Message from Board of Directors

Dear Parent of a Prospective CIA FIRST Student:

On behalf of CIA FIRST we would like to thank you for your interest in our school. We are very proud of our school and we consider it to be the highest endorsement that a school may receive when a parent chooses to enroll their child in that school.

Choosing CIA FIRST as your child’s school means that they will be part of one of the fastest growing International Schools in Cambodia. We are proud of the quality of education our students receive and the accomplishments of our graduates. Of CIA FIRST’s first high school graduating class (2012-13) five of the six graduates went on to university (two in Phnom Penh and the others in Australia, Canada, and Korea); the graduate who chose not to enroll in university is working as a teacher in Phnom Penh.

CIA FIRST is a private, non-sectarian international school that opened in 2004 with 16 students and the mission to cater to all students without prejudice, and to enable the "whole child" (physical, mental, moral, and social) to master local and global competence and citizenship. Our school provides students with international English speaking curricula, but also offers students additional tracks in French and Chinese (Mandarin). The Khmer curriculum elective, which includes workbooks developed by CIA FIRST for K5 - Grade 12, has been recognized by the Ministry of Education, Youth, and Sport.

Our school values diversity and global citizenship, which is reflected in the enrollment of our student body representing more than 18 countries and 12 primary languages spoken in the students’ homes. While some may see this as a challenge for educators, at CIA FIRST we see this as a rich opportunity for our students to learn side-by-side with peers from diverse backgrounds, thereby enriching their education experience and global competence.

Our school hosts student enrollment from K3 (preschool three year olds) through high school grade 12. The coming school year we will open up a new campus site that will host our middle – high school students (grades 6 – 12) and in following years also kindergarten and elementary school alumni.

CIA FIRST uses a standards-based curriculum supported by the American AERO framework – challenging, professionally validated, voluntary academic standards. CIA FIRST is in the process of Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) Accreditation.

CIA FIRST values innovation and has innovative initiatives around parent engagement, environmental sustainability, social responsibility, and technology. CIA FIRST has a partnership with the Rotary Club Phnom Penh (“Interact” – the Rotary Club’s international youth service club for youth 12 – 18 years of age). In addition, we have three Parents as Partners Associations (Kindergarten, Elementary, and Middle/High School).
A Conversation with the School Director

Mr. Andre Struve
Director of CIA FIRST

1. How would you describe the CIA FIRST Educational Program?

CIA FIRST offers a USA-based educational program that is designed to develop global competence, analytical and critical thinking skills, while meeting the needs of students from diverse language and cultural backgrounds. We believe in educating the “whole child” and that the best student outcomes occur when there is strong engagement and empowerment of parents as the child’s first and foremost teacher. It is also critical to have schools, families, and the community all working together to support the education and development of the child. We provide co-curricular subjects such as Information and Communication Technology, Music, Art, Physical Education, Swimming, French, Chinese, as well as a range of clubs and societies. Furthermore, all full-time students have the option of pairing their international program with the Khmer curriculum elective, which has been recognized by the Ministry of Education, Youth, and Sport.

2. What was the original purpose in establishing CIA FIRST International School?

International quality education must be accessible for all children around the world. Due to a tremendously wide gap in quality and price between poor education institutions and international quality education institutions in 2004, the Cambodia International Academy (CIA) was created in order to fill this gap and offer high quality international education at an affordable price.

3. How far has CIA FIRST progressed since its inception?

The student population has been growing steadily since foundation of the school in 2004 with only 16 students at current location of campus 1. Since then we aim to cater to the growing middle class of Cambodians and to foreigners. All of us at CIA FIRST place high demands on our curriculum, teaching quality, co-curricular activities, facilities, and school management. We have developed a culture of strong teamwork, embracing all stakeholders of the school community. We have reached a level in all above mentioned criteria which exceeds school standards found in developed and western countries. Yet, even amidst all this success, we are keenly aware that our improvement efforts must never cease.

4. In School Year 2013-2014, the Ministry of Education, Youth, and Sports (MoEYS) added the English Language subject in the national curriculum from Grade 4 upward. What is CIA FIRST’s view on this decision?

I am glad that this important step was taken and it shows that worldwide governments start to recognize that the future of each country lies in the hands of the next generation which needs to be equipped from early years on with a global mindset, and in particular tolerance and a strong sense of local and global responsibility. English is a difficult language to learn for the Cambodian people but English proficiency is and will always be a fundamental tool to move the Cambodian society toward a just, prosperous and global minded society.

