

## EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL (EMIS)

# SO MUCH MORE THAN A SCHOOL



Israeli, Belgian, Palestinian, Brazilian and Vietnamese teens walk into a room and leave with a groundbreaking development that will win an international competition. No, this isn't a dream or Silicon Valley – it's a Physics classroom at the Eastern Mediterranean International School (EMIS), Israel's first international boarding high school

EMIS students come from 40 different countries  
Maya Kogan  
EMIS was founded in 2014 with the mission of "making education a force for peace and sustainability in the Middle East." With Israeli, Palestinian and international students from far and wide, the student body is extremely passionate and the extraordinary diversity makes EMIS a unique experience.

Located on the green campus of Hakfar Hayarok in central Israel, EMIS is home to 190 students from 40 different countries who live and study together for two to three years. Coming from a wide variety of cultures and languages, the 16-to-18 year olds together form a vibrant community of dedicated global citizens.

The prestigious International Baccalaureate diploma curriculum offered at EMIS combines elective courses, personal projects and various extracurricular activities. Life on campus provides numerous creative opportunities, and students can participate in a number of sports activities, take art classes with trips to inspirational galleries and exhibitions, hear lectures from Nobel Prize winners, or volunteer in refugee centers.

### **Making a difference**

EMIS's mission is to enable its students to make a difference in the world. Tuition is subsidized according to need, thereby assuring a student body that is socio-economically and culturally diverse, and making it possible for teens from all over Israel and the world to have the opportunity to benefit from everything EMIS has to offer and to aspire to be a leader who will help change the Middle East and the world. The school invests considerable resources in scholarships, the curriculum and special projects that strengthen its mission.

At EMIS, students shape many programs themselves. They lead dozens of committees, projects and clubs; they volunteer in schools and engage in local and global causes. Students at EMIS have plenty of time and freedom to do what they love, whether it's hiking, caring for animals, sports or art. Whatever their passion, students are empowered to get involved and make a difference.

### **Unique initiatives**

One of EMIS's flagship projects is YOCOPAS, an international youth movement for peace and sustainability. YOCOPAS brings together students from the West

Bank, Gaza, East Jerusalem and other Israeli (Jewish and Arab) schools, and also brings international schools from Denmark and Spain. The participating students, who meet several times a year, are empowered to become active in their communities in the areas of sustainable environment and peace. YOCOPAS's organizing committee is comprised of students representing ten partner schools and EMIS. Last year, EMIS hosted its third annual three-day conference, during which the students heard lecturers and participated in creative workshops and forums on peace and sustainability.

As part of the hands-on-approach to the school's mission, each year students and staff participate in a project week, which focuses on a

specific theme. Last year, the theme was “Borders” and the EMIS community travelled in groups to explore Israel’s borders. This project week was overseen and planned by the students and was a huge success. Students and staff members visited the borders of Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, Gaza, Egypt and the West Bank, as a way to ‘break down the borders’ surrounding their new home. During Borders Week, students met various Israeli and Palestinian activists, politicians and members of the public, which allowed students to learn about the complexities of the region, as well as about the obstacles to peace and possible solutions. The week concluded with the whole school gathering in the Judean Desert, close to Masada, where EMIS students led workshops and reflection sessions on the experiences of the week.

The school’s Cultural Committee also organizes special cultural weeks. Recently, the EMIS community held an Eastern and Central European Cultural Week, during which students learned about all the different cultural aspects of that region, including traditional dances, songs, customs, art, political and historical conflicts, tasty food and much more. Throughout the whole week, the EMIS community was enriched with the hidden cultural perspectives and traditions of Eastern and Central Europe. Last year, EMIS students also organized a Latino week and an Asian week, where students from those regions shared their cultures with their peers.

The annual EMIS Science Week is another exciting event which follows a different theme each year. Recent themes have included ‘Water,’ in which students travelled across the country as far as the Sea of Galilee in the north and the Red Sea in the south; and ‘Color,’ where everything color-related was experienced, from creating rainbows and lava lamps to painting with vegetable pigments. These opportunities have enabled students to gain a deeper understanding of the mechanisms of the world around them.