



**Bishkek
International
School**

PRIMARY SCHOOL HANDBOOK 2022/23





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Updated on 29th July 2021

Welcome

Dear BIS Parents and Students,

On behalf of the Primary School faculty and staff, welcome to Bishkek International School (BIS). We are thrilled that you will be a part of our school community and that we will have the opportunity to work closely with you this coming school year.

BIS is a warm and welcoming school. Our Primary School faculty members come from widely diverse locations and bring with them a wealth of knowledge and experience of the best educational practices. Together with our whole student body, consisting of more than 300 students from over 30 + different countries, the BIS Primary School creates what is truly an international experience. BIS is a co-educational through-school located in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan. Whilst young in years, BIS has recently been accredited by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC). To add to this, we are proud to have been authorised as Kyrgyzstan's first International Baccalaureate World School administering the Primary Years Programme, the Middle Years Programme, and the IB Diploma Programme. Importantly, BIS is also recognized by the Ministry of Education in Kyrgyzstan. As a school, we are committed to helping students become internationally-minded, think creatively, reason critically and communicate effectively.

The Primary School here at BIS, and in particular the Primary Years Programme we follow, enables students to reach their full potential by offering a challenging and developmentally appropriate international curriculum. Our teachers work exceptionally hard to ensure that learning opportunities are engaging, relevant to our local and global context and are steeped in student interest. Likewise, the school year is filled with extra-curricular activities, whole-school and community events which further contribute to enriching the lives of our students and parents alike.

Our Programme of Inquiry (POI) covers a range of topics that link closely with our core curriculum while allowing our students to dig deep into their inquiries and lead their own learning. You can view the details of the Units of Inquiry (UOIs) your child will explore over the course of the academic year at [insert link](#). To connect in-school learning with the real world, our students partake in regular educational visits off campus. You can find our educational visits policy at [insert link](#).

Whether you are new to BIS or returning for another year, we welcome the fact that from time to time you will have questions regarding school life and the programmes we offer. Please take time to read through the information in this handbook which will serve as a useful guide in answering questions you may have about this school year. Up to date changes and new information will also be posted on our school website: www.bis.kg

We trust that this will be an outstanding year at BIS and that you will find the Primary School to be an exciting and engaging learning environment. Once again, we welcome you to the BIS family. We look forward to developing our partnership with you throughout the year and to providing an outstanding education for your children.

Gill McGuigan
Primary School Principal
gmcguigan@bis.kg

Alicia Grinsteinner
Primary Years Programme Coordinator
agrinsteinneri@bis.kg

Vision and Mission

Vision

To be the best international school in Central Asia providing inspirational education in a happy environment to globally minded students who are the leaders of the future.

Mission

Our Mission is to enable our students to:

- Develop their intellectual curiosity and achieve their academic, sporting and creative potential;
- Be confident in their abilities and respectful of others;
- Learn about local and global issues and prepare to tackle common challenges.

In a school which:

- Delivers and celebrates excellent teaching for internationally accredited education;
- Values diversity and inclusivity;
- Promotes the well-being of the whole school community;
- Contributes positively to the development of the Kyrgyz Republic.

Practical information

Practical information on a range of topics can be found in the main Student Handbook [here](#). This includes:

- Equipment and clothing requirements
- Arrival time at school
- Homework and deadlines
- Lunch and snacks
- Attendance at school
- Using school resources
- The school calendar
- Behaviour and sanctions
- Bullying
- School awards



Please note that Primary School students may find it useful to use a personal computer at home to complete assignments, but they are not required to bring one to school. Students will have access to school Chromebooks and desktop computers as required during lessons. If a student wishes to bring their own device (laptop, tablet, Chromebook) to school for use in class, they are welcome to do so, but must abide by expectations for appropriate use of technology as outlined in the [Student Handbook](#).



Communication at BIS

Strong communication links between home and school are a vital aspect of an effective school. At BIS we strive to maintain open channels of communication with students and parents about our educational programmes, student progress, school events and other issues of importance. Effective communication is the responsibility of every member of the school community. BIS operates as transparently as possible with as much information as possible about the school available on the BIS website, www.bis.kg.

Meet the Teachers

Early in the new school year, the school hosts a 'Meet the Teachers' evening for parents to meet their children's teachers and hear about overall and subject-specific programmes for the upcoming school year. Parents are encouraged to learn as much as possible about the curriculum, teacher expectations and school procedures. This year, Meet the Teachers will take place on Friday 26th August.

ManageBac

All primary students and parents have access to ManageBac, our curriculum information system, at bishkek.managebac.com. There you will find information about the units of study for each individual subject, homework deadlines, summative assessments, grades, report cards, attendance records and teacher email addresses. New students and parents will be issued with log-in details at the start of the year and full help guides are available on the platform. Please email Ms Alicia (agrinsteinner@bis.kg) or Mr Jacques (jprinsloo@bis.kg) for any further information on Managebac.

Newsletters

As well as parents being invited to participate in many of the whole community activities and events, the BIS PYP prides itself on the involvement of parents in many of the unit of inquiry activities. Teachers will inform parents, via email and newsletters, of any opportunities to become involved in specific learning events. Previous examples of in-class parent involvement have included: Reading a story to the class in a mother tongue language, baking recipes from around the world with students and joining classes on field trips.

