

# Elementary Program

Organic | Meaningful | Fun!



Kaleide

International School  
Tenerife

## About

Kaleide International School is a family-run, not-for-profit school in Tenerife, born from a powerful dream: to create a space where children are truly heard, education respects their rhythms, and learning is joyful, meaningful, and deeply human.

We are a community, supported by families and educators who believe in a more respectful, connected, and purposeful way of growing up together.



## Ethos

We believe children are competent, curious, and full of potential.

Learning at Kaleide isn't delivered; it's co-created daily through questions, projects, relationships, and play. We draw inspiration from Reggio Emilia, Montessori, Forest Schools, democratic education, and the latest neuroscience, with an ethos rooted in care for ourselves, each other, and the natural world.



# Our Vision of Childhood

*What children learn does not follow as an automatic result from what is taught, rather, it is in large part due to the children's own doing, as a consequence of their activities and our resources.*

—Loris Malaguzzi



We see each child as a subject of rights—competent, capable, and eager to make sense of the world. From this deep respect flows an educational approach that centres on the child's own questions, choices, and discoveries.



In Elementary, we continue to nurture each child's intrinsic motivation, supporting them as they become increasingly autonomous, socially engaged, and reflective learners.

Our role is not to mold, but to accompany—holding space for their development with curiosity, trust, and care.

# Our vision of Learning

At Kaleide, learning is not something that happens to children — it's something they live. Rooted in a set of guiding principles, our approach is designed to nurture each child's growth with joy, meaning, and purpose. These beliefs shape every corner of our learning community:

## Learning Begins with the Heart

We believe learning is personal. Every child brings their own rhythm, emotions, and ways of making sense of the world.

## Sparking Engagement

When children are captivated — when learning feels like an adventure — curiosity takes the lead.



## Hands On, Minds On

Learning comes alive through doing. We invite children to dive in, get messy, build, question, test, and create.

## A Strong Web of Relationships

In an environment of genuine care and connection, every child feels seen and heard.

## Nature as Our Companion

Our outdoor spaces and the natural world are essential companions in learning. We embrace nature as a powerful setting for discovery, exploration, holistic development, and a place where we learn to care deeply for the non-human world.

## Voice and Choice

With choice comes the responsibility to care. Children have the freedom to make choices and the guidance to take responsibility for their learning, their relationships, and their environment.



# What Makes Kaleide Different?

Our distinctive approach to education creates an environment where children can flourish:

## Social and Emotional Well-being

We understand that a child's cognitive development is deeply intertwined with their emotional health. Our program is built on fostering a safe space where children feel seen, heard, and valued. We explicitly teach emotional literacy, restorative conflict resolution, and reflective practices, ensuring children develop the self-awareness and empathy crucial for all learning, and for life.

## Real Relationships & Personalized Attention

With exceptionally low adult-to-child ratios (fewer than 7 children per adult), we ensure that every child receives truly personalized attention. This allows our facilitators to build deep, trusting bonds with each student, understanding their unique needs, interests, and developmental rhythms. Children feel genuinely supported, fostering confidence and a strong sense of belonging.



## Integrated Language Immersion

Children are naturally immersed in both English and Spanish throughout their day. Rather than formal lessons, languages are woven into playful, real-life interactions, stories, songs, and projects. Our facilitators speak in their native languages, creating an authentic bilingual environment where language is a bridge to new connections, never a barrier.

## No Rush, No Pressure

Our days unfold gently, respecting each child's individual pace of development. There are no bells, no tests, and no push to meet artificial, age-based milestones.

We believe that true, deep learning happens when children are intrinsically motivated and not rushed, allowing them the space to grow organically and develop a lifelong love for learning.

## Small, Connected Community

By intentionally maintaining a small size, Kaleide fosters a powerful sense of community and belonging. Children build strong, authentic bonds with peers and adults across different ages, creating a supportive "community of learners" where everyone is known, heard, and has the opportunity to contribute.



## Mixed-Age Learning

Our Elementary group (ages 7-12) is a vibrant, mixed-age community. This unique structure allows children to learn with and from one another, mirroring family dynamics. Younger children are inspired by older peers, while older children develop leadership, empathy, and mentoring skills, enriching the learning experience for everyone.

## No Grades, No Tests—Just Growth

We focus entirely on each child's individual progress and holistic development, rather than external validation. Without the pressure of being graded or compared, children are free to explore, experiment, and learn from mistakes, fostering intrinsic motivation and a genuine love for the learning process itself.

