



International Baccalaureate®  
Baccalauréat International  
Bachillerato Internacional

Sagesse High School

# PROVIDING A LIFETIME OF EDUCATIONAL BENEFITS

**1995**

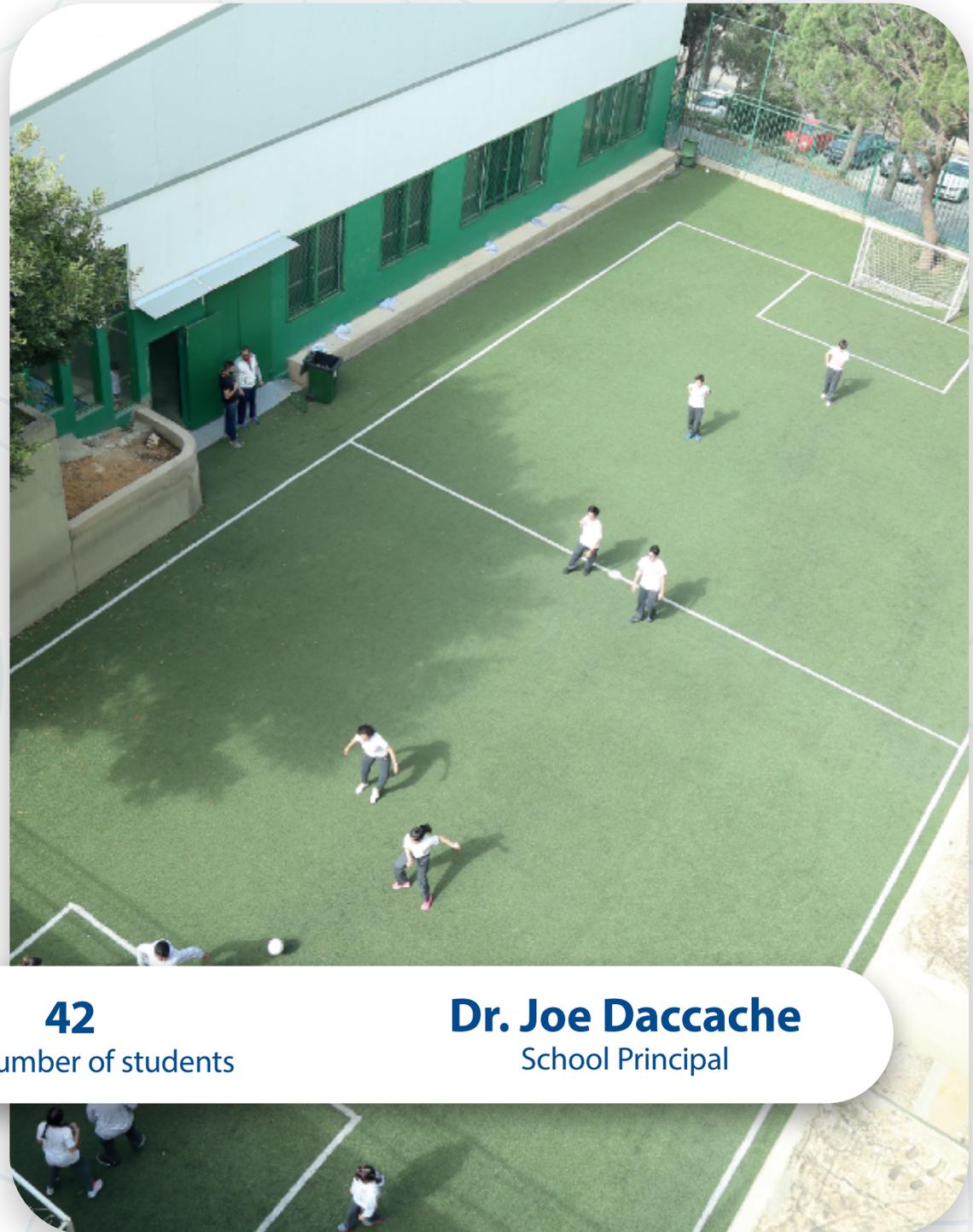
Diploma Programme offered since

**42**

Total number of students

**Dr. Joe Daccache**

School Principal



## Steeped in history

Sagesse High School, Mary Mother of Wisdom, is a Catholic school, located in Ain Saadeh, Lebanon. Founded in 1992, the school is proud to offer a broad curriculum for its cohort, which has helped to lead its alumni to first-choice universities for the past three decades.

In its early years, the school taught the Lebanese national curriculum, which was shortly followed by the American Programme. However, due to an influx of international families in Lebanon, an education with global perspectives was required. This led to the school's journey to International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma Programme (DP) authorization in 1995, making Sagesse High School the first Catholic school in Lebanon to offer the IB.

Discussing how the implementation of the IB was initially received by the school's community 25 years ago, the school's DP coordinator, Lady Maalouf, said: "Back then the IB was new, and it was difficult to convince our community of the rich opportunities it offers. Nowadays, it's easier for people to see the benefits, not just within our school, but in the wider community too, and students are seen to be proactively living up to and tackling challenges that affect everyone living in our city. Our DP students are taught to be ambassadors of their community, which aligns with the IB learner profile."