As mentioned above, teachers will use class newsletters to keep parents informed of the unit of inquiry taking place and how each class's learning journey is progressing. A minimum 6 newsletters per school year will be sent out by each homeroom teacher. These will be sent in both English and Russian.

Parent-Teacher Meetings

Parent-teacher conferences are held two times per year. Parents will have the opportunity to meet their child's homeroom and co-teacher and, if requested, subject specialist teachers to discuss academic and social progress and targets for future improvement. The PYP Coordinator will also be available for individual meetings if requested.

In the 2021/22 academic year, parent-teacher conferences are scheduled for:

- ✓ Friday 26 August – Meet the Teachers
- ✓ Wednesday 12 October – Parent-Teacher Meetings
- ✓ Wednesday 18 January – Parent-Teacher Meetings
- ✓ Thursday 13 April - Student Led Conferences
- ✓ Wednesday 14 June – Parent-Teacher Meetings

Welcoming New Students

New students joining the PYP will be invited for a group meeting with the Primary School Principal and/or PYP Coordinator to discuss their transition to the school and any questions or concerns they might have. This gives us a chance to get to know each and every student and welcome them to the school community. Additionally, students entering Grades 2-5 who use a language other than or in addition to English at home will be asked to come to school before enrolling to complete the WIDA MODEL assessment. This guides us in determining the best support plan for our new English Language Acquisition (ELA) students. Students entering Grades 0 and 1 will complete the assessment within their first two weeks of enrollment. Details of the WIDA MODEL assessment can be found at <https://wida.wisc.edu/assess/model>.

Lines of Communication

The following set of guidelines is based on the understanding that whenever a question, issue or problem arises, parents have the right and responsibility to contact the school. At BIS we strive to maintain open channels of communication with students and parents about our educational programmes, student progress, school events and other issues of importance.

The following channel of communication should be used if parents have questions or concerns.

1. Homeroom Teacher/Specialist Teacher: The teacher directly related to your question should be your first port of call. Please email these teachers directly if you have a question or concern or would like to arrange a meeting.
2. PYP Coordinator: Please email the programme coordinator or arrange an appointment for questions concerning the Primary Years Programme and curriculum.
3. Primary School Principal: For concerns and questions of a more general nature concerning operation of the school and its programmes or for concerns that cannot be resolved through a conference with the teacher, please email or arrange an appointment with the Primary School Principal. Transition to the Primary School and requests to move class may also be discussed with the Primary School Principal.
4. Head of School: If more information is required or the concern remains unresolved, parents may wish to contact the Head of School, with the knowledge of the Director of Studies. The Head of School for BIS is Mr David Grant. His email address is dgrant@bis.kg
5. For a detailed explanation of the complaints and appeals procedures, please reference the 'Complaints and Appeals Procedures' policy which can be found in the Parents and Guardians Handbook as well as the Students Handbook.

If parents have questions related to accounts and finances such as school fee issues, payments, refunds, etc., they may contact the Chief Accountant, Ermek Alybekova.

Emails and Telephone Calls

If parents have any questions about their child's learning or wellbeing, they are encouraged to contact the relevant staff members by email or arrange an appointment with a teacher by contacting Reception (email: info@bis.kg; tel: +996 312 214 406). The following people should be contacted according to the nature of the question:

Subject-specific academic questions:	<i>Subject teacher</i>
Programme or overall curriculum questions:	<i>PYP Coordinator</i>
Welfare or behavioural questions:	<i>Homeroom Teacher and School Counsellor</i>
Questions about sporting activities or ECAs:	<i>Athletics Director/ECA coordinator</i>
Accounts and fees:	<i>Chief Accountant</i>
Transportation:	<i>Head of Administration</i>
Primary School issues:	<i>Primary School Principal</i>
Medical issues:	<i>School Doctor and Homeroom teacher</i>
Address changes, withdrawal and transcripts:	<i>Admissions Officer</i>

Teachers will call or send an email directly to parents if a student's progress or behaviour warrants such communication. We hope that by working together we can develop happy, responsible and independent students.

The Curriculum

The Primary Years Programme

BIS is a fully authorised International Baccalaureate Primary Years Programme school. The written, taught and assessed curriculum is in line with the international curriculum developed by the IBO for students in international schools. The PYP (Primary Years Programme) is an international curriculum framework designed for all children between the ages of 3 and 12 years. The program focuses on the total growth of the developing child, affecting hearts as well as minds and addressing social, physical, emotional and cultural needs in addition to academic welfare. The PYP combines the best research and practice from a range of national systems with a wealth of knowledge and experience from international schools to create a relevant and engaging educational program.

The PYP offers a comprehensive, inquiry-based approach to teaching and learning and provides an internationally designed model for concurrency in learning for mobile, transient students. It incorporates guidelines on student learning styles, teaching methodologies and assessment strategies.

The curriculum framework is an expression and extension of three interrelated questions:

- What do we want to learn?
- How best will we learn?
- How will we know what we have learned?

At the heart of the PYP are 6 transdisciplinary units, which serve as the key organizers for the selection of the units of learning, delivered primarily through inquiry methodology.

Programme of Inquiry

At the core of the PYP's philosophy is a commitment to structured, transdisciplinary inquiry. Much of the content from the subject areas, particularly Science and Social Studies, is taught through transdisciplinary Units of Inquiry where students are encouraged to make connections with their existing knowledge and between the traditional subject areas. Traditional subject areas are also used as lenses to explore big ideas that are of global significance.

