



# Green Hills Academy

*“Towards Excellence”*

## Green Hills Academy Handbook for IB Students (and their parents!)

### Contents:

1. So you are planning to join the IB programme?
2. The first year: adjusting to a new pace
3. How to survive the second year of the IB
4. Life after the IB

### Appendices:

- A. Subject Choice Form
- B. Academic Honesty Policy

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## 1. So you are planning to join the IB programme?

Congratulations, that is a good choice. The International Baccalaureate is a highly regarded international – surprise! – qualification: students who have completed it and done well should be able to enter universities anywhere in the world.

Green Hills Academy is the only school in Rwanda where you can take the IB. We feel that it is well-suited to our students because ...

1. the IB programme provides a good challenge to the best students, but at the same time it can be tailored to cater for students who would be struggling with the full Diploma.
2. the programme is taught in English at Green Hills Academy, but francophone students can take French language and literature as native speakers.
3. the IB is an excellent preparation for university studies: in fact, we think it is the best.

## What is the IB all about?

Since its foundation more than 40 years ago, the International Baccalaureate Organization (IBO) has become a major force in education, and its programmes have been adopted by many schools throughout the world. While at Green Hills Academy we only follow the IB Diploma Programme, the IBO also provides a Primary Years Programme (PYP) and a Middle Years Programme (MYP) for younger students.

### IBO mission statement

The International Baccalaureate Organization aims to develop inquiring, knowledgeable and caring young people who help to create a better and more peaceful world through intercultural understanding and respect.

To this end the IBO works with schools, governments and international organizations to develop challenging programmes of international education and rigorous assessment.

These programmes encourage students across the world to become active, compassionate and lifelong learners who understand that other people, with their differences, can also be right.

## What courses can I study in the IB?

The IB is designed so that it can be started by students coming with a wide range of backgrounds – you don't even need to be fluent in English, although it helps. Most of you will have been at Green Hills Academy for a few years and will have taken the IGCSE exams: that is a very good preparation.



# Green Hills Academy

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One reason that the IB is so highly regarded everywhere is that it provides a good general education but also allows students to specialise. So don't complain that you have to do all those subjects – that is one of the great things about the IB!

To be able to gain the IB Diploma, every student has to take one subject from each of the following six groups:

1. your first language: this will usually be English or French. The course is called “Language and Literature”; it is not about grammar, but about how language is used. If you are fluent in French, but you are better at reading books and writing essays in English, then you should probably take English in group 1.

(If both your English and your French are not so good, but you have another first language, like Chinese or Kiswahili, there may be another option: talk to us!)

2. a second language: this will usually be French or English, depending on what you chose as your first language, or you can take German.
3. a humanities subject: this could be Business and Management, Economics, Geography or History.
4. a science subject, like Biology, Chemistry, Environmental Systems and Society, (ESS) or Physics. Note that for some courses it may be necessary to have the right previous experience: you should probably not take HL Physics, for instance, if you have not studied Physics before or you gained low grades in Mathematics.
5. Mathematics: everyone has to take Mathematics, sorry! But there is a course called Mathematical Studies, which is a bit easier.
6. Visual Art. Or any other subject from one of the other groups, so you can specialise, by taking another humanities subject or another science course.

And you can specialise more – after all, some people want to do a lot of science, other people really like languages, and so on. So you will be studying three of your subjects at Higher Level (HL) and three at Standard Level (SL). In most subjects, the HL and the SL course are not so different, but at HL you are supposed to have more time for the subject and to learn more; and so the exams will be more difficult too, of course. Some subjects, though, such as Business and Management, Environmental Systems and Society, and Mathematical Studies, can only be taken at SL.

Unfortunately, because so many courses have to be fitted into the timetable, it is not possible to accommodate all possible subject combinations. But we try very hard to give everyone their first choice.

If you satisfy certain conditions, such as studying French in group 1 and your other subjects in English, or studying both English and French as group 1 subjects, you can gain what is called a ‘Bilingual Diploma’. If you have any questions about this, we can give you more information.

One of the ways in which we – that is you, your parents and the school – can know if a subject is right for you is by looking at your performance in the two years of IGCSE: if you usually score a grade C in a subject or below, then you should not be taking that subject at Higher Level. The most



# Green Hills Academy

*“Towards Excellence”*

challenging IB course is probably HL Mathematics – according to one study it is equivalent to **two** British A-levels. So to have a chance of succeeding in HL Mathematics you should really have a history of gaining a grade A\* in the IGCSE Mathematics program of grade nine and ten.

## Are there any other requirements?

If you want to gain the IB Diploma, as well as choosing six subjects, ...