## Strong Family Involvement

Families are integral to the Kaleide community and are encouraged to be active co-educators. Through family meetings, workshops, volunteering days, and open communication via platforms like Class Dojo, we strengthen the vital links between home and school, ensuring a collaborative and supportive environment for every child.

# Our Elementary Community

*When learners generate curriculum, their participation and engagement are ensured.*

—Elizabeth Jones



**Our Elementary community consists of two dynamic, mixed-age groups: Alisos (typically ages 7-9) and Zephyrs (typically ages 10-12).**

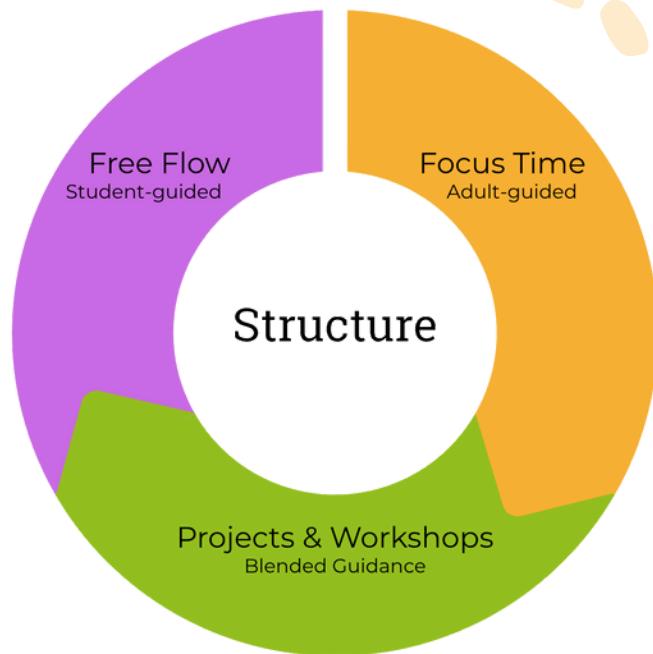
While each group has evolving academic expectations, they share many moments throughout the day, fostering a strong sense of community through workshops, collaborative projects, and Free Flow activities.



We emphasize teaching "stage not age", meaning a child's group placement considers their self-direction skills, language, communication, and math abilities, as well as their social and emotional needs. This holistic approach ensures a supportive learning environment tailored to every child.

# A Day in Elementary

Our Elementary schedule is flexible and interactive, blending adult-guided and child-led learning.



## Relaxed Entry (8.45-9.00)

Children arrive with a sincere and caring welcome.

## Keybu (Daily Welcome Meeting)

A 5-10 minute daily check-in for emotional well-being, planning the day, and community building.

## Example in Action

Children might reflect on their emotions using our “emotional thermometer check”, and then review the activities planned for the day, to end the Keybu with a lively collaborative game.

## Focus Time

A structured time for small-group instruction in maths and literacy, tailored to each child’s level and taught in both English and Spanish.

## Example in Action – Literacy

A small group of children work on identifying themes and emotions in a short story read aloud by a facilitator. They discuss why a character might feel left out, link it to their own experiences, and then write a few lines from the character’s point of view. One child dictates her ideas while the facilitator acts as a scribe. Another uses sentence starters to structure her thoughts independently.

## Example in Action – Maths

Using Cuisenaire rods and base-10 blocks, a group explores the concept of multiplication as repeated addition. The facilitator introduces the idea by posing a question: “If each child in our group brings 4 stones, and there are 6 of us, how many do we have altogether?” They build the problem physically, draw it pictorially, and finally record it as an equation.

## **Agreements Circle**

A vital democratic meeting where all voices (students, facilitators) converge to reflect on and consider changes to school agreements, fostering a sense of ownership and responsibility through sociocracy (consent-based decision-making).

## **Example in Action**

Students might decide how often they want to be able to bring toys to school, what happens when someone does not cooperate during tidy-up, or where they would like to go for their end-of-school trip.

## **Projects**

Children co-create long-term investigations with facilitators, integrating science, history, ethics, art, and more. Projects are rich, real, and deeply interdisciplinary.

## **Example in Action – The Dragons Project**

Over two terms in 2023-24, students embarked on a "Dragons Project" born from their fascination with mythical creatures and a desire to prove their existence. An unexpected discovery of an ancient letter about dragons propelled their research into history, language evolution, and medieval inks.