These Units of Inquiry are planned under the Transdisciplinary Themes:

- Who we are
- Where we are in time and place

- How we express ourselves
- How the world works
- How we organize ourselves
- Sharing the planet

The written curriculum is a balance of essential knowledge and skills, development of conceptual understanding, demonstration of positive attitudes and taking responsible action. To achieve this balance, five essential elements are emphasized in the written curriculum:

Knowledge	Significant, relevant content that we wish the students to explore and know about, taking into consideration their prior experience and understanding. This knowledge is developed through the transdisciplinary units of inquiry as well as stand-alone, subject specific units.
Concepts	Powerful ideas that have relevance within the subject areas but also transcend them and that students must explore and re-explore in order to develop a coherent, in-depth understanding. There are 8 key concepts that are explored each year: form, function, change, causation, connection, perspective, responsibility, reflection. In addition to these important concepts, related concepts are explored through the central ideas of each unit.
Skills	Those capabilities that the students need to demonstrate to succeed in a changing, challenging world, which may be disciplinary or transdisciplinary in nature. These skills are organized in the following areas: Thinking, Social, Self-management, Communication and Research. Subject specific skills are also mapped through our scope and sequence documents.
Attitudes	Dispositions that are expressions of fundamental values, beliefs and feelings about learning, the environment and people. These are needed to develop the attributes of the Learner Profile. Appreciation, Commitment, Confidence, Cooperation, Creativity, Curiosity, Empathy, Enthusiasm, Independence, Integrity, Respect, Tolerance
Actions	Demonstrations of deeper learning in responsible behavior through responsible action; a manifestation in practice of the other essential elements. What will they do as a result of their learning? What action will they take now that they have a new understanding? This action will take many forms.

The use of textbooks

Because the BIS and IB PYP philosophy strongly believe that students learn best through authentic inquiry, students will not have much interaction with traditional textbooks and workbooks. While there is certainly a place in the curriculum for textbooks and workbooks, BIS uses a wide range of resources to effectively differentiate for individual needs and learning styles. Recognising that it is not knowledge alone that makes a learner successful, the skills, attitudes and knowledge pupils develop from student-led, engaging learning opportunities will be evident throughout the school year.



Inquiry Based Learning

The leading pedagogical approach of the PYP is recognised as allowing students to be actively involved in their own learning and to take responsibility for that learning. Inquiry is the process that moves the student to a new and deeper level of understanding. It involves the synthesis, analysis and manipulation of knowledge, whether through play or through more formally structured learning. Inquiry can take many forms including:

- Exploring, wondering & questioning
- Making connections between previous learning and current learning
- Collecting data and reporting findings
- Deepening understanding through the application of a concept
- Making & testing theories
- Researching & seeking information
- Taking & defending a position
- Solving problems in a variety of ways



The IB Learner Profile

The aim of all IB Programmes is to develop internationally-minded people who, recognising their common humanity and shared guardianship of the planet, help to create a better and more peaceful world. The result of the development of all the elements of the PYP (mentioned in the previous pages) are the attributes of the IB Learner Profile.

The IB Learner Profile permeates every aspect of what we do at BIS, and it defines what IB learners—both teachers and students—strive to be. It represents ten attributes valued by IB World Schools which are believed to help individuals and groups become responsible members of local, national and global communities. (IB, 2013)

Disposition	Description
Inquirers	We nurture our curiosity, developing skills for inquiry and research. We know how to learn independently and with others. We learn with enthusiasm and sustain our love of learning throughout life.
Knowledgeable	We develop and use conceptual understanding, exploring knowledge across a range of disciplines. We engage with issues and ideas that have local and global significance.

Thinkers	We use critical and creative thinking skills to analyze and take responsible action on complex problems. We exercise initiative in making reasoned, ethical decisions.
Communicators	We express ourselves confidently and creatively in more than one language and in many ways. We collaborate effectively, listening carefully to the perspectives of other individuals and groups.
Principled	We act with integrity and honesty, with a strong sense of fairness and justice, and with respect for the dignity and rights of people everywhere. We take responsibility for our actions and their consequences.
Open-minded	We critically appreciate our own cultures and personal histories, as well as the values and traditions of others. We seek and evaluate a range of points of view, and we are willing to grow from the experience.
Caring	We show empathy, compassion and respect. We have a commitment to service, and we act to make a positive difference in the lives of others and in the world around us.
Risk-takers	We approach uncertainty with forethought and determination; we work independently and cooperatively to explore new ideas and innovative strategies. We are resourceful and resilient in the face of challenges and change.
Balanced	We understand the importance of balancing different aspects of our lives — intellectual, physical, and emotional — to achieve wellbeing for ourselves and others. We recognize our interdependence with other people and with the world in which we live.
Reflective	We thoughtfully consider the world and our own ideas and experience. We work to understand our strengths and weaknesses in order to support our learning and personal development.

The IB provides curriculum documentation with benchmarks and guidelines for the assessment of student learning. Flexibility is also a key feature of the program, enabling teachers to respond to local requirements and settings for authentic learning.

We encourage parents to visit the official IB website to find out further information: <http://www.ibo.org>



Local Curriculum

The local curriculum follows the programme determined by the Ministry of Education of the Kyrgyz Republic. All primary school students will also take part:

- Kyrgyz Language
- Host Country Studies (Kyrgyz Geography and History through the medium of art)

Most pupils will also participate in Russian Language. The local Russian programme is provided for all Kyrgyz citizens and open to any other students who have the required fluency in Russian and wish to participate. Russian beginner and intermediate classes are also provided for those pupils who do not have a fluent level. Pupils' participation in Russian Language classes may be delayed if intensive ELA lessons are required.