1. you need to take the course in Theory of Knowledge (ToK). This is a course which looks at all the different subject areas and asks how we know things, and how we can be sure of what we think we know. In this course you only have two lessons a week, and there is not much homework to do, but you should be prepared to think hard in the lessons and participate actively.
2. you also need to do an Extended Essay (EE) in one of your subjects. It will have to be 4000 words long and be based on your own research – but you don't have to worry about this until February of the first year.
3. you have to take part in the CAS programme: “CAS” stands for “creative, active and service”. This should take 150 hours of your time over the two years, and can include many different kinds of activities, both at school and outside, and you are free to choose things that you enjoy most.



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Putting it all  
together

The components  
of the Diploma  
programme are  
represented in the  
circular model  
shown on the right.





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## What if I find it all too much of a challenge?

There are many students for whom the IB is good, but for whom the full Diploma programme is too demanding. For those people, there is the option to do just some of the Diploma courses: you could do all your subjects at SL, for instance, or you could not do a science and just do five subjects, or you could avoid writing an EE. But we still want you to take ToK and to participate in the CAS programme in the first year – they are just too good, and useful, to miss.

Even if you are not doing the full Diploma, you can do an Extended Essay or do the whole of the Theory of Knowledge course, including the assessment at the end, which consists of a class presentation and an essay. You might do these out of interest – but an additional grade or two might also look very good on your Certificate, especially when it comes to university applications.

Of course, when you apply to universities, they will know that you have not done the full Diploma, and there are some subjects, such as Medicine, which you might not be able to study at some universities. But there are also many universities and colleges, including some very good ones, that may offer you a place – and perhaps even some financial support – if your grades are good enough, even without the full Diploma.

It all sounds a bit complicated at first, doesn't it? That is why we organise **Induction Days** at the very beginning of grade 11, which will give you an introduction to the whole of the IB programme and what makes it so special, and also information about particular subjects, so be sure to make use of that opportunity. In case of questions or problems, the staff at Green Hills Academy, especially the Principal and the IB Coordinator, who have many years of experience with the programme, are always willing to help you.

Dos: Make your subject choices early – even before taking your IGCSE exams: your performance in these exams will help us determine whether your choice of subjects is right for you.

Make use of all the opportunities to find out more, and in particular attend all the Induction Days in August.

Have a 'Plan B', in case your choice of subjects turns out not to be possible, or too challenging for you.

Don'ts: Don't be too ambitious: be realistic about what you are good at, and what you can achieve.

Don't be too unadventurous: challenge yourself, at least in some areas.

## Notes for parents:

1. Some of the choices your son or daughter will be making are important for their future, and so it is very important that you discuss their decisions with them.



# Green Hills Academy

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But it is also important that students take responsibility for their own choices, and that they take courses that they like: they will certainly do better if they enjoy their subjects.

2. To be able to make an informed decision, all students who are joining the IB programme should attend the Induction Days that will take place at the start of the new academic year in August.
3. Please understand that in most subjects, for the students' own benefit, we cannot allow them to start a course at Higher Level in which they did not gain at least a grade B in the IGCSE exams; (except perhaps if they consistently achieved a grade A or B in that subject in grades 9 and 10.) For HL Mathematics we even require a grade A\*. We can of course discuss a change from SL to HL if a student subsequently does very well.

## **2. The first year: adjusting to the new pace**

After the IGCSE exams that most of you will have taken, and a holiday, you are back to a normal routine. You are hopefully making good progress, although you will probably find that things are moving faster and there is more to understand and more to do. Fortunately, you might think, the final IB exams are a long time away, almost two years. But that is a dangerous way of thinking – a very dangerous way!

### **How does the grading system work?**

We use the IB grading system in grades 11 and 12.

1. In each subject you will gain a grade from 1 to 7, with 7 (“Excellent”) being the best and a grade 1 to 3 being considered a “Fail”; so you need a grade 4 (“Satisfactory”) to pass a course. For now, that is really all you need to know.
2. To be awarded the IB Diploma, you need to pass three HL and three SL subjects, except that
  - a. you can have a grade 3 at HL, provided you have a grade 5 in another HL subject. (The total number of points at HL must be at least 12.)
  - b. you can have a grade 3 at SL, provided you have a grade 5 in another SL subject, provided you have a grade 6 in another SL subject. (The total number of points at SL must also be at least 12.)

So you will need at least 24 points to be awarded the Diploma. (In fact the rules are a lot more complicated, but this will do as an approximation.)

3. The Extended Essay and ToK are graded on a scale from A to E, and these grades are combined to give you up to three additional points in the IB. That means that the highest possible IB score is 45 points. You will not be awarded a Diploma, if you have a grade E in either your EE and in ToK.

