our curriculum was initially based on the New Zealand Qualifications Authority. Whilst it is still broadly based on this curriculum it has been adapted since we first started the school to be more relevant to the Fiji situation whilst retaining the foundational elements of the original NZQA's approach. We originally chose the New Zealand curriculum for two principle reasons:

1. It fitted (and still fits) in well with our philosophy (see above) and;
2. It provides benchmarks rather than a rigid curriculum. There are eight essential learning disciplines covered:
  1. English language;
  2. Science;
  3. Technology;
  4. Second language;
  5. Social studies;
  6. Mathematics;

7. Arts;
8. Health & well being.

We place a heavy emphasis on being physically safe. Our Class 1 & 2 children spend a lot of time on learning how to swim, learning how to cross the roads and walk along them, and how to walk safely through bush or along the sea shore.

We have a strong emphasis on personal skills, both in terms of knowing others and knowing oneself. Furthermore we strive to instil humanistic codes of ethics and morality, simply put to respect the world we live in, treat others with dignity & courtesy, to be honest and courageous. We believe that a strong core of ethics and morality is part and parcel of a child's holistic development and is part of a child's mental and emotional safety.

Even though we explained before that the Theory of Multiple Intelligences highlights that there are more than language and maths skills in explaining how a child is 'intelligent', we are of course concerned with language and numerical literacy. They are still valued skill sets that service our other teaching and learning, and we try to maximise a child's natural psychological development cycles to attain these literacies as thoroughly as possible.

## Pedagogy

Pedagogy refers to how we teach.

We tend to have an activity approach to our teaching that embeds our teaching into something that the children are far more able to see the relevance to why they should learn about something. Activities also allow our children to have a variety of different paths into a topic that they are learning about. This fits in well with the notion that children have different strengths in the way that they understand and interact with their environments (their different *intelligences*). Our teaching is also not strictly delimited into maths or geography classes. Our teaching recognises opportunities in many topics to support other disciplines. So fractions or percentages might



School visit to the Meditation Centre just outside Nadi to be taught about the architecture of the centre by Swami Tadananda.



come in a biology lesson; comparing the relative lengths of time that dinosaurs lived compared to mammals for instance.

We have found inspiration from the *Montessori* and *Waldorf-Steiner* schools. Like the Montessori and Waldorf-Steiner approach, we have a strong multi-sensorial approach to teaching. That means that we might use, music, dance and art to help us in our learning of language, maths or science.

### Children are Unique Learners

Children have different strengths or weaknesses in different arenas or *intelligences*. Children are more likely to try and understand the world through the arena or *intelligence(s)* that they are naturally stronger in. A *multiple intelligence* inspired school tries to offer at least some degree of individualised educational programme in recognition of this fact.

### Holistic Education with Relative Greater Emphasis on Arts

Since there are multiple entry points to a topic the education as a whole tends to be more holistic. This means that many schools that use a multiple intelligence approach are perceived to have a relatively greater emphasis on arts. This is not to say that such schools promote arts more (than science, ICT or economic subjects). Rather relative to many schools today, we still believe that both visual and performing arts is an essential part of a child's education.

### Many Entry Points to an Educational Topic

To at least some degree, *multiple intelligence* orientated schools tend to provide more than one way for a pupil to understand a topic. This means that a child may have a better chance of 'entering' into understanding a topic if these 'multiple entry points' match up with an intelligence domain that they feel more comfortable with.

### Mandatory Field Trips

Education at its best, does not just teaching abstract concepts, but it also tries to showcase how these concepts apply in the real world. The best way to do that is to go into the real world and

interact/observe/play with it. Field trips are the best way to do this and of course we do many excursions into the greater Suva area and other times we go out of Suva for the day.

In 2016 we started to plan for a significantly new component of our children's education and that is three mandatory field trips that work with children at the Pod 5 level, Pod 8 level and Pod 11 & 12 level. It would mean your child spending significant time away from home (2 weeks to potentially 20 weeks) but under the supervision of three to four adults for the group. During this time children will still continue doing their set curriculum but it will be in the context of learning their second language (Fijian, Rotuman or French) as a total immersion programme; but they will also be doing components of an Environmental Award programme. All students entering for the first time to MIS from 2017 are required to go on the relevant field trips at the relevant year. As of 2021, we still have not locked in an appropriate field trip experience for the senior years (Pods 11 & 12).

### Apprentice Model is Utilised More

Where possible we try to incorporate teaching models that are more akin to an 'apprentice' model where children might be working with an acknowledged expert in a field. This might be one of our own teachers, or indeed some of our parents, or people that we know of that exist in the community. Children with either the strong motivation or identified intelligences for a specific skill set are invited to be partnered as an *apprentice*. This might come across more like a club or hobby but in fact we believe that these are valuable teaching opportunities.

### Assessment

Assessment refers to how we know that a student has learned.