Assessment and Reporting

Why and how do we assess?

Assessment at BIS is primarily a teaching and learning tool to support the continued development of our students. It is used by teachers to make regular judgments about the effectiveness of both the teaching and learning in progress, and by both teachers and students to identify how and where further progress might be made. Assessment is also used as a summary or measure of an individual's performance, including in reference to IB standards. Where external testing is used (see 'ISA testing' below), assessment is used as a measurement of the school's effectiveness and a means to identify areas for staff and school development.

Assessment methods used within the PYP may be formal or informal, formative or summative, and include oral, group, peer or self-assessments. In many cases, greater emphasis is placed on the thought process leading to the desired outcome than the result or product itself.

BIS therefore aims to design holistic assessments that will ensure that knowledge, conceptual understandings, skills and the IB Learner profile are monitored, supported and valued. In doing so, we ask:

- What learning goals will be achieved?
- How can I involve students in the assessment design?
- How could students engage in dialogues with teachers about the development of learner profile attributes?
- What data or evidence should be gathered?
- What tools or strategies should be used to gather data?
- How will the evidence be monitored, documented and measured?

- How could students be asked to evidence any additional learning?
- How will the results be shared to feed back to the student?
- How will the results be used to inform next steps in learning and teaching?
- How will the results of the assessment be used to inform the learning community?



Report Cards

Students in the PYP receive two main school reports a year. These semester reports will be produced in January and June. They will report on pupils' learning and development of the most recent two Units of Inquiry. Homeroom teachers will comment on pupils as a learner and assess any transdisciplinary skills and attitudes that have been relevant to the units. Likewise, students will be assessed in any areas of learning that have been covered in Mathematics, English, Science and Social Studies. Subject Specialists will also provide a written comment and assessment. There are five possible assessment grades. These are as follows:

E	Exceeding grade level expectations
M	Meeting grade level expectations
D	Developing towards grade level expectations
NE	Not yet evident
NA	Not assessed

Interim reports will not be provided in the 2021/2022 academic year. Instead, we encourage parents to follow their child's learning through our school through our curriculum information system, Managebac.

Parent-Teacher Meetings

As mentioned above, Parent-teacher conferences are held three times per year. Parents will have the opportunity to meet their child's homeroom and co-teacher and, if requested, subject specialist teachers to discuss academic and social progress and targets for future improvement. The Primary School Principal and PYP Coordinator will also be available for individual meetings if requested.

In the 2021/22 academic year, parent-teacher conferences are scheduled for:

- ✓ Friday 26 August – Meet the Teachers
- ✓ Wednesday 12 October – Parent-Teacher Meetings
- ✓ Wednesday 18 January – Parent-Teacher Meetings
- ✓ Thursday 13 April - Student Led Conferences
- ✓ Wednesday 14 June – Parent-Teacher Meetings

Student-Led Conference

The aim of this annual event is to give students the opportunity to share their perspective on what they have learned and how they have learned it. The students take responsibility for the conference and lead the learning process with their parents. We encourage students to lead these sessions in their mother tongue language. This event is a time for pupils to shine and share their development with parents. Prompt cards with example questions will be provided to help pupils and parents navigate the discussion. Likewise, teachers and co-teachers will be present to facilitate the reflection process if need be.

Academic Honesty

Students in BIS Primary School will be introduced to the meaning and significance of concepts related to academic integrity, in particular academic honesty and authenticity. Through the interactive and engaging learning opportunities provided across the PYP programme, students will be introduced to level appropriate skills such as:

- taking responsibility for their own work
- creating guidelines for individual and group work
- creating and adhering to expectations and good practice regarding age-appropriate references, citations, quotations and paraphrasing
- making agreements related to the responsible use of information technology and media resources

As the PYP allows our students their first opportunities to understand academic honesty, those who do not adhere to expectations will be supported in reflecting on, and discussing, how their work could be adapted to be more inline with the expectations.

Baseline assessment, ISA testing, and WIDA MODEL and tracking progress

BIS Primary School students complete baseline assessment in English and Maths at the beginning of each academic year or on joining the school. Results from these assessments are not included on report cards but are used to identify support needs and to enable teachers to track student progress over the course of the year. Grade 4 and 5 students will also complete baseline assessments in Science.

In February, all students from G4 and G5 will complete International Schools' Assessment (ISA) online tests in reading, writing and mathematical literacy. The purpose of these tests is to provide international benchmarking of students' competencies, as well as to monitor student progress, identify knowledge gaps and evaluate the school's performance. The tests are not used to report on individual student achievement and results of individual students' performance are not shared with parents or guardians. Teachers do not use lesson time to directly prepare the students for the test content.

The WIDA MODEL assessment is administered to all incoming students who use a language other than or in addition to English at home in order to determine if students need English Language Acquisition (ELA) support. All students in ELA

classes will be assessed in the spring to determine their placement for the next academic year or if they are ready to graduate out of the ELA programme. These assessments guide our teachers in designing lessons and learning materials that appropriately support the English language learning process for each learner.

Learning Support is provided for students who experience learning difficulties and need support in mainstream class. This support may be in small groups, in class or pull out and long term or short term. The focus is on specific learning challenges in all aspects of their academic areas.