To make sure that you are doing the right courses, we will keep an eye on your performance, until you are registered for the IB in November of your second year.



# Green Hills Academy

*“Towards Excellence”*

- At Green Hills Academy, to be allowed to continue to take a subject at Higher Level, you have to maintain a pass mark of 60% throughout.
- To keep your Diploma status, your exam grades each term must be such that you would gain the Diploma if these were your final grades.

## How does my day look?

Every student at Green Hills Academy has a homeroom, where they start the day. You are expected to be there by 07:30, the homeroom teacher takes attendance, and makes announcements so that you know what is going on and what is coming up. The class will also sing the Rwandan National Anthem during that time. To be well informed, you should also always read the notice board when you arrive at school in the morning.

The lessons are 55 minutes each. After the first three lessons we have a break, with a drink and a snack in the Dining Hall, and this is followed by 15 minutes of reading time: students are in their homeroom class, and read – it could be their own book, or one from the Library, but it must not be a book related to one of their subjects. This is to develop a 'culture of reading' throughout the school, and we hope that it will encourage students to read more and more widely, which will in the end benefit their academic performance as well.

After two more lessons, there is a longer break for lunch. The last two lessons start at 13:40, and school finishes at 15:30. At that time, all students **must leave** the school, unless they are participating in one of the school-organised activities, which run from 15:45 until 17:00, or they are staying for the Day Boarding programme.

Throughout the school, one of the classes each week is reserved for CALS, which stands for “Careers and Life Skills”. For IB students, some of these sessions are for helping you go through the process of choosing and applying to universities, but they may also be used for assemblies or House activities.

Because in the IB every student chooses their own subject combination, there will be times during the week when you do not have a lesson. If you are studying for the Diploma, this will usually be five lessons each week. The most important thing is that you must not disturb other students and classes when you are free – but don't just spend your time on Facebook, try to get used early on to using that time well: start some of the homework or work on your assessments, or study with other students from one of your classes. This way you will have less to do at home, and you will make better progress in your subjects.

## Who's Who

Teachers at the Secondary School have a lot of experience in the IB. These are some of the people you will come across:

1. The Principal, Alan Shanks, who is also a teacher of ToK,
2. The IB Coordinator, Anna Bagabe, who teaches English and deals with all the administration of the programme. She is the first person you, and/or your parents, should talk to when you



# Green Hills Academy

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have questions or there is a problem.

3. The Careers Counsellor, Tr Flavia, who also teaches Business and Management. One reason for doing the IB is to be in a position to enter a good university; Tr Flavia is the one with the information, who can help students through the process of application.

## What if I am not sure I am doing the right courses?

If you find after some time that some of your courses are not what you had expected, or some of the courses, or the combination of them, might seem too difficult, you have different options:

1. You might change levels, for instance from HL to SL in Mathematics and from SL to HL in English B.
2. You could change some subject, for instance from SL Economics to SL Business and Management.
3. You could opt not to take the full Diploma programme, by dropping a subject completely, or by taking 5 subjects at SL and only one at HL, or by not writing an Extended Essay (EE). These are serious changes, and your parents need to be part of that decision.

There will still be many good universities where you can study, but ...

- a) the best universities and colleges prefer candidates who have the full Diploma.
- b) for certain courses, such as Medicine, you would definitely need the full Diploma; (but if you are thinking of changing to a less demanding programme, then Medicine is probably not a realistic choice for you in any case.)
- c) your chances of getting financial support from a university or college are lower if you have not taken the full Diploma.

But you may be better off with a Certificate with good grades in five subjects than with a failed Diploma. It is important to find the appropriate combination of courses soon, so that you don't waste time and effort on subjects or topics that you will not need in the end.

If you think that you should change subjects, or levels, here is how to go about it.

1. Talk to your teachers first: you can tell them that you are worried, and ask them if they think you will be alright. You can ask them what subjects you need for certain university courses, and discuss other options with them.
2. Talk to the IB Coordinator: she will give you a form to be signed by the teachers of any courses you are changing or dropping, as well as by your parents. The purpose of this form is not only to keep everyone informed, but also to make sure that the change has been properly discussed. In general it is up to you and your parents what subjects you take, but a teacher might not be willing to sign the form if he/she thinks that you cannot cope with a course, or if the class is already full.

You have only changed subject when you have returned this form, all properly signed, to the Principal.



# Green Hills Academy

*“Towards Excellence”*

3. It should be obvious that any changes should be made as early as possible, so that you are not behind in your new course.

Except that we want you to continue with the programme you originally chose for the first four weeks at least, so that you fully understand about your courses. If you are just thinking of dropping a course then there is of course no hurry, and it might be a good idea to try really hard first to see if you can manage.

