

Foreign school with local flavour

Half of its teachers will be Singaporean, so students are immersed in local experience

BY LIAW WY-CIN

WHEN ER International School opens here next year, half its teachers will be Singaporean.

This is unusual. Teachers in foreign schools, which cater to the expatriate community, more often than not tend to be foreigners.

But ER wants its students to be immersed in the local experience.

Principal Donald Hooper said yesterday: "We hope students will be able to get to know other international students and their cultures, and get a good flavour of the local culture through greater interaction with the local teachers."

ER is working with Educare, a Singapore Teachers' Union cooperative, to recruit teachers.

The school has been set up by local private education provider Raffles Campus, a subsidiary of Emaar Education, which is part of Dubai-listed real estate company Emaar Properties.

The "E" in the school's name stands for Emaar and the "R" for Raffles.

It is waiting for the Ministry of Education (MOE) to clear its registration and expects to begin classes in January.

It will start with Grades 5 (equivalent to Primary 5) to 9 (Secondary 3), and Grade 11.

When the school reaches full capacity, it will have 1,500 students, from kindergarten to Grade 12, and 100 teachers.

It intends to offer the International Baccalaureate diploma, the American High School diploma and Cambridge University's O and A levels.

All private schools have to register with the MOE, but this does not amount to endorsement by the ministry.

Private schools like ER are different from the three privately funded schools under the MOE's purview.

St Joseph's Institution (International), Anglo-Chinese School (International) and Hwa Chong International have to uphold three key tenets of the Singapore education system:

- » Bilingual language policy
- » National Education
- » Flag-raising ceremonies incorporating the National Anthem, and recitation of the National Pledge.

Also, at least half their students have to be Singaporeans or permanent residents.

None of these restrictions applies to private schools like ER – and Singaporeans are generally not allowed to enrol in such institutions as the Government wants them to be integrated into the mainstream school environment.

Registration at ER International will open on Nov 10, during the school's open house. The school is located in Ulu Pandan Road, between the Pine Grove and Pandan Valley condominiums.

wycin@sph.com.sg