My name is Alayna Haines. I have been here in the Dominican Republic for 4 years already and, like many of you, I feel privileged to be a guest in this beautiful country and to be part of the amazing ISS community. I hope that you are looking forward to this year as much as I am! Previously I have taught 2nd grade here at ISS and also in Vietnam. Before that, I taught 3rd grade and Kindergarten in the US. This is my first year in 4th grade and I can’t wait to get into all the great science topics and novels and long division and history that this year has in store for us. I am also excited to work with you on developing your child’s ability to set and achieve their learning goals by passing more and more responsibility into their maturing hands. As we begin this new school year, I want to introduce you to some of the routines and habits that will help us work together as a school-to-home team.

**The School Day**

My door will open at 7:50 am each day and all students should be in the classroom by 8:00 am. Students will be dismissed onto the school campus at 3:00 pm unless your child has been scheduled for reinforcement from 3:00-3:30. Please make sure your child knows what they are doing after school each day so that they can leave the classroom feeling prepared and confident.

**Homework**

My philosophy of homework is that it serves 3 purposes: First, it develops valuable study habits that will help students continue their success throughout their lives. Second, it provides practice on material learned in school. Third, it gives you as parents a chance to see what your child is working on. Math homework will be assigned on a Friday and will be due the following Friday. Reading homework will be assigned on your child’s reading group day and will be due the following week on the same day. This allows you as a family to fit the work in where your schedule allows. There will typically be math and reading work, with some occasional extra assignments that fit in with current units and projects. You can support your child by giving reminders, providing a time and a place for work, checking over their work for completeness, and being a study partner.

**Communication**

I will use email to keep you informed of school and classroom events as well as individualized information about your child. Make sure to provide an accurate email address that you check regularly and let me know if you do not receive emails. Please feel welcome to reach out to me at any time; I really do want to know about any questions, concerns, or helpful information on your end. I confess that I don’t always remember conversations during drop off and pick up, so if it is important, send an email. I check my email at least at the beginning, middle, and end of each school day. Emergency contact should go through the school office. The phone number is (809) 571-3271.

Finally, please mark your calendars for **August 29,** which will be our **Meet the Teacher** evening. This event will be a great opportunity for us to spend a little more time getting acquainted with one another and becoming familiar with all that this 4th grade year will entail. I am looking forward to a fun and productive year!