## So what things should I be doing?

The IB programme has different aspects, and you need to make sure that you put in enough effort and get your priorities right.

1. First of all you have to work on your different subjects of course: that not only means attending all the lessons but also paying proper attention and doing all the assignments. And because the IB is already a bit like studying at university, you might have to do some additional reading for instance, on top of the assignments you are given.

It is very dangerous to think that the IB is still a long way off – all the courses are two-year courses, and one thing builds on another: so if you don't keep up, you will find the material getting harder and harder.

2. The school expects all students to take part in ToK for the first year, and completing the course is a requirement for the full IB Diploma. Make the best use of Theory of Knowledge (ToK) lessons. In ToK, like in most of life, the more you put into something the more you get out.

There is a 'practical' use too: the way of thinking that you develop in ToK will help you write university application essays, and the new vocabulary that you come across is like what you will need to do well in the SATs (– see below.) If you feel that you are not learning anything in ToK, then you are either wrong, or you are sleeping in the lessons.

3. The first year is a good time to put a lot of effort into other activities. The IB requires all Diploma students to be involved in the CAS programme, of creative, active and service activities, and the school helps you by organising after-school clubs and other activities, like *umuganda*, but the more you are involved in things that you have chosen yourself the more fun you will have. So take the initiative, start something new.

Here too there is a 'practical' use: anything that you have been very involved in, at school or outside school, will be something you can write about in a university application essay, and it looks good in the references that we will have to write.

4. In some subjects the IB assessment already starts in your first year: the write-ups of your science practicals and the Written Tasks you write in English and French will have to be submitted to the IB and will form part of the final grade you get in those subjects. The coursework component is at least 20% in all subjects, and in some cases such as Visual Art a lot more, so it is necessary to make a good effort even in the first year.

To help you plan ahead and keep track of all that is required, you will be given a calendar listing



# Green Hills Academy

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deadlines and dates when work is due.

5. At the end of the second term, in February, and at the end of the third term there will be a week of exams, two hours in each subject. These exams will give you a good idea of where you stand, in terms of your performance and the grade you might achieve in the end. And they also give you an opportunity to improve your exam technique: how to do well in exams is something that has to be learnt.

While it is of course best to always keep up with the work, you should also spend some time in the weeks before the exams to revise: even how to revise is something that has to be learnt.

6. In February of the first year, we will start to talk to you about the Extended Essay: how to choose a subject, a topic and a supervisor, and what progress you should be making. By the end of the first year you should have an outline of the essay, so that you can spend some time during the long holidays working on it. Most IB students at the end of their two years wish that they had managed to complete their EE before the start of the second year! – that's what everyone always **plans** to do.
7. In March of the first year already we will start to talk to you about options for your further education: different countries, universities and courses, and what they would require. This will happen mostly during school hours, but we will also have a meeting some evening when we would like your parents to come. You can discuss your plans with any teacher, in particular of course those in the Careers' Counselling Team: a wide range of expertise is available within the school.

## How can I be a good IB student?

Good question! According to the IB, a good student is not just someone who gets high grades. The purpose of the IB is to help students develop in many different ways, and that is the main reason that the IB is so highly respected by universities – students with this qualification tend to be well-rounded and more mature than their age-mates. In fact, the IB Organisation has published a Learner Profile, which describes who they would consider a good student. (By the way, students who have thought about and follow the Learner Profile tend to get high grades too ...)



# Green Hills Academy

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## The IB Learner Profile

The aim of all IB programmes is to develop internationally minded people who, recognizing their common humanity and shared guardianship of the planet, help to create a better and more peaceful world.

IB learners strive to be:

Inquirers	They develop their natural curiosity. They acquire the skills necessary to conduct inquiry and research and show independence in learning. They actively enjoy learning and this love of learning will be sustained throughout their lives.
Knowledgeable	They explore concepts, ideas and issues that have local and global significance. In so doing, they acquire in-depth knowledge and develop understanding across a broad and balanced range of disciplines.
Thinkers	They exercise initiative in applying thinking skills critically and creatively to recognize and approach complex problems, and make reasoned, ethical decisions.
Communicators	They understand and express ideas and information confidently and creatively in more than one language and in a variety of modes of communication. They work effectively and willingly in collaboration with others.
Principled	They act with integrity and honesty, with a strong sense of fairness, justice and respect for the dignity of the individual, groups and communities. They take responsibility for their own actions and the consequences that accompany them.
Open-minded	They understand and appreciate their own cultures and personal histories, and are open to the perspectives, values and traditions of other individuals and communities. They are accustomed to seeking and evaluating a range of points of view, and are willing to grow from the experience.
Caring	They show empathy, compassion and respect towards the needs and feelings of others. They have a personal commitment to service, and act to make a positive difference to the lives of others and to the environment.
Risk-takers	They approach unfamiliar situations and uncertainty with courage and forethought, and have the independence of spirit to explore new roles, ideas and strategies. They are brave and articulate in defending their beliefs.
Balanced	They understand the importance of intellectual, physical and emotional balance to achieve personal well-being for themselves and others.
Reflective	They give thoughtful consideration to their own learning and experience. They are able to assess and understand their strengths and limitations in order to support their learning and personal development.