Intervention is designed to:

- meet individual learning needs
- ensure full access to the curriculum
- develop the student's ability to be an independent learner
- remove barriers to learning

Children are referred on entry if a need has been identified at a previous school. After entry at BIS, teachers can make referrals for intervention support to our Learning Diversity and Inclusion Coordinator, Kathryn Ryder.

Following this referral observation, assessment and diagnosis is carried out. If support is required, Individual Education Plans (IEPs) are established. These include targets/goals for the student. These targets are reviewed with the student, teachers and the parent twice a year.

Student life

Anniversary Show

BIS' Anniversary Show takes place annually to celebrate the anniversary of the opening of the school. The show usually takes place in early December at the Kyrgyz State Philharmonic Hall and is well-attended by the community.

The show theme will be announced at the beginning of the academic year and all students will have the opportunity to participate in the show. Auditions will be open to primary students for specific roles. If a pupil is involved in the production and has a major role, they are expected to attend all rehearsals, including those which take place out of school hours. Class performances within the production will mostly be rehearsed and practiced within school hours.



Assemblies

A whole school assembly is held every Monday morning during 2nd period. Assemblies are used to inform students about upcoming events, celebrate student achievements and encourage students to share their knowledge with each

other. Assemblies are often a place for students to showcase their learning surrounding Units of Inquiry, the Learner Profile of the Month or the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals.



Awards

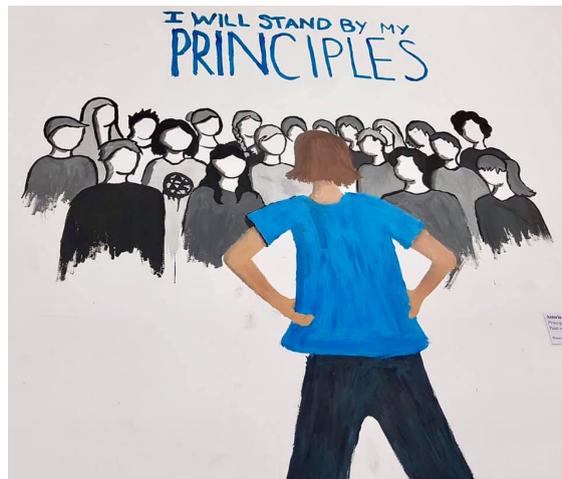
School awards are presented during school events at the end of each Semester. Separate prizes are given for Primary School, Middle School and High School students.

- Academic Awards are presented for significant, sustained effort and achievement in academic work
- A School Prize is given to students who show the most improvement in their work (awarded to someone who isn't necessarily an academic high achiever) or personal development (e.g. making a significant contribution to a service activity, school society or event).
- Special Prizes may be awarded for excellence in academic, sport, musical, drama or service activities.



Bullying

Students must not bully anyone in any way, online or otherwise. This includes any physical, verbal, social or cyber intimidation or mistreatment of any member of the school community. BIS staff are vigilant to instances of bullying behaviour and in homeroom classes students focus on issues of friendship, respect and positive interactions, as well as the importance of maintaining a respectful and responsible online presence. The school takes a strong stance on bullying behaviour and any instances will be dealt with immediately. Ms Gill, Primary School Principal, works with form teachers to address serious behaviour incidents, including bullying. Depending on the severity of the offence, instances of bullying may result in temporary suspension or permanent exclusion from the school and contact with the police in cases of legal consequence. The BIS student code of conduct can be found in the student handbook.



Educational Visits and Trips

BIS places important emphasis on the value of education outside of the classroom. It is our intention that every Primary School student will have the opportunity to go on at least three Unit of Inquiry related educational visits per year. All students are expected to participate in the educational visits as they form a vital part of learning and development. If a family has difficulty in paying for the visit, parents should request a special discount from the school based on financial need. Students participating in educational visits are expected to uphold the same standards of conduct as they do in school. Each trip is subject to written consent provided by pupils' parents/guardians and payment of trip costs, as required.

Primary school students should have the following items for school trips:

- Backpack/bag to items to/from school
- Hat/cap for outside in hot weather OR warm coat and hat for cold weather
- A bottle for drinking water
- Spare clothes if suggested by trip leader

Pupils may wish to bring other items such as snacks and cameras. However, these must be approved by the trip leader and are the pupils' responsibility. Any snacks brought on the trip must be nut-free and cannot be shared with others.



Events

BIS hosts several events throughout the school year, to which all are invited. These events serve to bring the community together, provide alternative educational opportunities and showcase the talents and hard work of our students. Some of these events take place during the school day (e.g. UN day, Science Fair, Winter Sports Day, Nooruz, Art and Poetry Evening), some take place in the evening after school (e.g. End of School Barbeque), and others take place at weekends (e.g. Asia Day, Anniversary Show, BIS' Got Talent). A full list of events can be found in the school calendar at the end of this Handbook. All events are announced in advance through the Voices newsletter and via email.



Extra-Curricular Activities

BIS offers a wide range of extra-curricular activities (ECAs). ECAs run every day from 15:30. A list of ECAs available for the term ahead are sent before the start of each term or in the first week of the first term. The majority of these are provided at no extra cost, however, if the activity involves an external facilitator or transport costs, additional payment is requested. These ECAs are marked on the list as 'paid ECAs'. ECA timetables are provided to staff, students and parents before the start of each ECA cycle by the ECA Coordinator. In the case of remote learning, online ECAs will be provided though the options may change based on the digital platform.

