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I.P.S.
Orientation Handbook
for New Families

International Preparatory School
Mauritius

Welcome to IPS

On behalf of the IPS Board of Governors and the IPS school community we would like to welcome you and your family to the International Preparatory School, Mauritius (IPS)

A brief history and introduction to our school

IPS was founded in 1989 to serve the educational needs of children aged 3-11, living in the north of the island who require a broad-based international primary school education through the medium of English. Since its foundation, IPS has emerged as one of the leading independent primary schools in Mauritius. The school is constantly examining its educational programme and striving to meet its Vision and Mission statements.

IPS places a high value on a distinct, well-researched, collaborative and progressive approach to high quality education. The curriculum has, over the years, been guided by the National Curriculum of the UK and by other international and inquiry-based programmes currently used in a number of other international primary schools across the world. In April 2018 we officially became an IB PYP World School.

The school has also been at pains to ensure that the programme remains sensitive to the needs of children from very different linguistic and cultural backgrounds and to the varied learning needs of children at different developmental stages. Also, IPS places a high value on the need for our students to know about and to understand the very varied cultures, languages and customs of Mauritius and also hopes that all students will leave the school with an understanding of the history of their island home.

IPS has been accredited by the Council of International Schools (CIS) since 2007 and works hard to maintain and, where possible, exceed the exacting professional standards set by CIS for all aspects of school life. This accreditation recognizes and validates our educational standards and helps us ensure that we also meet the international standards for comparable schools. In addition, IPS uses the Australian Centre for Educational Research's (ACER) international school benchmark assessments (ISA) to help us measure student progress and to ensure that we measure up to the standards common in the 500+ other international schools worldwide that use these benchmark assessments.

USEFUL SCHOOL LINKS AND INFORMATION

School website: www.ips-mu.com

Facebook account: [International Preparatory School-IPS](#)

Bloomz communication app: www.bloomz.net

Staff email directory: <http://www.ips-mu.com/faculty/>

Parent Association	Name Email/Phone
P.A Welcome Team	Mrs. Desmarais ipspa1@intnet.mu dhos@ips-mu.com

INTERNATIONAL PREPARATORY SCHOOL

[School calendar](#)

IPS follows a northern hemisphere calendar. The school year begins mid-August and runs through to the end of June.

We have 3 terms: Term 1: August-December
 Term 2: January-beginning April
 Term 3: Mid-April-end of June

Reports are issued at the end of terms 1 and 3. There are several fixed times throughout the year for parents and teachers to meet, plus weekly parent/teacher meeting times when individual appointments can be scheduled as required.

Public Holidays in Mauritius

There are 15 Public Holidays per year in Mauritius (school closed). 8 are fixed dates, 7 are moveable holidays, dependent upon the new moon

Fixed

January 1st/2nd-New Year Celebrations
 February 1st-Abolition of Slavery
 March 12th-Independence and Republic Day
 May 1st-Labour Day
 August 15th-Assumption or November 1st All Saints Day (one year one, the following year the other)
 November 2nd-Arrival of Indentured Labourers
 December 25th-Christmas Day

Moveable

Chinese Spring Festival January/February
 Thaipooasam Cavadee-January/February
 Maha Shivaratree-February/March
 Ugaadi-March/April
 Eid-UI-Fitr
 Ganesh Chaturthi-August/September
 Diwali-October

Some important term dates:

TERM 1

DATES	EVENT ATTENDING
Monthly	Coffee Mornings with HOS All families are invited
August	Back to School nights Parents and Teachers
September	PA Morning Tea All families are invited
September	Goal Setting Settling In Conferences Parents and Teachers (N, R, Y1) (GSSI) Child, Parents and Teachers (Y2-Y6)

TERM 2

DATES	EVENT ATTENDING
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Feb	Student-Led Conferences (SLC) Parents and Child
April	Swimming Exhibition Y2 Y2 Families
April	Swimming Gala Y3-Y6 Y3-Y6 Families

TERM 3

DATES	EVENT ATTENDING
May	Student led Conferences Parents and child
May	New Nursery Open Day New N families and students
June	Class 6 PYP Exhibition Class 6 Parents/Families
June	Sports Day R-Y2 R-Y2 families
June	Sports Day Y3-Y6 Y3-Y6 families
June	Y6 Moving On/Final Assembly Last day of school year. Parents invited

N.B. Your child's class teacher will send you an invitation to join "Bloomz" the parent-teacher communication platform we use at IPS. Please "accept" the invitation as quickly as possible as all school and class information is shared via this app.