Something that you might find useful is to think about how the actual practices of the school and of Green Hills Academy



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the IB programme relate to the ten different aspects of the Learner Profile.

## Dos:

Keep up with the required work in all your subjects: get used to planning ahead.

Take the exams seriously.

Enjoy the extra-curricular activities: try as many as you can, be involved, take the initiative. And keep a record of what you have done.

Keep track of the coursework requirements in your various subjects and complete them on time. Make use of the help that your teachers are allowed to give you.

Be ready to decide about and start your EE: if you do your preparation and your writing in good time, the whole process should even be enjoyable – after all, you chose the subject and your own topic.

## Don'ts:

Don't miss school, unless you are **really** sick.

Don't fall behind with the work, otherwise you'll soon feel lost.

Don't do things at the last minute.

Don't think that you can leave all the course work and the EE to the second year, otherwise things will pile up and you will not be able to do them well.

Don't copy work from other people, or from books or the internet: the school and the IB have very strict policies about academic honesty. ( A copy of the policy can be found in the appendix of this Handbook.)

## Notes for parents:

1. The IB is a demanding programme in that it expects students to show initiative, be self-motivated and well organised. Many students find this difficult to start with, and parents can help by being involved, asking questions, and being supportive – don't believe your son or daughter if they say that “there is nothing to do.” Students will be given a calendar of deadlines and dates when work is due – discuss this with them.
2. It may seem too early, but students and their parents need to start thinking about university applications before the end of the first year. The students will be given a lot of information during school time, but there will also be an introductory meeting for parents.



# Green Hills Academy

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## 3. Surviving the second year of the IB

It has to be said: the second year of the IB programme is pretty challenging – once they are at university, most students would say that their life is easier than the second year of the IB was. But everyone should be able to manage well enough, as long as they stay on top of what needs to be done.

### What happens in the second year?

1. Of course you will continue to have classes and cover the course content in all your subjects. Teachers will continue teaching until the end of April. Revision and teaching will be going on concurrently to prepare for the final exams in May.
2. On top of covering the course content, you will have work to do in all subjects that will count for a least 20% of your final grade. This includes practicals and the Group 4 Project in the sciences, Written Tasks and Orals in the Languages, and so on.

Some of this work is submitted directly to the IB and marked by an examiner, who could be anywhere in the world; the other work is marked by your teacher – but we then have to send the work of some students to the IB, so that they can check that the teacher has marked properly. (This process is called “moderation”.) Your teachers are allowed to give you some advice on this work, but there are rules about how much they are allowed to help you.

To make sure that you don't have too much work all at once, we prepare a calendar of when you should have completed different tasks, and we try to spread the deadlines out to help you. But you **must help yourself too**, by doing the work when you are supposed to.

3. You will also continue with Theory of Knowledge lessons and CAS, and if you want to gain the full Diploma, you have to complete your Extended Essay, do a ToK Presentation and write a ToK Essay, and summarise and reflect on your CAS involvement. All this will take a lot of time, so be prepared.

For many students, the EE is the most difficult piece of work to complete, or even to start, because it depends to a large extent on their own motivation. The sooner you get it done, the more time you will have for your courses. You will also feel **a lot** better once you have finished it.

About CAS, instead of treating it as just a school- or IB requirement, think of it as a chance to pursue fun, interesting and worthwhile activities that help you grow into a well-rounded person.

4. In February you will have ‘Mock Exams’. The Mocks will consist of real exam questions, and in some subjects you will be tested on the whole of the content of each course. Of course, you must expect to do less well than you can do in the final exams, but the Mocks will be a good practice, and they will help you set your priorities for the revision period.
5. The actual IB exams consist of two or three papers in each subject, and are spread out over a period of about three weeks starting in early May. You will get a timetable from the IB at least a month before then. To do well, the most important thing is of course how well you



# Green Hills Academy

*“Towards Excellence”*

have prepared yourself during the two years of the course; but you can help yourself further by approaching the exams calmly, being well organised, and having had enough sleep.

6. And one more important thing that you have to think about: unless you plan to take a ‘gap year’, between school and university, you have to get information, take decisions, perhaps take some additional tests, and complete applications. The next section of this Handbook deals with Life after the IB.

