



**Bishkek
International
School**

COVID-19 Protocol March 2022

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1 Introduction

COVID-19 has caused severe disruption worldwide, including having a major impact on children's education and their social, cultural, and sporting development.

BIS implemented a COVID-19 protocol from February 2020 and operated as a physical school for all grades for most of the 2020/21 academic year, with very few days in remote learning due to government restrictions or quarantines. This approach continued in the 2021/22 academic year, with all school events in Bishkek largely returning to pre-COVID-19 normality. International events are still curtailed by travel restrictions. The BIS COVID-19 protocol has been regularly updated since February 2020, taking account of the changing situation and new information about the spread and impact of COVID-19.

Evidence from antibody tests of all school staff, and reports of the Kyrgyz government from population testing, indicate that over 70% of the Bishkek population now has some immunity to COVID-19. Vaccination against COVID-19 is now freely available for adults in Bishkek.

The current protocol is based on COVID-19 now being endemic, and treats COVID-19 as one of many risks that our community faces. The most important rule in this protocol is to **"stay at home if you are ill with a communicable disease"**.

2 COVID-19 Action Levels at BIS

The appropriate action level is decided by the BIS Management Board after discussion at the BIS Health, Safety and Security Committee. Levels are not defined by specific data points, in terms of COVID-19 data in the Kyrgyz Republic, but are based on our assessment of risks and by Government requirements.

2.1 Level Zero

At Level 0, the COVID-19 risks are incorporated within our Health and Safety Policy and standard operating procedures. The school will operate in a similar way to the situation prior to COVID-19, with any adjustments as required for the long-term management of respiratory disease risks. At Level 0, this COVID-19 Protocol document no longer applies as all relevant long-term management aspects have been incorporated in the general Health and Safety Policy. We expect to reach Level Zero in summer 2022, and to continue at this level thereafter.

2.2 Level One

At Level 1, the school operates on all school days, following all COVID-19 Protocols set out in this document.

2.3 Level Two

At Level 2, one or more classes are moved to remote learning due to Sanitary Inspection quarantine controls.

2.4 Level Three

At Level 3, all learning provision is via remote learning and the school is closed to students, except as required for academic examinations (under strict conditions) or other specific activities approved by the government. Staff may work from the school, following all protocols in this document, but are encouraged to work from home if they have effective facilities at home to provide remote learning.

2.5 Level Four

At Level 4, the school is closed to both students and staff. Remote learning continues for students and educational materials are delivered to homes as required. Staff work from home. The school has only security staff and minimal facilities staff working at school for maintenance.

3 Terminology

Throughout this document reference is made to "fever" and "COVID-19 symptoms." A "fever" is defined here as a body temperature ≥ 37.3 degrees Celsius. "COVID-19 symptoms" vary greatly between individuals, with all of the following being assessed by BIS as symptoms which may indicate COVID-19: fever, dry cough, sore throat, fatigue, body aches, difficulty breathing, diarrhoea, nausea, loss of taste or smell. Note that any of these symptoms could indicate other issues, not COVID-19, however during the period that this protocol

applies, they will be treated as potential COVID-19 indicators.

4 Action Taken by the School Before Opening in August 2021

Actions include:

1. All staff (including contract staff e.g. bus drivers) were tested for COVID-19 and COVID-19 IgG antibodies on August 13th 2021.
2. All staff are trained in COVID-19 control systems required at school.
3. A medical isolation unit is established outside the main building for any cases of possible COVID-19 symptoms.
4. Stores of hand soap, hand sanitizer, masks, gloves and other prevention and control materials are in place.
5. A system is in place for daily health checks and reports for all students and staff.
6. A system is in place to monitor absence due to illness, including full record of any absence of students and staff.
7. Ventilation systems are serviced and are working to enable all areas to be ventilated either continuously or for at least 30 minutes at least 3 times each day.
8. Systems in place for cleaning and disinfection of toys, books, classrooms, libraries, cafeterias etc, with disinfection routine recorded every day, and particular attention paid to high-frequency contact surfaces such as door handles, washbasin taps, stair handrails and frequently used equipment.
9. System in place for cleaning and disinfection of dining equipment, with utensils sterilised at high temperature.
10. System in place to check hand washing and hand sanitizer stations every day to ensure they are clean, functioning properly and refilled.
11. System in place for rapid waste removal from recycling bins etc in student areas and regularly disinfecting waste containers.
12. System in place to reinforce COVID-19 messaging to all students and staff, including display signs around the school.
13. Regular meetings of the Health, Safety and Security Committee to review health reports and implementation of this policy to find areas for improvement.
14. Relocation of some activities to remote contact to reduce personal interactions.
15. Agreement for staff to work from home when they are not required in school.