If you have any questions or comments regarding ECAs, please contact Ms Bojana, ECA coordinator: baskovic@bis.kg.



Learning at Home

Homework is any work or activity which students are asked to do outside lesson time either on their own or with support from parents and the community. Homework should not prevent students from participating in an activity after school such as sport, music or clubs of any kind. Equally, students should plan such activities to allow time to complete homework.

The purpose of homework at BIS is:

- To encourage students to develop the confidence and self-discipline to work on their own, an essential skill for adult life.
- To promote independent study routines
- To consolidate and reinforce skills and understanding.
- To extend school learning and inquiry, for example through additional research.
- To support the home/school relationship.

Homework that enhances student learning is:

- Purposeful and relevant to students needs
- Appropriate to the child's age
- Appropriate to the capability of the student
- Increases student fluency
- Develops the student's independence as a learner
- Varied, challenging and clearly related to the current Unit of Inquiry
- Values and involves the use of the child's mother tongue language

Amount of Homework

The primary school does **not** have a fixed homework timetable with time allocated for different subjects on different evenings. If given homework, families will need to manage their time so that they do some homework when required. As a general principle, the BIS primary school values playtime and downtime for students after school hours. Therefore, Grade 0 (Kindergarten) to Grade 5 teachers may assign a modest amount of homework that is felt appropriate to the student's needs. Teachers will not usually set substantial homework tasks to be completed for the next day. The time devoted to homework, however, may likely increase as the student progresses through the school. Ideally, in addition to time for reading, a child could be expected to devote 10 to 30 minutes to homework dependent on their age. Children are not expected to spend more than 30 minutes on homework each evening (excluding reading). As BIS follows the PYP transdisciplinary learning approach, homework activities may reflect this. Whilst traditional writing and mathematical tasks may be set, activities could also include continued inquiry, projects and hands-on learning. The activities, tasks and duration chosen for homework are at the discretion of the teacher.

Daily reading is encouraged for all pupils and this daily activity can be supported by a parent or family member. Pupils will have a weekly opportunity to check-out books from the library to aid their daily reading. Subscriptions to online

learning resources are also a valuable way to engage students particularly when revising topics already covered at school.

Houses

The House System exists to promote healthy competition based on inclusion and teamwork. BIS has three Houses for students from Primary, Middle and High school; they are 'Snow Leopards', 'Piranhas' and 'Phoenix'. Students are assigned to a House upon joining the school and stay in the same House until they leave BIS. Occasionally students may move between Houses only by agreement between the student, Houses Coordinator and Director of Studies, if this is necessary to rebalance the Houses. Each member of the teaching staff, except those on the Management Board, is assigned to a House and one staff member is appointed as 'Head' of each House to help in the organization of different competitions.

Various competitions and events contribute to house points. In previous years in Middle School this has included participation and success in a FIFA tournament and a table tennis tournament, participation in dress-up days and participation in school-wide design competitions. Teachers also award House points to each of their classes based on the weekly performance and participation of students. Points are accumulated throughout the year to produce an overall winning House.



Primary Lockers and Cubbies

Each Primary School student is assigned a cubby at the beginning of the school year, or on joining the school. Cubbies should be used to store library books, bags, spare clothes/coats and any other materials needed for the school day. They should not be used to store any valuables. Primary cubbies do not require a key and are unlocked at all times. Any perishable foods should be removed by students daily.

Playground Guidelines

Students are encouraged to make the most of the school's outside space during break times. When using the outdoor facilities, safety and respect for others and one's surroundings are of paramount importance. Primary School students must not leave the school premises during break times and must not climb any trees or walls in the school grounds. Any

accidents or problems with play equipment must be reported to the Duty teacher immediately. A full list of playground rules can be found in Annex 4.

Safety drills

Fire, earthquake and armed intruder drills are conducted periodically. Students are informed of procedures for each event during assemblies and Form time. All students are expected to follow these procedures to enable a smooth evacuation of the school and ensure student safety. A comprehensive review of procedures is conducted after each drill to implement any improvements needed. A report of each drill is shared with the Health and Safety Committee and Governing Board.

Student Council

BIS has separate Student Councils for Primary and Middle/High School students. Councils are organised and supported by a designated teacher, a 'Student Council Facilitator'. For Primary School, a primary school teacher will serve as the student council facilitator. At the beginning of the school year, each form class elects two representatives to represent them on the Student Council. Elections are held again in the second semester - with students on the Student Council normally serving one semester. Student Councils can meet as often as required to discuss any issues related to BIS and to present recommendations to BIS management. The Councils also organize school events for students such as Valentine's Day and Halloween.

Student Support and Counselling

Homeroom teachers and Co-teachers are the first port of call for providing students support relating to academic, social or emotional well-being. In addition to their Form teachers, students can also approach the School Counsellor, Ms Zhibek, or the Head of Student Welfare, Ms Laura, for help at any time. Initial contact can be made by the student themselves or as a referral by teachers or parents. Homeroom teachers, Co-teachers, subject teachers, Ms Zhibek, and Ms Gill work together and communicate regularly to monitor the wellbeing of all students. Any staff member with whom students wish to discuss any concerns will keep information shared with them confidential - unless the student is in any personal danger of, or may be subject to abuse or neglect. If this is the case, concerns must be referred to the Child Protection Officers, Ms Laura and/or Ms Zhibek, and the necessary guidelines will be followed to ensure the student is cared for in the correct manner.