Note that we have to register you for the IB by mid-November of your second year. While it is possible to make changes later, such as from Higher to Standard Level, or the subject area of your Extended Essay, you will have to pay the fee that the IB charges, plus other costs, so this will be very expensive. (If someone has to make a late change, it usually means that they have not kept up well enough with what was required, or have not taken advice they were given.)

## So how should I be working?

The things that were mentioned above, about your first year, still apply, only more so. Here are some practical suggestions:

1. Make your own list of all the times that you have available for school work, including your free lessons at school, and decide at the beginning of each week how you will use them. When you make a plan, be realistic!
2. Keep a diary of when work is due. Start by entering all the deadlines that apply to you from the calendar that you will have been given. That way you can plan ahead and not find yourself under too much pressure suddenly.
3. Discuss the work you have to do and your plans with your parents, a friend or a teacher. You will find it easier to follow your sensible plans if you have shared them with someone else.
4. If you set aside certain times as ‘study times’ each week, you will enjoy your free time much more, since you won't have to worry about your school work during your free time.
5. Give yourself a limited amount of time for each piece of work. This will make you more efficient, and might even give you more free time. It will also prepare you for working under time pressure in exams.
6. Be clear about your priorities: allow enough time for subjects that you don't enjoy so much, for instance. Don't put further effort into an essay, say, when you could benefit more from moving on to something else.
7. Generally, well-organised students not only get better results, they also enjoy school more. If you are not enjoying school, don't run away from your studies; instead, invest some time to make sure you are up-to-date with everything.

There is a lot of time available for revision, but many people find it difficult to revise, or even to start their revision. So here are some ideas:

1. Again, make sensible plans for when you are going to revise what, distributing the content of your courses over the time available.



# Green Hills Academy

*“Towards Excellence”*

2. Organise your notes, first by subject, and then by area of the syllabus, and then make your own summary of each area, with the most important themes, facts or formulae.
3. Don't just read your notes, or books. Since you will have to write in the exam, practise writing things down as you revise: summarise your own notes or chapters from a book, make outlines, solve problems.
4. Get used to revising with other people some of the time. This will help your motivation, and it is more efficient as you put together your ideas. When someone explains something to someone else, both sides gain!
5. Change to a different subject, and a different way of thinking, after a few hours, and it really helps to take occasional breaks – as long as the breaks don't take over.

## Dos:

Discuss any problems you may have with your parents, your teachers and the IB Coordinator early; if you wait too long, it may be too late.

Be organised: make plans, for the whole year and for each week, of when you will be doing which work.

Get support from your teachers, as far as it is allowed, on the assessed work you are doing: hand in first drafts as required, and so on.

Make sure that you have completed all your assessed work before the Mocks, so that you can start to concentrate on revision.

Make sure all the work you submit is your own. Use the TurnItIn website to check that you have not slipped up.

## Don'ts:

Don't miss school, unless you are **really** sick: always keep up well enough so that you don't have to miss school to complete work that is due.

Enjoy your free time, but don't waste time: when you have free lessons, use them well, to study with other people, get your homework done, and so on.

Don't copy work from other people, or from books or the internet, without proper acknowledgement: the school and the IB have very strict policies about academic honesty.



# Green Hills Academy

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## Notes for parents:

1. The main reason that the IB is a demanding programme is that students are not only studying for exams but have to produce work independently. This requires being well organised, which many of them are still finding difficult. The school tries to help them as much as possible, but the support of parents is just as essential.
2. For students to make the best, and easiest, progress, it is important that their parents and the school keep in touch. We will call you when we feel there is a problem, but we would appreciate it if parents contacted us with any concerns, and if they could come to the Open House and other meetings.



# Green Hills Academy

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## 4. Life after the IB

The IB is recognised as a qualification for entering university almost everywhere in the world, including in Rwanda, and it is highly regarded by universities because IB students are usually well-prepared for their continuing studies. But this does not mean that if you have completed the IB, or even if you have done very well in the IB, you are guaranteed acceptance at any university. While the IB is a good starting point, gaining a place, especially if you also require a scholarship, will require a lot of effort.

### What do I have to do about university applications? When?

At the same time as studying hard in the second year, you may have to start the process of applying to universities.

1. Before the end of your first year we will start to give you information about your various options, and how the application process works for different countries.

We will also have a meeting one evening for students and their parents, to make sure that they know what is required and can be involved.

2. By the end of August, after discussing with your parents, you should have decided on the countries and the universities you want to apply to, and on the course(s).

At that point you should make a careful list of what will be required for your applications, and when it will be required. Well-organised students can even keep track of it all in a spreadsheet.