5 School Bus

To maintain a safe and healthy environment on the school bus, the following protocol is followed, in addition to the normal school bus protocol:

The Bus Driver must:

1. Have no fever and/or COVID-19 symptoms;
2. Clean and disinfect the bus in the morning and afternoon before pick-up and after drop-off;
3. Make sure hand sanitizer is available for student use;
4. Keep the bus windows open for good ventilation, weather permitting.

The Bus Monitor must:

1. Have no fever and/or COVID-19 symptoms;

2. Check student temperature before they get on the bus;

Students must:

1. Have a temperature of less than 37.3 degrees C. Any student with temperature \geq 37.3 degrees will not be permitted to board the bus;

6 Entering the Campus

6.1 Entry to the Main Campus

Entry to the main campus is normally only allowed for Students and Employees. Visitors, including parents, may be allowed on the campus only by prior agreement of the Head of Administration. Anyone who comes to school with a temperature of 37.3° C or higher, or with a cough, or with any possible flu like symptoms, will be sent home, or placed in isolation until they are collected and taken home. Exceptions may only be made for students with possible flu-like symptoms if they have known pre-existing conditions for asthma/allergies, and only if approved by the school doctor.

Any student or staff member who is absent from school for 4 or more consecutive school days for any reason, will not be allowed to return to school without a medical ‘spravka’ to state that they are healthy. Exceptions to the ‘spravka’ requirement may be allowed by the school doctor if the absence is clearly not related to any possible infectious disease (e.g. a broken leg or scheduled exam leave). The school doctor may also require a negative antigen ‘rapid flow test’ result taken in the 48 hours before returning to school, in case of possible COVID-19 symptoms during school absence.

Preschool Student entry:

1. Student entry to the Preschool is via an entrance at the south west corner of the main building. Preschool students are met by Preschool teachers at the south west entrance gate.
2. Parents whose children do not easily adapt to school are allowed into the Preschool outdoor play area during morning arrival to support their child transition during the first few days of school.
3. Parents are not allowed into the school building and must leave the Preschool play area before 9:00 am each day, to allow children out to play.

Primary/Middle/High School Student entry:

1. Students enter via the main entrance at the south-east corner of the main building.
2. Students are temperature checked upon arrival in their Homeroom/Form classroom.

Employee entry:

1. Employees are responsible to not come to school if they are ill. Infrared thermometers are available for staff to self-check if they are concerned about their temperature.

6.2 Access for Parents and Visitors

Parents, suppliers, and any other visitors are not allowed into the main campus during school working hours under normal circumstances, in order to minimise the number of personal interactions for our students. Suppliers and any contract workers for repairs are arranged for outside school hours. The only exceptions for parents are for special events, approved by the Head of Administration, with specific invitation and individual parent sign-up.

The school has an external reception building opposite the main gate with security, reception, cashier, and meeting room for all meetings with parents or visitors to the school.

7 Checks During the School Day

All classes have an infrared thermometer, used by Homeroom/Form or Co-Teachers to check student temperatures as required. All preschool and primary students have their temperature checked and recorded on entry to the class in the morning. All Middle/High School students are checked once in the morning. Anyone with a temperature reading of \geq 37.3 degrees C, or presenting any COVID-19 symptoms, will be immediately escorted to the medical isolation unit for further checks. If the reading remains above 37.3

degrees C, they will be held under observation until collected by parents.

All staff are instructed to observe all students in their care for fatigue, cough or any signs of fever, and all students are instructed to immediately report any feeling of higher temperature or illness. Any student showing any sign of illness will be escorted to the school doctor for checks. Any student with confirmed fever or possible COVID-19 symptoms will be held under observation until collected by parents, or sent home by public taxi if requested by parents.