Each year group will have the opportunity to share their learning with their parents each year. You will be advised of the date nearer the time. All important school dates are listed in the Head of School's weekly "InfoByte" newsletter posted on Bloomz.

INTERNATIONAL PREPARATORY SCHOOL

New to Mauritius?

We hope the information below helps you settle into your new country smoothly. Mauritius 360 Guidebook (English/French), available from supermarkets and Les Bons Plans a Maurice (French only) contain useful information.

1. Background information on Mauritius

a.) Geography

Situated 890 km to the east of Madagascar, between latitude 19°50' and 20°32' south and longitude 57°18' east, Mauritius forms part of the group of islands called the Mascarene Islands, named after the Portuguese navigator Pedro Mascarenhas who first visited them at the beginning of the 16th century.

Reunion, a French island, is 200 km to the south west of Mauritius and Rodrigues, an island forming part of the Mauritian territory, 600 km to the East North East. Mauritius is considered to be part of Africa.

The island covers an area of 1,860 km² and is made up of a central plateau gradually rising towards the south west where it reaches its highest point of 828 metres at Piton de la Rivière Noire. This plateau is still surrounded with what remains of the primary crater in the form of a chain of mountains (Moka, Corps de Garde, Pieter Both) and some isolated peaks (Piton du Milieu, Motte à Thérèse).

The country's capital is Port Louis and the main towns are Curepipe, Rose Hill/Beau Bassin and Quatre Bornes.



b.) History

The history of Mauritius can be divided into four periods; the Dutch period, the French period, the British period and the modern period.

For details see <http://www.govmu.org/English/ExploreMauritius/Pages/History.aspx>

Mauritius has been an independent country since 1968 and a Republic since 1992. The current Prime Minister and leader of the Militant Socialist Movement, (MSM), Mr Pravind Jugnauth took office in January 2017.

Mauritius has a thriving agricultural, tourism and textile industry but in recent years has diversified into new industries such as ICT and offshore banking. Thanks to its growing economy it is considered to be among the most dynamic countries in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Today the island is internationally renowned as a holiday destination and is famed for its white sandy beaches, turquoise sea, luxury hotels and the exceptional hospitality of its population.

c.) People and Population

Mauritius has a population of about 1.4 million inhabitants. The people are descendants of European colonists, African slaves, Indian coolies and Chinese merchants. Today the island is a melting pot of all these cultures. Every ethnic group which lives in Mauritius has brought along its cultural heritage.

Mauritius enjoys a degree of social harmony and cultural understanding that makes it a model for successfully promoting the benefits of ethnic diversity and co-existence.

d.) Languages and Religions

The four religious groups most widely found in Mauritius are Hindus, Christians, Muslims and Buddhists.

The most recent statistics state that approximately 52% are Hindu (this figure includes minority communities of the Hindu family such as the Marathas, Telugu and Tamil) 29% Christian, 16% Muslim and 2% Buddhist.

Religion, cultural identity and language are inextricably linked in Mauritius and many Mauritians learn their “ancestral” language at school and/or in their community.

The ancestral language of most Hindus is Hindi or Bhojpuri together with a minority of Tamil, Telugu and Marathi speakers.

The majority of the Muslim population is Sunni and Hindi speaking. Other languages include Bhojpuri, Gujarati, Urdu and Arabic.

Most Sino –Mauritians descend from Mandarin-speaking settlers from Hunan. Some adhere to Buddhism and other Chinese religions, but many converted to Christianity in the twentieth century.

The general population includes Franco-Mauritians, other European immigrants and Creoles. Creoles are ethnically diverse some with black African ancestry, others of mixed descent and still others from parts of Asia. The general population share a common language, Creole, and the Roman Catholic religion.

Language is perhaps the most complex and perplexing aspect of the Mauritian social mosaic: according to Philip Baker and Peter Stein who studied languages in Mauritius, English is associated with “knowledge”, French with “culture”, Creole with “egalitarianism” and other languages with “ancestral heritage”.

In a nutshell: Creole is the most widely spoken language in the country, French predominates the media and English is the official language of government and school instruction. Thus, most Mauritians have a good knowledge of several languages.

Religion is very important to Mauritians and most practise their religion assiduously. Diverse religious beliefs are respected. However, as elsewhere in the world there, is an increasingly associated political facet/aspect.

e.) Climate

Mauritius has a maritime climate and two seasons: tropical during summer and sub-tropical during winter. The summer months extend from November to April and winter from May to October.