Technology

Grade 3, 4, and 5 students will be given a school email account with access to Google drive. Students are expected to check their email regularly and use their account responsibly. Access to the school computer network must only be made using an authorised account username and password; students should always keep their passwords secret. Students may access school Wi-Fi through the BIS_Students network. Use of the internet and school computers should be for educational purposes only.

All primary classes also have access to Chromebooks (stored in the library) and desktop computers in the ICT room and primary library. These devices should be used with permission and under the supervision of the class teacher, ECA supervisor or librarian only. Students must treat all devices with care and respect.

Any violations of responsible technology use may result in a temporary or permanent internet ban, school disciplinary procedures or, where appropriate, police involvement. For further guidance on the use of technology at BIS, please refer to the ICT policy which can be found on our school website.

A number of upper primary school students have personal mobile phones. According to the BIS Mobile Phone policy, mobile phones should not be used anywhere in school for any purpose between 7:45 – 15:15. The following exception can, however, apply:

- Students may use their phones in class if given specific permission by the class teacher.

If a student uses their phone outside of this approved condition, it will be confiscated and kept at Reception until the end of the day. If repeat offences of this occur, contact will be made with parents to discuss the issue to better

understand the context behind the phone usage and to find a solution to the problem. One eventual requirement may be for the student to leave their phone with Reception every day. All students are expected to read and adhere to the ICT policy and mobile phone policy, which can be found in Appendices 5 and 6.

Valuables

Primary school students are asked not to bring valuables to school. Money should be brought to school for school trip fees or for planned events such as a charity bake sale. This money should be kept in pupils' lockers/cubbies. If a valuable is required for a class activity, such as 'show and tell', students may leave the valuable with their homeroom teacher for safe keeping.

Yearbooks

A school yearbook is produced at the end of each academic year. This is available to order for a subsidised cost through the school office and will be available for collection in the final week of term. An email explaining the process will be sent to students and staff nearer the time.

All Handbooks and Policies can be found on the school website (www.bis.kg) or can be provided on request at BIS Reception.

Frequently Asked Questions: General

- **What are the school hours?**
The registration period is between 07:45 and 08:00. However, the school is open to students from 07:30. Primary school students finish classes at 15:00 and enjoy an afternoon snack and opportunity to play until 15:30. Optional extra-curricular activities take place between 15:30 and 16:30.
- **What should I do if my child is going to be late?**
Please call our reception office on +996 312 21 44 06 or email info@bis.kg and your child/children's homeroom teacher(s) to inform the school of the late arrival and approximate arrival time.
- **What should I do if my child is going to miss school?**
Please call our reception office on +996 312 21 44 06 or email info@bis.kg and your child/children's homeroom teacher(s) to inform the school of your school absence.
- **What should I do if somebody different will be picking my child up at the end of the day?**
Please call our reception office on +996 312 21 44 06 or email info@bis.kg and your child/children's homeroom teacher(s) to inform the school, of the change.
- **What time is lunch?**
For Primary school students, lunch time is at 12:15. Students will have plenty of time to enjoy their food as well as have time for recreational play.
- **Are there any prohibited foods on the campus?**
BIS is a completely nut-free school. No student, parent, or staff member should bring any nuts (including peanuts) into school. To protect student safety and to avoid allergic reactions, no food of any kind may be brought into BIS by students, parents, and non-kitchen staff, if it is intended to be shared among students, including for birthday parties.
For birthday parties, if ordered 3 days in advance, a pizza can be ordered from a limited list, which is known to be nut free. Any party or event with ordered food must be approved in advance with the Homeroom/Form Teacher or Co-Teacher. Students are not allowed to order in food to be delivered to school under any circumstances. The rule about not bringing in food to share only applies during school days until 17:30. For any evening or weekend event, food may be brought into school for sharing, if approved in advance by the Head of Administration.
- **Does my child need a laptop?**

Primary students are not required to bring a laptop to school. Chromebooks are available to use on site if a teacher would like students to use this type of device for online research and/or work.

- **What stationery does my child need?**

Primary school students have access to pencils, pens, rulers and all other basic equipment in the classroom. However, if students would like to bring their own equipment this is also though these items brought to school are the student's responsibility.

- **When are holidays?**

Please see the school calendar on our website for the school holidays. As national holidays sometimes change, please check the calendar throughout the year.

- **Who should I talk to if I have a problem?**

Homeroom and Co-teachers should be the first port of call if any issues arise. If a problem continues, please contact the Primary School Principal to discuss the matter further.

- **Is there a school bus? How does it work?**

Yes, school buses cover a number of routes around Bishkek and are supervised by school staff. Morning pick-up begins from 7:15 (depending on location) and afternoon buses depart school at 15:30 and 16:30 after ECAs have finished. All buses are equipped with seatbelts. If you would like to use the school bus or are interested in finding out more about routes and cost, please contact Burmukan Birzanova.

- **What should my child do if they forget books or homework?**

In Primary school, we spend time focussing on, and developing, good organisational skills. Occasionally students forget things at home that they need for lessons. If this happens, they should inform the teacher at the beginning of the lesson and ask for advice as to what you should do. If it is the first time this happens, they are likely to be given a reminder to bring the correct materials in the future. However, if students regularly forget to bring the necessary materials to class, teachers may involve the homeroom and co-teacher to discuss how to address issues involving organisation.