The traditional notion of an assessment is probably best summed up as an examination. For most of us brought up in an traditional western styled schools, the examination is the necessary burden that we must overcome in order to advance. The pressure is so great that students the





MIS children and two time Tongan Olympian Pita Taufatafua pose for a group photo. MIS was the only school that Pita came to visit to give an inspirational talk to the children about what it takes to succeed in life.

world over have been very inventive in figuring out how to gain an edge by cheating.

For us, we think assessments are actually a gift that allows the student, and ourselves the teachers, to figure out if learning has occurred. If a student is assessed and the results suggest that learning has not occurred then we know that there is a hole in the student's learning. Either they did not understand what we were saying, perhaps because we were clumsy in our explanation; or they simply did not do the work (not motivated - lazy?); or a mixture of both.

**Assessments are NOT a judgement of character.**

We use a variety of different assessments including:

- i. Oral assessments ('Tell me what you understand by the term *respiration*').
- ii. Written assessments (most likely recognised as a traditional 'exam').
- iii. Self assessments ('Rate on a scale of 1-10 how you think you did and provide evidence how you came to this assessment').
- iv. Assessments of others, mostly in group work.
- v. Demonstrations. ('Show me that you can do this task').
- vi. Opportunistic assessments. ('I've noticed that Sara is more confident in getting up to talk in a School Meeting').

One thing that we DO tell our students is that whatever assessment they are given, it has NO BEARING on their worth or value as a human being. They are just as good (or not so good) after the assessment as before the assessment took place.

We provide biannual reports in the main topic

areas that explain these strengths and weaknesses as well as parent-teacher interviews to help explain these reports.

Some parents may feel that our assessments may offer a 'buffet' approach with the danger that their child might suffer from having such a mixture. We would like to assure our parents that this is not the case. Our assessments offers students an excellent grounding with which to enter either a secondary school system in any English speaking school such as those in Fiji, New Zealand or Australia.

Our secondary assessments which are based on the New Zealand Qualifications Authority's *National Certificate of Educational Achievement* (NCEA). This is explained in a comprehensive transcript that the students receive when they leave.

Although we are a young school, there have been students that have left MIS either in Year 12 (Form 6) and have transferred to other post secondary educational institutions, such as Foundation studies at the University of the South Pacific or acceptance into undergraduate diplomas in Fiji National University. Others have left at Year 13 (Form 7) and have achieved acceptance into reputable overseas University.

In other words you can feel assured that your child is not 'locked' in our school's learning and teaching approach.



## Who are We?

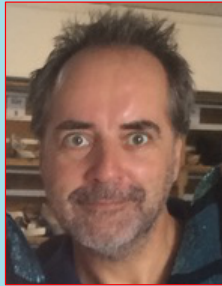
We have two tiers of teaching staff. The management directors who are also senior-educators, and educators. From time to time we may also have assistant teachers associated with the MIS who are either doing volunteer work, or who are doing training experience. Despite the vast years of experience that our staff have, we still believe that no teacher's education is ever 'finished'. We continue to attend workshops or professional development courses either organised here or by travelling abroad. The current full time teaching staff are:



Ms. Sofia Koroi - Academic Director. More than 26 years of teaching experience. Sofia is a child of the land, with a love for gardening, flowers and planting.



Ms. Jieni Marike - Pedagogic Director since 2010. Jieni is the lead pioneer in our extended Rotuma field trips, and is also helping to pioneer our swimming for survival programme.



Dr. Robin Taylor - Curriculum Director. Research psychologist. 21 years of university teaching. Robin was born and bred in Northern Europe but who has figuratively and literally married into the Pacific.



Ms. Zhanna Mukhametzhanova - Educator since 2021



Ms. Kelly Finiasi - Educator since 2017 at MIS. Kelly is came to MIS with a wealth of experience in public schools and who was interested in the progressive nature of MIS.



Ms. Courtney Underwood, Educator since 2023 at MIS. Courtney has training in early childhood education and has been a regular fixture in the Suva library doing youth arts and crafts.

Ms. Shirlyn Singh - Educator since 2021 at MIS. Shirlyn is an experienced educator who was a co-founder of the Montessori Kindergarten in Lami Town.



Mr. Vishal Raj - Assistant Educator since 2017 at MIS. Vishal is completing his teaching degree at the University of the South Pacific.





## Why Did We Start MIS?

Primarily (pun intended), we started this school because we think there is a gap in educational offerings that provide the holistic and grounded education that is most likely to maximise a child's potential. As educators, we felt frustrated that we were not fully able to help children 'spread their wings'.

Secondly, we recognised that there remains a shortage of schools that provide high educational standards at a price that is affordable to the majority of local (Fiji citizen) middle income earners.

Thirdly, we understand that parents want continuity in their child's education. We feel that we are a natural extension to a number of Early Childhood Educational establishments which favour a more Montessori or Waldorf-Steiner style of teaching.

Finally because we are committed to the nation and we believe that real development (rather than band aid solutions) will only come from investing in the education of our children. We sincerely believe that we're helping to educate the innovative and lateral thinkers as well as the leaders of tomorrow.

## Contacting Us:

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