On the coast, summer temperatures range from 25°C to 34°C. The winter months are cooler, between 20°C to 25°C. Humidity is highest from December to April but is never unbearable, particularly on the coast where there is an almost constant sea breeze. Sea temperatures vary between 24°C in the winter and 28°C in the summer.

In the centre of the island the temperature is about 5°C lower than on the coast. Rainfall is highest during the summer months.

f.) Cyclones

Cyclones with strong winds and heavy rain, can occur in Mauritius. The official cyclone season stretches from November to April but the risk is greatest between January and March. Mauritius will normally experience about three or four cyclones a year during this period, each usually lasting a couple of days, and flooding can result. There is an advanced cyclone warning protocol in force. Dependent upon the size, strength and the distance the cyclone is situated from Mauritius, its speed and trajectory the Government meteorologists issue cyclone warning bulletins. These cyclone alerts are divided into 4 “classes”. See Parents handbook.

If one is prudent, however, there is no need to be concerned! Houses are strong enough to withstand strong winds. The worst-case scenario is generally localised flooding and electricity cuts.

g.) Fauna

There are no “dangerous” animals in Mauritius. However, you will probably come across:
Mosquitos- they do not carry malaria which has been pretty much eradicated from Mauritius. However, mosquitos can be a nuisance and many people use anti-mosquito coils outside and Vape machines inside.

Ants-that appear from nowhere when there is food about! Take care to store food in air tight containers and to sweep /wipe up any crumbs and spills.

Flies Take care to cover/refrigerate food in a hot climate to protect it from flies which can carry disease!

Geckos-small, harmless lizards that come out at night and given their size are incredibly noisy. Very difficult to get rid of and leave their droppings all over. On the plus side they eat mosquitos.

Spiders-some are quite big and hairy. If you are bitten see a doctor or pharmacist.

Snakes-only harmless “couleuvres”. About 30 cms long, they can come into the house especially after periods of heavy rain.

In the sea:

Stonefish-Stonefish stings are uncommon but can in some cases be fatal. You should obtain urgent medical attention if stung; many hotels stock anti-venom serum. It's a good idea to bring shoes that can be worn in the sea to protect against sharp coral, sea urchins and stonefish.

Jellyfish-sometimes found. If you get stung see a doctor or pharmacist

Sharks are rarely found in the lagoon except in the areas where there is no coral reef. Areas where bathing is dangerous and usually prohibited.

2. Health Care

a.) Immunisations

No vaccination certificates are required for entry into Mauritius, unless travelling from a country infected by yellow fever or where yellow fever is classified as endemic. The Centre for Disease Control recommends vaccinations for hepatitis A (which can be contracted through contaminated food or water) and hepatitis B (in the event of needing any medical procedures) and an-up-to date

tetanus vaccination.

Health care in the private clinics is considered to be good. The Clinic Darne in Floreal and Wellkin Hospital in Moka are able to deal with most emergencies.

There are also Community Health Centres on the island where the service is free of charge.

b.) Mosquitoes

These are common in Mauritius and do not carry malaria. However, they can transmit dengue fever. To minimize the number of mosquitoes at home it is important to ensure that there are no mosquito-breeding areas (such as stagnant pools, flower pot saucers etc) many people use anti-mosquito coils and citronella candles outside and Vape machines inside. You can treat mosquito bites with oil of lemon eucalyptus.

c.) Dengue fever

This is a viral illness that is transmitted to humans via mosquito bites. Symptoms include fever, headaches, severe joint, bone and muscular pain-hence the disease's other name "breakbone fever". There is no vaccination and prevention is through the avoidance of mosquito bites.

d.) Rabies

Rabies is present in Mauritius. However, it is not a major risk. Wildlife professionals and researchers are most at risk.

e.) Schistosomiasis

This is a parasitic infection, also known as bilharzia, which is transmitted to humans through contact with fresh water. The parasite enters through the skin. Prevention is dependent on the avoidance of swimming, bathing and paddling in freshwater lakes and streams.

f.) Bites and scratches

Again, in our hot, humid climate they can become infected more easily than in cooler climates and should therefore be monitored. It is recommended to avoid scratching insect bites.

g.) Doctors and dentists

All speak excellent English. If necessary, the school can provide the names and contact details of health professionals.

h.) Pharmacies

These are open every day (until midday on Sunday and public holidays). You will need a prescription for antibiotics.