All medical data and treatment decisions will be formally recorded and reported to relevant school personnel (e.g., Management Board and relevant Teachers) and if required, to government authorities.

8 Hygiene Procedures

Good hygiene habits are best practice in normal times but they are especially important during times in which we work together to control the spread of disease, including the COVID-19. To emphasize the importance of good hygiene, the essential expectations are listed below.

Hand Washing:

Wash hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds using the 7-step method:

- After using the toilet;
- Before touching your eyes, nose or mouth;
- Before and after eating;
- After sneezing or coughing or using a tissue;
- Before and after using any school equipment, including computers;
- After contact with garbage or a high exposure area such as a door handle, banister, elevator buttons;
- After touching shoes;
- Before leaving for school and as soon as you get home from school;
- Between classes;
- When hands are dirty.

Hand Sanitizer:

‘Hands-free’ hand sanitizer stations are provided in every room in school, in every corridor, and at every entry to the school. If you are unable to wash your hands in any of the circumstances listed above, you should use hand sanitiser instead.

Face Masks:

BIS recognises that the efficacy of face masks to prevent transmission of the virus is unclear, especially as they are worn in a school setting, and that requiring use of face masks negatively impacts the academic and social development of students. The use of facemasks is therefore entirely a personal choice for the individual concerned.

BIS does not provide disposable face masks. If a student or staff member would like a new face mask during the school day, the internal BIS reception has reusable cloth masks for purchase.

General Hygiene Rules:

1. Cover your mouth and nose with the inside of your elbow or a tissue if you need to cough or sneeze. Tissues should be disposed of properly.
2. Do not share food or drinks – always have a personal water bottle that you clean thoroughly each day with soap and water.
3. No spitting at any time.
4. No spitting or snorting into the washbasins. Use a tissue!

9 Social Distancing

Staff and students are encouraged to maintain some social distance to avoid direct transfer of any communicable diseases, however it is recognised that full social distancing is not realistic in the Primary Years Programme or in many classes for Middle and High School, or during snack and lunch times.

All snacks and lunches are served in the school café or dining room from August 2021. No packed lunches or snacks will be served, except as required for educational visits outside the school campus.

10 Extra-Curricular Activities

Students have the opportunity to participate in creative, sporting and academic clubs in mixed year groups. Parents may take this into account when deciding on sign-up for ECAs.

11 School Cleaning & Ventilation

School cleaners thoroughly clean and disinfect all classrooms and classroom surfaces each morning and afternoon, and common spaces and surfaces (including door handles and railings) every 2 hours. Toilets and bathrooms are cleaned at least three times a day.

All windows and doors should be open as far as possible (except in bathrooms) to maximise natural ventilation and outside air exchange. This COVID-19 protocol overrules the normal air-quality control protocol. Under the COVID-19 Protocol, windows should be open if possible, provided the outside AQI is below 100.

All external air ventilation systems are on at all times to maximise fresh air in the school. In bathrooms, doors and windows should be closed and extraction fans on all day to extract air from the bathroom to outside.

Air filters should be on if windows are closed for any reason.

12 COVID-19 Cases

We encourage antigen 'rapid flow' testing if any member of the community is concerned that they may have COVID-19. Antigen tests are available in pharmacies in Bishkek, and may be available from BIS in certain circumstances. Please contact doctor@bis.kg for more information about antigen test availability.

If anyone is ill, or has confirmed COVID-19, they should stay at home until they are well. When a COVID-19 diagnosis is made by an antigen test or through self diagnosis, the individual should quarantine in accordance with the latest guidance from [US Government CDC guidelines](#). If a positive PCR test result comes from a Bishkek laboratory, and the Sanitary Inspection has control of the case, any quarantine must follow Sanitary Inspection instructions.

13 Remote Learning

BIS does not provide remote learning support for any students from February 2022, except in cases of long-term absence due to serious illness, when special arrangements will be made to support a student in this situation, or in cases of whole class or school quarantine due to Sanitary Inspection imposed controls.