Today, with a cohort of 42 students, the school has gone from strength to strength, growing its

reputation and learning opportunities for both its students and teachers alike. Lady says: "We have a wide and diverse cohort who choose to study with us; we teach students who have come from as far away as Italy and Spain. I think this helps to reinforce the element of international-mindedness within our student community and, as a school, that is something we are proud of."

## Conquering challenges

Commenting on the recent educational challenges that Sagesse High School faced in the wake of the pandemic, Lady says that the issues tackled and conquered by the school stem back further: "We've already had challenges disrupting our teaching over the past few years, more so than other IB World Schools, due to the economic crisis here in our own country. The global Coronavirus pandemic just added to the ongoing problems we were facing as a school; we have not been able to reinstate face to face teaching since 2019 due to the ongoing revolution in Lebanon. Our whole school team has worked hard to make the shift to online learning, and all have adapted to it extremely well. We were able to make sure our staff could continue with effectively teaching the DP and all of its modules."

Lady explains that the DP not only develops academic knowledge but consciously astute students who want to help their local communities: "One of the biggest challenges we

have faced, not just as a school but as a country, was responding and recovering from the devastating explosion on 4 August 2020 in our city. Through the DP's core element, creativity, activity and service (CAS), our students were able to volunteer to help clean up the streets that were badly affected by the explosion and, in turn, help our community to rebuild and heal. Additionally, at the start of the pandemic, our students instigated a COVID-19 awareness campaign through social media and webinars, showing the public the precautions and measures that could stop the spread of the virus. They've also participated in Model UN programmes, which have helped them develop their skills and give back to the community in the process."

DP students don't only think on a local scale. Lady notes that international-mindedness is one of the main benefits of an IB education: "I have been a DP coordinator for nearly 20 years, so it's easy for me to see how the DP core truly helps the students to develop future ready skills. Developing international-mindedness is just one example but aligns so closely with our school's mission statement: For our students to be life-long learners, compassionate leaders, and active responsible citizens of not only their own community, but as members of global ones."

## From the classroom and beyond: Lasting DP impacts

With 28 years of teaching experience at the school, Lady continues to explain how the DP has helped shape the school and surrounding community for 25 years: "The DP is a rich and rigorous programme that has wholeheartedly impacted the teaching staff and our approaches to learning and teaching. So much so, the IB approaches have filtered throughout all year groups to non-IB classes and other departments have tailored their teaching to fit around the DP."

Today, the DP is ranked as equivalent to the national Lebanese Diploma. Lady says that this has helped further develop the programme's recognition among the school parent community: "All of our parents are aware of how well the DP prepares their children for university and are fully supportive of the programme and the skills it develops within the students. They can see how much added value the DP core brings to the programme over other academic frameworks."

"In addition to the DP core, we strive to keep the DP subjects relevant to our students' communities and backgrounds, offering Arabic A Literature and Lebanese History; the fact that the students can undertake subjects close to their heritage is extremely important to us. This helps

our students to establish and reinforce the links with their learning and local community even further."

Lady explains that all of these elements of the programme combine to make a DP student who they are: "A DP student is someone who reflects, questions, and has developed research and critical thinking skills. It's someone who is concerned for others' wellbeing, is respectful of other cultures, open-minded, engaged in their community and seeks to become a lifelong learner. DP students are able to distinguish between real and fake news on social media, and that is a crucial skill to have nowadays. As a programme, it provides a student-orientated approach to learning and teaching, which adds value to their educational experiences."



## Quarter of a century highlights

It is clear that Sagesse High School is proud of the strong community links it has established both with the IB and other IB World Schools over the last 25 years. Looking back at this, Lady explains: "A personal highlight during my time as an IB educator, was when I was offered to help design the CAS programme as part of the DP. As a school, and with the contribution of the CAS coordinator, we were able to design an enriched CAS programme including integrated subject and core CAS trips to several cities such as, Barcelona, Prague, Vienna and Lisbon. On a school level, we are immensely proud that we were able to hold our own IB cluster workshops for other IB World Schools to attend; having the opportunity to host and contribute to these workshops is truly a highlight of our years of offering the DP so far."

Reflecting on the last 25 years, and thinking ahead to the future, Lady says: "It's been a wonderful journey so far. In the short term, we're hoping to be in a position to offer blended learning to our students. We're hoping to expand and extend our offering to more Lebanese students, and also to be able to offer more IB programmes, starting with the Primary Years Programme (PYP) and later the Middle Years Programme (MYP)."





I have been a DP coordinator for nearly 20 years, so it's easy for me to see how the DP core truly helps the students to develop future ready skills. Developing international-mindedness is just one example but aligns so closely with our school's mission statement.

**Dr. Joe Daccache**  
School Principal

Find out more about the benefits of the IB:  
[www.ibo.org/benefits](http://www.ibo.org/benefits)