- Pharmacie Ducasse, Royal Road, Grand Baie tel 263 84 03/ 54.23.62.17(emergencies)
- Rose Beauty and Health, Super U Complex, Grand Baie tel 269 02 89
- Pharmacie Pereybere Royal Road, Pereybere
- Pharmacie Ducasse Royal Road Trou aux Biches

i.) Drinking water

Officially tap water is safe to drink and most Mauritians drink it. However, non-Mauritians are advised to boil tap water before drinking it or buy bottled water.

j.) Food

As always when in a hot climate this should be carefully washed and/or cooked and refrigerated. Larger supermarkets stock all everyday foods-both fresh and frozen. Imported foods- fresh meat, cheese, speciality foods etc -are easily available although usually higher in price than locally produced.

3. Groceries

Food and Supermarkets

There are many supermarkets in Mauritius*. Most, if not all items are available- if not there are substitutes). Imported items from South Africa, Europe Australia etc are, of course, more expensive.

Eating out is also common, with a large range of restaurants and prices to choose from anything from fast food-McDonald's- to gourmet restaurants. It is not advisable to eat food sold by street vendors.

*Store 2000- Pereybere

Super U Hypermarket (a franchise of a French supermarket chain) Super U complex

Food Lovers' Market: Grand Bay La Croisette

Intermart: Grand Bay La Croisette and Calodyne

4. Communication

a.) Mobile Phones

Telephone: The whole island is covered by the mobile network. Orange and Emtel, the local mobile phone operators, have showrooms located in all shopping malls. They use GSM and 4G networks, which are compatible with most international operators.

A SIM card costs approx Rs 200. You have to show your passport but you are not required to show proof of residence.

Expats are required to pre-pay either using scratch cards or via ATMs.

Overseas calls:

You can call overseas directly from your mobile or you can buy prepaid phone cards which are slightly cheaper. Whatsapp and Skype are also a good alternative.

The international access code for Mauritius is +230.

To call overseas from a landline dial 020 followed by the country code.

b.) Internet

ADSL is available everywhere. Optic fibre is now being installed in most areas of the island. Despite this Internet speed can be slow especially during peak times. It is easy to communicate via Skype etc if we accept that the connection is not always perfect. High speed Internet (10MB) costs about Rs 1200 per month. Orange (Mauritius Telecom) or Emtel are responsible for installation and billing.

MyT (Mauritius Telecom) proposes a broadband, phone lines and digital TV package (other services also included) called My.T for approx Rs 1500 per month

For more information visit their website: <https://home.myt.mu/mytooffers#section-tvpacks/>

There are Cyber cafes and free Wi-Fi in most shopping centres. (Super U, Grand Baie La Croisette, Bagatelle, Le Caudan, Port Louis)

c. Media

The national television station, the Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation (MBC) has three

channels

MBC 1 predominantly French language programmes

MBC 2 predominantly Indian languages programmes and

MBC 3 predominantly English language programmes

Satellite Television is widely available.

DSTV from South Africa (Rs 2500) with lots of English language programmes and Canalsat which offers channels in a choice of languages. Their shops can be found in the main shopping Malls.

d. Bookshops:

Librairie Papyrus- Richmond Hill Complex Grand Baie

Bookcourt-La Croisette, Grand Baie

Store 2000 - Pereybere

Press Book-Royal Road, Pointe aux Canonniers

5. Getting Around

a.) Driving

In Mauritius we drive on the left. Motorists are advised to take great care when driving as the use of the indicator can be quite random and the local drivers quite unpredictable. Plus in rural areas animals-especially goats-often stray onto the road. Stray dogs are also a permanent hazard everywhere.

- Extra care must be taken at night because many motorcyclists and cyclists don't have proper lights.
- Watch out for pedestrians who are difficult to spot in badly-lit areas.
- Seatbelts must be worn in both front and back seats.
- Crash helmets are obligatory for motorcyclists
- Motorcyclists and cyclists have to wear fluorescent clothing between dusk and dawn.

The road network has greatly improved in recent years, both in quality and quantity. Most main roads are in good condition. "Unadopted" and minor roads are often in a poor state of repair. Watch out for the potholes! Roads are very congested at peak times.

NB: You must always have your driving license in the car when driving. If you are stopped by the police you will be expected to produce it immediately. Mauritian law also requires you to carry a fire extinguisher and special yellow chalk to mark the road in case of a collision.

b. Driving Licences

International licences are accepted but are valid only for one year.