3. For students in grade 12, some of the weekly CALS sessions in the timetable are used for activities relating to your university applications: you will have forms to complete, and can do research or ask questions.
4. Wherever you apply, you will need transcripts of your past grades, predicted IB grades and references, from the school or from individual teachers. All of these take time to prepare, so you must ask for what you need well in advance – some weeks before you have to submit them, rather than some days, or some hours before! And remember, during the Christmas holidays there may be no-one around to do things!
5. If you are applying to colleges or universities in the US, you may need to take the SAT Reasoning Tests, which are held at different times throughout the year. For admission in the Fall of any year, you must have taken the test by the end of the previous year. You may also have to take some SAT Subject Tests.

Green Hills Academy is not a test center, and it is up to you to register at a center in Kigali, usually at least one month before the test date.

6. If you are applying to the US, or some other places, you may be asked to take the TOEFL test, to show that you are competent in English. This will usually only be required after you have been accepted. But the IB provides a formal letter, which is accepted by many institutions, stating that you have had all your teaching in English for the past two years and



# Green Hills Academy

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should therefore not need the TOEFL. We will give you a copy of that letter if you ask for it.

7. If you are applying to the US, you have to be prepared to spend a large amount of time and effort on the applications – it will be almost like taking one additional SL subject! Keep in mind that the single most important part of your application is probably the essays that you have to write. The deadlines for completing applications to the US can be as early as 01 January, and they are much earlier even if you apply for 'early admission' or 'early decision'.
8. If you are applying to the US for admission in the Fall after your IB exams, the decision will be taken before you have taken the IB exams. So you have to stay on top of your academic work all the time, and be fully involved in the life of the school, so that we can write good references for you and send off good predicted grades.
9. If you are not applying to the US, things are easier and can be done later.

Note though that if you are applying to certain universities, for instance in Europe, they may require a transcript directly from the IB, which you can order on-line, at [https://rrs.ibo.org/replacement\\_orders/](https://rrs.ibo.org/replacement_orders/). The cost of this services is US\$ 16 for each institution you select. The IB certificates are usually ready for collection from the school at the end of August.

10. One of your options is of course to take a 'gap year' between school and university, (or a 'gap half-year', depending on where you want to apply.) If you spend that time well, doing something worthwhile, many universities will consider you a stronger candidate.

If you do decide to wait for a year, the school will of course support you in the application process, even when you are no longer a student. But please let the Careers Counsellor know.

11. A large amount of expertise on universities and how to apply is available at the school, so make use of it: attend all meetings, talk to the Careers Counsellor and other teachers, provide the information we need so that we can help you, and so on.

Remember, while the school and your parents are an important part of the decision-taking and application process, the main person in all this is **you**.

A question we often get asked is: “How do I get a scholarship to go to the US?” The answer is: by being good – very good; (and a bit of luck may be necessary as well ...) Ask yourself: “What have I done to expect someone to spend US\$ 50,000, per year on my education, or even just contribute US\$ 20,000?” Remember that you are competing for those scholarships with millions of very bright and extremely hard working students from all over the world!

However, you do have some advantages:

1. You are studying at Green Hills Academy, and so you can get advice, supportive references, and help in the application process from experienced members of staff.
2. You are studying for the IB, which is recognised world-wide as a top academic qualification.
3. You are (probably) Rwandan: not only are the American colleges and universities looking for variety, but they consider Rwanda 'an interesting place'.

But none of this entitles you to a scholarship, or even a place at a university or college of your dreams;



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you need to be good (and have some luck.)

## What if I did not do so well in the IB?

The IB does allow you to retake one or more subjects, or even submit a new Extended Essay, either in November of the same year or in the next May session.

1. The IB results for the May session are published in early July. If you decide to retake some of your exams, or submit a new EE, the school has until 29 July to register you for the November session. For the next May session we have to register you by 15 November. The IB charges fees, that we will need you to pay, ChF 203 for the registration, ChF 140 for each subject, ChF 107 for the Extended Essay, and ChF 54 for Theory of Knowledge.
2. You can still be registered at a later date, or change your registration, but the costs can be considerably higher! As much as ChF 585 for the registration, plus an additional ChF 183 or ChF 316, depending on the date, for each subject.
3. The marks that you gained for your coursework will usually be carried over from the May to the November session, so you will not have another oral or have to repeat any science experiments.
4. If in the retake you gain a worse grade than you had originally, the IB will use the better grade when they report your results.
5. You do not need to retake your subjects at the same school, but another school is under no obligation to accept you: there is a large amount of work involved on the part of the school. In cases where there has been a change of syllabus or of assessment procedure, the exam will be according to the new versions.

If you think there has been a mistake in the marking of your papers, you can ask for a re-mark, (or an “enquiry upon results” in IB-speak) which will be done by a senior examiner.