5. In terms of the development of human resources in Cambodia, what are CIA FIRST’s major plans/strategies?

We do not see people as human resources but as human potential. It is more than frustrating to see how low-quality education is still dominating the education system in many countries. CIA FIRST has taken a leading role in the development of human potential and we have already started to reach out to local and international education NGOs, other private schools but also to institutions as the National Olympic Committee of Cambodia (NOCC) and private companies for collaboration. After the opening of a new, modern and innovative campus in school year 2014/2015 I envision the integration of public schools into our system of collaboration in the future. Only if working together as a team, including all stakeholders of the education system in Cambodia, we will reach our goal: The creation of a just, prosperous and global-minded society.
CIA FIRST International School's curricular program emphasizes the development of long-term transferable understandings rather than purely acquisition of knowledge and skills. The curricula are embedded with authentic performance tasks which assess the students’ abilities to apply their understandings to real-world situations in addition to more traditional assessment methods. Through the use of overarching enduring understandings and essential questions, teaching and learning always focuses on the ‘big ideas’ and long-term transfer goals. The school aims to equip its students with the tools necessary for them to succeed in further education and beyond, both in the local and international contexts.

CIA FIRST believes in educating and developing the “whole child”. Our campus includes a Fitness Sala, playful learning space, basketball court, two pools, 3 computer labs with 100 workstations; and all classrooms grade 1 and above are equipped with Wi-Fi, computers, and LCD projectors. Afternoon activities at CIA FIRST include: Yoga, Reading Club, WAVE Dance and Music Club, Global Citizenship Club, Chess Club, Science Club, and Fencing Club.

CIA FIRST offers online Northwest Evaluation Association M.A.P. (Measures of Academic Progress) testing twice per year.

CIA FIRST offers language assistance programs to students, staff, family, and community members.

i. General English Program (GEP)– enrollment is open to anyone to learn English from basic to advanced

ii. English as a Foreign Language (EFL) intensive support program – for students with low English proficiency for the general education classes

iii. Intensive Learning Program (ILP) – taught by an education specialist who is trained in supporting students with particular learning needs

iv. CIA FIRST offers free Khmer language lessons for staff who are non-native Khmer speakers

One 5th grade student wrote about being inspired at CIA FIRST because, “the students are confident enough to share their ideas with other students... My classmates are really friendly... CIA FIRST gives the students a good education. For me, CIA is the best school in Phnom Penh.”
VISION

We envision new heights of achievement for the individual learner and everything within his/her reach and power to influence: family, community, the world. In our endeavor to enhance a broader, international educational experience and to develop informed, socially and environmentally responsible global citizens, we are committed to:

- Providing a learning environment that will promote the highest possible international English and Khmer education
- Providing a physical environment that is conducive to quality teaching and learning
- Fostering cooperation with students, parents and community in the pursuit of best educational standards competitive on a global level
- Promoting 21st century skills, knowledge and attitudes necessary for lifelong learning
- Encouraging attitudes that promote a sense of responsibility and self-reliance, contributing to a positive self-image and independent learning
- Undertaking the responsibility of producing students equipped with high moral character, personal discipline, vocational efficiency, duties of local and global citizenship, appreciation of the Arts, and a love for their home, world and nature.

MISSION

CIA FIRST International School is a non-sectarian international/private school that caters to the needs of all youth without prejudice to their national, racial or religious affiliations. Our primary concern is to enable the "whole child" to master local and global challenges of today and the future. We are committed to providing our students with a stimulating learning atmosphere where they can discover what is essential for their physical, mental, moral and social development and experience the joy and love of learning in their early years.

VALUES


PRINCIPLES

Our Four Guiding Principles:

i. Health and Safety
ii. Environmental Care
iii. Respect Earns Respect
iv. Learning to Give and Joy of Sharing

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The Future of CIA FIRST

Where are we heading?

A. WASC Accreditation
CIA FIRST is currently in process to be accredited by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges. The WASC Accrediting Commission for Schools uses research-based criteria centered in three areas:

1) School goal of successful student learning
2) School has a clear purpose and school-wide student goals
3) School engages in external and internal evaluations as part of continued school improvement to support student learning.

B. Technology Innovations
CIA FIRST piloted the use of Kindle e-Readers to replace textbooks in our middle school. This pilot proved successful as students generally improved in the following areas:

1) Increased interest in and time spent reading
2) Improved retention of information read (because with an electronic devise it is easy to highlight key information, conduct a fast key word search, and sometimes even play the text in audio)
3) Higher test scores and grades.