They conducted an "archaeological excavation" of a "dragon skull" in the sandpit, organized an outing to see the thousand-year-old dragon tree of Icod, and created a mini-play about the dragon Ladon.

The project culminated in a reflective discussion on ethical questions about power and species' rights.



## **Example in Action – The Restaurant Project**

A group of students created "The Bittersweet Cuisine" to learn how to set up and manage a restaurant. They learned everything from sewing table linen to economics (comparing material prices) and nutrition (preparing a healthy menu). They raised funds by selling loquats, avocados, and lemons from the garden, and even offered relaxing massages. When a power cut occurred, they cooked noodles and tofu over an open fire, demonstrating teamwork and problem-solving. This project taught them the power of creativity and collaboration to achieve goals.



## Workshops

Our school's workshops provide vibrant, hands-on learning experiences. These regular sessions encourage children to learn new skills, share knowledge, and explore diverse interests. While facilitators and external experts are the primary providers of these engaging sessions, children can also initiate and even lead workshops on topics of their choice, sometimes with the help of family members. By focusing on experiential learning, we ensure children gain practical skills, lasting knowledge, and develop crucial confidence, autonomy, and critical thinking.



## Example in Action

Our School Mural Project, developed within the weekly Art Workshop, saw children passionately driving the artistic design, then applying mathematical concepts to measure and calculate materials. They transformed their vision into a vibrant mural, demonstrating how workshops blend fun, creativity, and meaningful learning while fostering a strong connection to their school community.



## Free-Flow

This unstructured, child-led time is absolutely crucial for fostering genuine learning, allowing children to relentlessly pursue their curiosities.

Whether it's diving into favorite books, engineering elaborate structures with Kapla boards, strategizing in chess, or launching personal passion projects like the "Wild Helpers"—a group dedicated to wildlife and endangered species—this free flow time is where children truly shine.

It is within these moments that they organically cultivate autonomy, essential problem-solving skills, boundless creativity, and critical self-direction, laying a powerful foundation for lifelong learning.

## Outdoor Learning & Forest School

Tuesdays offer optional full-day nature immersion.

We spend the day in a nearby forest. Children build shelters, forage, follow animal tracks, use real tools, and learn to navigate the seasons.

### Example in Action

Children explore geometric patterns in leaves, create face paint from soil, or build a shelter using branches and rope—then return to school to write their own nature guides.



## PPS (Pre-Secondary Project)

Dedicated time three times a week for Zephyrs (ages 10-12) to acquire specific emotional and academic skills for successful transitions.



## Opting-out

Alisios students can choose to opt-out of some Workshop, Project, or Free Flow sessions for playtime in the garden, fostering self-regulation (with a maximum of 4 opt-outs per month).

## Excursions

Every month, we organize school outings that strengthen our connection to the world around us. These experiences—whether to museums, exhibitions, theatre performances, cultural events, or nature spots across the island—are often inspired by children's interests or sparked by classroom explorations. They offer meaningful opportunities to learn, reflect, and grow together outside the school walls.



## Sports and Swimming

Our students enjoy regular opportunities for sports and active play.

Once a week, we visit La Manzanilla Stadium for football, athletics, or collaborative games. Every fortnight, we have a swimming session at the San Benito sports center.

### Example in Action

At La Manzanilla Stadium, children might organize their own football game, practicing teamwork and spatial awareness, or engage in relay races, developing gross motor skills and friendly competition.

During swimming, they not only learn strokes but also build confidence and water safety skills through fun games and instructor-led activities.



## Closing Circle

A calm moment of reflection and connection to end the day. We share our gratitude for the experiences we've had, sing a song together, and talk about any upcoming events in the next few days.

### Example in Action

A child shares a story they've written; another leads a silly group game. They sing together or give thanks for something that made them smile that day—"I'm grateful for the loquat ice-cream we sold in the stall!"

# How We Learn

*Learning is not the product of teaching. Learning is the product of the activity of learners.*

—John Holt



## Academic learning through inspired discovery

Our approach to academic learning is rooted in neuroscience and a profound understanding of how young minds thrive.

We believe that learning is not about rote memorization, but about sparking genuine curiosity, fostering active engagement, and connecting concepts to real-world experiences.

That's why we don't rush children, compare them, or coerce them.