1. The deadline for requesting a re-mark is 15 September. The IB charges a fee (ChF 146) for this service that we will need you to pay; the process should be completed within 21 days.
2. *N.B.:* Since a re-mark may result in your mark going down, rather than up, the school will need your and your parents' written consent before we make such a request.
3. If a re-mark results in a change of grade, the fee that has been charged by the IB will be refunded. Moreover, if a re-mark results in a change of grade but you have already registered to retake the subject, then you can cancel that registration without having to pay any fee.

(Sorry, the charges mentioned above are only a rough guide: the IB scale of fees may have changed, and Green Hills Academy needs to pass on to students/their parents the cost of making the bank transfer to the IB in the required currency and the cost of sending the scripts. Please understand that we can only register you or ask for a re-mark when the necessary fees have been paid at the Accounts Office. Btw, the present exchange rate is ChF 1 = 1.13 US\$.)

As you can see, the IB is very expensive. But when you take the IB course at Green Hills Academy, the ordinary charges, for the first time we register you for the final exams, are included in the school



# Green Hills Academy

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fees you paid for the last two years.

## Dos:

Think of a wide range of options, both in terms of countries and in terms of courses to apply for.

Collect information wherever you can: nearly everything you might need to know is available on the internet. But also make good use of what is available at the school: use the various printed resources, attend the meetings that will be organised, and so on.

Be organised and do things on time: set aside a few hours each week, to get things done.

When you think of your options, have a plan B and a plan C that you can fall back on as well as your preferred plan A.

Discuss your ideas with your parents, teachers and especially the Careers Counsellor at the school.

Make sure the Careers' Counsellor is informed of your decisions and the outcomes of your applications.

## Don'ts:

Don't only consider the US: while that is perhaps the most popular destination, and there is more scholarship money available, colleges and universities there are difficult to get into.

Don't be unrealistic in what you are aiming for: even very good students should have some 'safer' options.

Don't leave it too late to decide and take the necessary actions: you may be wasting good opportunities.

Don't expect things to be done for you – you are the main person in the application process.

Don't expect the Careers' Counsellor, other teachers or the school's secretary to be available until the universities' deadlines – they may not even be in the country during the holidays.



# Green Hills Academy

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## Notes for parents:

1. Although the responsibility for the process of deciding on and applying to universities rests mostly with each student, it does require the active involvement of the school and of the parents. To be fully informed of what the options and the process are, please come to the meetings for students and their parents that we will be holding.
2. For the best outcome, it is important that students collect information, take decisions and start applying early, although the deadlines depend on the country and the university, and even the course. Please support them your son/daughter by discussing their options with them.
3. Students can sometimes be unrealistic and consider only a single choice – which may be too difficult to get into, or be too expensive. Please encourage your son/daughter to consider a wide range of possibilities. There are many excellent universities outside the US and Europe.
4. If you and your son/daughter would like to discuss the available options, the choices or the application process, please make an appointment with the school's Careers Counsellor.



# Green Hills Academy

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## Green Hills Academy – IB Subject Choices for 2016–2018

To obtain the IB Diploma, students need to choose one subject from each of the six groups. Three subjects should be taken at Higher Level (HL) and three at Standard Level (SL); some subjects are offered at SL only. In addition to their six subjects, Diploma students will take part in the CAS-programme of extra-curricular activities, follow the Theory of Knowledge (ToK) course, and write an Extended Essay (EE) in one subject. Students for whom the full Diploma would be too challenging can do part of the full programme (including CAS, EE and ToK).

Name of Student: \_\_\_\_\_

Class (if presently at Green Hills Academy): \_\_\_\_\_

	Group 1	Group 2	Group 3	Group 4	Group 5	Group 6
<i>Higher Level</i>	English Lang & Lit French Lang & Lit	English B French B German B or another subject from Group 1	Economics Geography History Business & Management	Biology Chemistry Physics	Mathematics	Visual Art or another subject from Groups 2 – 4
<i>Standard Level</i>	English Lang & Lit French Lang & Lit	English B French B French <i>ab initio</i> (for absolute beginners) German B or another subject from Group 1	Business & Management Economics Geography History Psychology	Biology Chemistry Environmental Science & Society Physics	Mathematics Mathematical Studies	Visual Art or another subject from Groups 2 – 4

Unfortunately, certain subject combinations cannot be taken together: Environmental Science & Society / Biology / Art, Business & Management / Economics, History / Physics, Geography / Chemistry. (These groups might still have to be adjusted.)

**NB. Psychology will be offered depending on enrolled numbers. If you choose it, make sure you have choice B just in case it is not offered next year.**

IB Coordinator: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_