Additionally, utilization of these devices reduces book costs, is easier to carry than multiple books (resulting in students being able to essentially carry an entire library with them wherever they go), and it is environmentally friendly (reducing paper use). CIA FIRST will broaden this innovation by introducing e-learning devices to all students grade 6 and higher beginning in the 2014-15 school year.

C. New State-of-the-Art Campus
CIA FIRST has broken ground on a new school campus 800 meters from the CIA FIRST campus. This new campus will integrate modern facility designs with state-of-the-art technologies, and will also feature a full size gymnasium, 25 meter pool, and high technology capability in every classroom.

Additionally, the new campus will help to reduce the space limitations currently experienced at CIA FIRST as a result of the school’s rapidly growing enrollment.
University Partnerships

At CIA FIRST we want to see all of our graduates continue in their educational pursuits beyond their time at CIA FIRST. To strengthen our students' knowledge about their college options we are developing partnerships with universities to recognize and endorse the quality of education received at CIA FIRST, to acknowledge support for consideration of CIA FIRST graduates, to provide accurate information about the university's enrollment guidelines and timelines, and to have schools offer tuition reductions to CIA FIRST graduates. The university partnerships that CIA FIRST pursues are with top level universities both domestically and abroad; and with a diverse array of strong colleges. CIA FIRST also seeks to only develop partnerships with universities abroad if they have a strong international student support program.

Community Partnerships

There are three pillars that support a child's education and development:

1) Family
2) Schools
3) Community

The community supports a child's education and development by providing health care, stimulating and supporting the child's interests and education (in areas such as art venues, zoos, sports teams, and botanical gardens), providing opportunities for work experiences and internships, and providing opportunities to students to develop leadership experience and skills.

CIA FIRST seeks to continue developing a deep and broad list of community partners who will offer CIA FIRST students and their families discounts on services and will also share with CIA FIRST students tours of their business to peak student understanding and interest in different vocational areas.

CIA FIRST is proud to have established the first Cambodian Rotary INTERACT Club, sponsored by the Phnom Penh Rotary Club. Through this club and our Student Council we support the following NGO's and organizations: Save poor Children in Asia Organization, New Hope for Cambodian Children, Friends International, Pour un Sourire d’Enfant, Who Will Village, Kantha Bopha Children’s Hospital, Tiny Toones, Operation Smile, Karuna Youth Club, Hagar Cambodia, Missionaries of Charity, and Children Surgery Center.

CIA FIRST also regularly hosts community events such as: the annual Human Rights Soccer Tournament on Human Rights Day, a Road Safety Basketball Tournament, Women Power Volleyball Tournament, Family Day, and International Children’s Day Festival (an event organized by children, for children).
Parents Engagement

There is a vast body of research, data, and studies to support the fact that when parents are actively engaged in supporting their child’s education that the child will achieve better academically: will go further in their education, receive better grades, miss fewer days of school, and is more likely to attend a higher quality university. There is also evidence to support that this kind of parent engagement deepens the parent’s understanding of and support for the school. And additionally, this engagement improves the parent-child relationship.

At CIA FIRST we define “Parent Engagement” as the active and ongoing process of engaging parents, improving communication, collaboration, and deepening understanding and respect for international cultures and global citizenship toward the common goal of educating and developing the whole child.

One of the ways that CIA FIRST encourages and supports parent engagement is through Parents as Partners Associations (PaPAs). There are currently three PaPAs at CIA FIRST:

1) Kindergarten PaPA,
2) Elementary PaPA, and
3) Middle-High School PaPA. Each of these PaPAs is led by parents who have been elected by their peers to serve as PaPA officers.

Mr. Sok Heng Phay
Human Quality Manager,
Phnom Penh

International Airport

“As a former teacher I know about what makes for a strong, high-quality school and about the important difference that receiving a good education makes in a person’s life. I am very pleased with the education that my son is receiving at CIA FIRST and I also like that the school supports us, as parents, to partner in supporting our children’s education. I am pleased to be able to serve as the Chairperson of the Elementary Parents as Partners Association at CIA FIRST.”

Enrollment and Tuition Information

There are four easy steps to enroll your child at CIA FIRST:

1. Go to the school’s front desk and ask for an enrollment form
2. Complete the enrollment form (new students should take the Assessment Test before completing the enrollment form)
3. Attach two (2) 4x6 colored photographs to the enrollment form (individual pictures of the mother, father, and child)
4. Proceed to the accounting office to pay school fees

* For tuition fee please see school fee table attached inside the folder

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