- **Where can I store my things?**

Each Primary School student is assigned a cubby at the beginning of the school year, or on joining the school. Cubbies should be used to store library books, bags, spare clothes/coats and any other materials needed for the school day. Any perishable foods should be removed by students daily.

Frequently Asked Questions: Programme

What is the International Baccalaureate Primary Years Programme (IB PYP)?

The International Baccalaureate Primary Years Programme is a curriculum framework for young learners aged 3 –12 designed by the International Baccalaureate. Founded on a philosophy that recognizes a child's natural curiosity, creativity and ability to reflect, the PYP generates a stimulating, challenging learning environment to nurture those assets and foster a lifelong love of learning in every child. The PYP is transdisciplinary, meaning students learn across subject areas while investigating big ideas.

Does the IB PYP have a specific set of standards?

In the IB PYP, students learn about significant concepts through units of inquiry. The six transdisciplinary themes that guide units of inquiry and compose a year of study are:

- Who we are
- Where we are in place and time
- How we express ourselves
- How the world works
- How we organize ourselves
- Sharing the planet.

Units of inquiry interweave subject areas such as mathematics, language, arts, science and social studies. This approach encourages students to make their own connections between what they learn in core subject areas and how it relates to the world around them.

What are the advantages of an IB education?

- IB World Schools (the only schools authorized to offer IB programmes) are subject to a strict accreditation process monitored by the IB, ensuring that schools provide a high-quality education.
- IB teaching methods and curriculums are research-based and draw from the best educational practices from systems around the world.
- IB teachers are required to participate in many professional development opportunities to continually promote their awareness of current educational practices and new thinking.
- IB students develop a sense of the world around them and their responsibility to it.
- IB programmes are recognized internationally and ease the educational transitions of mobile students so that their education is not adversely affected if their families relocate.

Do IB PYP teachers receive special training?

All IB PYP teachers receive professional development in IB's approaches to teaching and approaches to learning from certified IB workshop leaders. This is a requirement for IB World Schools implementing the PYP.

What about the other curriculums from around the world?

The learning at Bishkek International School has been designed to engage students in learning that is relevant, challenging and significant. As an International Baccalaureate School, our philosophy and approach is based on the teaching and learning principles of guided inquiry, development of globally significant conceptual understandings, collaborative learning, differentiation and assessment for learning. Whilst teaching through the PYP framework, we incorporate standards from Singapore Math Enhanced, NGSS and the UK National English Curriculum into our programme in order to ensure the best education for our students.

Have studies been done on the impact of the IB PYP?

The IB PYP places great value on external validation of its programmes, curricula, and professional development. A recent Global International Schools' Assessment study found that IB PYP students outperformed non-IB students in mathematics, reading, and writing.

How can I learn more about the IB PYP?

- Visit the IB website at www.ibo.org.
- Attend school meetings and events.
- Arrange a meeting with the BIS PYP coordinator.
- Speak with your child's IB PYP classroom teacher.
- Ask your child to explain how they learn at BIS.

Policies, Handbooks, & Calendar

School policies

Up-to-date versions of all school policies can be found on our school website [here](#).

Handbooks

Parents & Guardians Handbook
Student Handbook

Calendar

[School Year 2022/2023](#)



Useful contacts

Head of School	David Grant	dgrant@bis.kg
Primary School Principal	Gill McGuigan	gm McGuigan@bis.kg
PYP Coordinator and PYP ELA Coordinator	Alicia Grinsteinner	agrinsteinner@bis.kg
Homeroom Teachers	Grade 0 - Altynai Isabekova	aisabekova@bis.kg
	Grade 1 - Maria Corbett	mcorbett@bis.kg

	Grade 1 - Begimai Keneshbekova	bkeneshbekova@bis.kg
	Grade 2 - Oksana Chichilova	ochichilova@bis.kg
	Grade 2 - Morgan Chadderton	mchadderton@bis.kg
	Grade 3 - Paul Fahidi	pfahidi@bis.kg
	Grade 3 - Michaela Kilbride	mkilbride@bis.kg
	Grade 4 - Shelley King	shking@bis.kg
	Grade 4 - Ana Marie Alcala	aalcala@bis.kg
	Grade 5 - Rebecca Peters	rpeters@bis.kg
	Grade 5 - Rona Butler	rbutler@bis.kg
PYP Counsellor	Zhibek Kenzhebaeva	zhkenzhebaeva@bis.kg
Learning Diversity and Inclusion Coordinator	Kathryn Ryder	kryder@bis.kg
Head of PYP Language Acquisition	Elvira Tonueva	etonueva@bis.kg
ECA Coordinator	Bojana Askovic	baskovic@bis.kg
Librarian	Irina Pak	ipak@bis.kg
School doctor	Asel Turusbaeva	doctor@bis.kg
Head of Administration	Mirzat Osmonova	mosmonova@bis.kg
Chief Accountant	Ermek Alybekova	finance@bis.kg

Primary School Subject Teachers and BIS Administration Members

Details of all our subject teachers and administration can be found on the school website. If you would like to contact any specific teacher or admin member, please use the first initial of their first name followed by their surname and @bis.kg

For example, to contact Alicia Grinsteinner the email address would be 'agrinsteinner@bis.kg'.

School Contact Information

Email: info@bis.kg

Phone: +996 312 214 406