Foreign driving licences are accepted in Mauritius. We advise you to present your licence to the Mauritius police at Line Barracks in Port Louis to ensure that your country's licence can be used here.

6. Money

a.) Currency

The currency of Mauritius is the Mauritian Rupee (MUR), which is divided into 100 cents. Foreign currency can be exchanged at banks, bureaux de change and larger hotels. ATMs are widely available in most big towns and some hotels. Major restaurants and large retailers accept major credit cards.

b.) Banks

Banking Hours: Monday to Thursday from 9:30 to 15:00, Friday 9:30 to 17:00 All banks are closed on public holidays and at weekends.

7. Recreational Facilities

a.) Restaurants and Bars

There is a selection of bars and restaurants in Mauritius, especially the Grand Baie area. It is worth asking other parents for the latest information.

b.) Theatre/Cinema

Recent films are shown in excellent cinemas at La Croisette, Le Caudan and Bagatelle shopping malls. Many films are in French and Hindi (some with English subtitles) and some in English.

Check websites for details:

<http://cinema.mu/cinema-movie-theatres-in-mauritius/star-cinema-la-croisette/> (Grand Bay)

<http://cinema.mu/cinema-movie-theatres-in-mauritius/star-cinema-le-caudan/> (Port Louis)

<http://www.mallofmauritius.com/tenant/star-cinema/> (Bagatelle, Moka)

Visit www.otayo.com for information all concerts, shows, theatres, sport events, expositions and all other events in Mauritius.

c.) Shopping

There are several large shopping malls in Mauritius including *Grand Baie- La Croisette Grand Baie-Coeur de Ville (Super U hypermarket complex) Port Louis-Le Caudan Waterfront Moka-Bagatelle Mall of Manutius*

where you will find designer stores, department stores and a plethora of fashion boutiques.

More details on their websites.

It's also fun exploring the smaller shops in the villages. You never know what you might find. Please note that it is not common practise to bargain in shops in Mauritius- you can try at the local markets if you wish.

8. Miscellaneous Information

Some Foreign Embassies/High Commissions:

United States Embassy, Port Louis: +230 202 4400.

Chinese Embassy, Rose Hill: +230 467 4600

French Embassy, Port Louis: +230 202 0100

British High Commission, Port Louis: +230 202 9400.

Australian High Commission, Port Louis: +230 202 0160.

South African High Commission, Port Louis: +230 212 6925.

Indian High Commission, Port Louis: + 230 208 3775/6

Pakistan High Commission, Floreal: +230 698 8501/2

New Zealand Consulate, Pretoria, South Africa (also responsible for Mauritius): +27 12 435 9000.

Canadian High Commission, Pretoria, South Africa (also responsible for Mauritius): +27 (0)12 422 3000.

9. Activities for children in the North

HORSE RIDING:

CEN – Club d'Equitation du Nord
Schoenfield Road
Tel: 264-9741
Email: clubdunord@intnet.mu

Centre Equestre de la Louisa
La Louisa
Belle Vue
Pamplemousses
Tel: 5-440-8887 ecurie@intnet.mu

Forbach Stables
Forbach Road
Esperance Trebuchet
Tel: 264-9044 / 5-701-3384
Email: info@horseridingmauritius.com

DANCING CLASSES:

JBM - Jeune Ballet Mauricien
Sottise Road
Grand Baie
Tel: 5-943-6582
Email: valy.manon@gmail.com

Le Studio Centre de Danse
Beau Plan Business Park
Pamplemousses
Tel: 5-727-5091
www.studiocentrededanse.com

SWIMMING LESSONS:

Big Splash Fitness Club
Rajah Road
Esperance Trebuchet
Tel: 264-8693

Northfields Sports Club
Labourdonnais
Mapou

Riverland Sports Club
La Croisette
Grand Baie
Tel: 269-6051

TENNIS:

Tennis Nord
Labourdonnais
Mapou
Tel: 266-8782
Email: tennisnord@gmail.com

Riverland Sports Club
La Croisette
Grand Baie
Tel: 269-6051

There are also Facebook groups, “Mums of the North” and “Mums of the East” (north for those who live in the north of the island and east for those who live in the east) These are not “official”, but they do give information about rentals, sales, domestic help and things happening in the regions and may be worth looking into. This is just a suggestion and we cannot be responsible for any information that may be found there.

This document is a perpetual work in progress. Your comments to help improve are GREATLY appreciated.

Thank you for reading!