Our curriculum is not rigid—we follow children's inquiries, projects, and the world around them. Learning emerges from life itself, adapting to each child and group.

## Literacy & Numeracy: Consolidating and Expanding Skills

In Elementary, our approach to literacy and numeracy is active, meaningful, and rooted in real-life contexts. We honor each child's developmental pace while nurturing a deep emotional connection to learning.



# Literacy

At Kaleide, we believe that reading and writing flourish when they are rooted in meaning, creativity, and connection. Children come to love literacy not because they are told it's important—but because they experience how it brings their ideas, stories, and questions to life.

We foster authentic literacy in both English and Spanish, ensuring children not only decode and encode words but truly make meaning from text and communicate effectively.



## Reading for Meaning

Children engage deeply with literature, non-fiction, poetry, and stories, learning to interpret, analyze, and appreciate diverse texts. Daily time is set aside for children to read books of their choosing, fostering a love for reading.

## Writing with Purpose

Whether it's writing letters to dragons, creating menus for a real restaurant, or documenting a forest expedition, children see writing as a tool for expression, inquiry, and communication.

## Oral Language Development

Communication is key. Children develop strong oral language skills through discussions, presentations, debates, and dramatic play, building confidence in expressing their thoughts and ideas.



# Numeracy

*Everything around you is mathematics. Everything around you is numbers.*

—Shakuntala Devi

Math at Kaleide is hands-on, visual, and joyful. We believe that children are natural problem-solvers—and when maths is presented as a creative, practical tool for understanding the world, they engage with it enthusiastically and with confidence.



Our approach follows the CPA model—Concrete, Pictorial, Abstract—which supports deep conceptual understanding:

**Concrete:** Children first explore maths through physical manipulatives like cuisenaire rods, number tiles, clocks, scales, and Montessori bead bars.

**Pictorial:** They then move to drawings, diagrams, and visual models to represent problems in a way that builds understanding.

**Abstract:** Only once they feel ready, children begin using symbols and equations to express mathematical thinking.

We also integrate numeracy across the day: in the garden, children measure plant growth and calculate surface area; in cooking workshops, they adjust recipes and divide ingredients; in games, they use logic and strategy to predict outcomes and track scores.

## Example in Action

In the Cooking Workshop, children use budgeting sheets to track expenses for their restaurant. They compare prices from different local shops, calculate profit margins, and create bar graphs to display favourite dishes.



# Language Immersion: A Natural Journey

*To have another language is to possess a second soul.*

—Charlemagne

We believe that true language acquisition unfolds through authentic immersion, rather than forced instruction. Your child will be naturally immersed in both English and Spanish throughout their day, learning by living the languages through play, projects, and conversation.

Our facilitators speak in their native languages, creating a truly authentic bilingual environment where language acts as a bridge to new connections, never a barrier. For instance, a facilitator might lead a cooking workshop entirely in Spanish, with children learning vocabulary for ingredients and actions, while another leads a storytelling session in English, encouraging children to respond and ask questions in English.

Research has shown that speaking more than one language benefits the brain and other cognitive functions. Far from being a hindrance, maintaining and developing their home language actually enriches their journey into additional languages.

We encourage parents to actively support their multilingual learners by continuing to speak and read to them in their home language.

The more robust a child's foundation in their first language, the more readily they can transfer those linguistic and cognitive skills to learning new languages.



# Transitions Between Groups

Transitioning from Alisos to Zephyrs is a personalized and flexible process that can take place at any point during the school year.

This decision is made collaboratively, drawing on observations from our pedagogical team, meaningful conversations with your child, discussions with your family, and self-assessments completed by your child.

**Age is not the main factor—** instead, we consider indicators such as self-direction, emotional well-being, and communication skills, which play a key role in ensuring a smooth and positive transition.



# Involving Families

Our community is built on a “three-party” model: children, facilitators, and families working side by side. We invite parents to be active co-creators in the life of the school through many meaningful avenues:



**Daily conversations at pick-up**—because small moments build strong relationships.

**Monthly school meetings**—to reflect together, share ideas, and grow as a community.

**Twice-yearly Parent Workshops**—hands-on sessions where you can experience our pedagogy firsthand.

**Volunteering Days**—joyful moments where families come together to help in the garden, share stories or skills with the children, or prepare a meal together.



Every moment of connection enriches our shared journey. When families step into the life of the school, children see that their world is united and whole—a place where learning, love, and community all go hand in hand.

