



# **Bishkek International School**

## **Vision Mission & Development Policy**

Reviewed by the Management Board: August 2024  
Previous Review: August 2023

**Approved by the Governing Board: August 2024**

## Preface

### Mission, Policies, Handbooks and Regulations

The Mission of Bishkek International School 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 and demonstrates diversity and inclusivity;
- Promotes the well-being of the whole school community;
- Contributes positively to the development of the Kyrgyz Republic.

This policy is one of several policies, procedures and related documents that guide operations at Bishkek International School (BIS) and help to facilitate the achievement of our mission. The full list of relevant documents, prepared by the Management Board and approved by the Governing Board, comprises:

Policies:

1. Vision, Mission and Development Policy
2. Admissions Policy
3. Learning Diversity and Inclusion Policy
4. Counseling Policy
5. Language Policy
6. Academic Integrity Policy
7. Assessment Policy
8. Health & Safety Policy
9. Child Protection Policy
10. Educational Visits Policy
11. Ethics Policy
12. Environmental Policy
13. Accounting Policy

Handbooks:

1. Staff Handbook
2. Parents & Guardian Handbook
3. Student Handbook

All Governing Board members and all staff must be aware of each of these documents and their contents. All policy documents and handbooks are available to students and parents/guardians via the BIS website or provided in PDF form to parents/guardians on request. All policy documents and handbooks are reviewed and revised by the Management Board every year, normally in April/May for approval by the Governing Board for the following academic year. All students, parents and staff are invited to send comments and suggest any changes to the Management Board at any time before the end of April each year for consideration for policies/handbooks for the next academic year.

Overall Governance of BIS is guided by the legal charter and various internal regulations. These are:

1. Legal Charter of 'Bishkek International School'
2. Regulations of the Governing Board
3. Regulations of the Parents Association

#### 4. Regulations of the Advisory Council

# International Baccalaureate

BIS is an International Baccalaureate (IB) World School, offering the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme (DP), the Middle Years Programme (MYP), and the Primary Years Programme (PYP). IB World Schools share a common philosophy and commitment to high quality, challenging, international education that BIS believes is important for our students. For more information about IB see [www.ibo.org](http://www.ibo.org)

## International Baccalaureate Mission Statement

*"The International Baccalaureate aims to develop inquiring, knowledgeable and caring young people who help to create a better and more peaceful world through intercultural understanding and respect. To this end the organization works with schools, governments and international organizations to develop challenging programmes of international education and rigorous assessment. These programmes encourage students across the world to become active, compassionate and lifelong learners who understand that other people, with their differences, can also be right"*

## International Baccalaureate Learner Profile

The aim of all IB programmes is to develop internationally minded people who, recognizing their common humanity and shared guardianship of the planet, help to create a better and more peaceful world. The IB learner profile represents 10 attributes valued by IB World Schools. We believe these attributes, and others like them, can help individuals and groups become responsible members of local, national and global communities. As IB learners we strive to be:

1. **Knowledgeable:** *We love learning new things. We explore concepts, ideas, and issues that have local and global significance. In doing so, we acquire in-depth knowledge and develop understanding across a broad and balanced range of disciplines.*
2. **Thinkers:** *We think about everything and make good decisions. We exercise initiative in applying thinking skills critically and creatively to recognize and approach complex problems, and make reasoned, ethical decisions.*
3. **Inquirers:** *We like to find out how things work and why they work this way. We develop our natural curiosity. We acquire the skills necessary to conduct inquiry and research and show independence in learning. We actively enjoy learning and this love of learning will be sustained throughout our lives.*
4. **Caring:** *We care about other people and want to make them feel good. We show empathy, compassion, and respect towards the needs and feelings of others. We have a personal commitment to service, and act to make a positive difference to the lives of others and to the environment.*
5. **Principled:** *We are responsible for our own actions. We always try to do what is right. We act with integrity and honesty, with a strong sense of fairness, justice and respect for the dignity of the individual, groups, and communities. We take responsibility for our own actions and the consequences that accompany them.*
6. **Reflective:** *We think about what we have learnt and what we have done, to be better in future. We give thoughtful consideration to our own learning and experience. We are able to assess and understand our strengths and limitations in order to support our learning and personal development.*
7. **Balanced:** *We have a balanced life with lots of learning, lots of activity, and lots of friends. We understand the importance of intellectual, physical, and emotional balance to achieve personal well-being for ourselves and others.*
8. **Risk-Takers:** *We are not afraid of trying new things, and we are brave. We approach unfamiliar situations and uncertainty with courage and forethought, and have the independence of spirit to explore new roles, ideas and strategies.*
9. **Open-minded:** *We understand different cultures and different ways of doing things. We understand and appreciate our own cultures and personal history, and we are open to the perspectives, values, and traditions of other individuals and communities. I am accustomed to seeking and evaluating a range of points of view, and am willing to grow from the experience.*
10. **Communicators:** *We can speak in more than one language. We are good at working with others. We understand and express ideas and information confidently and creatively in more than one language and in a variety of modes of communication. We work effectively in collaboration with others.*

In BIS we also have an additional profile, which is essential for wellbeing and success:

1. **Resilient:** *The path may be difficult, but we will succeed. We are resilient and capable of overcoming any challenge that comes our way. We have the inner strength and determination to navigate through difficult times and emerge stronger than before..*

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## 1. VISION & MISSION

The BIS vision, mission and commitments are based on the BIS Charter and concept documents when founding the school, and a collaborative process involving students, staff, parents and Founders in 2014, before approval by the Governing Board (GB) in June 2014, with further review and amendment in 2018 and 2022.

### 1.1 Vision

To be a model of excellence in Central Asia providing inspirational education in a happy environment for globally minded students who are the leaders of the future.

### 1.2 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 and demonstrates diversity and inclusivity;
- Promotes the well-being of the whole school community;
- Contributes positively to the development of the Kyrgyz Republic.

### 1.3 Commitment

BIS is a non-profit foundation, founded by the community as a liberal, secular and multi-cultural school with transparent governance and operations, providing education in a supportive, family orientated and safe environment. BIS welcomes any individual regardless of their gender, ethnicity, language, political and religious beliefs and everyone is encouraged to take part in all school activities.

In accordance with the BIS Charter, in addition to providing excellent education, our mission includes raising awareness of human rights, development of social responsibility, social justice and democratic participation, awareness and tolerance of cultural difference, humanity, development of team spirit, creativity, environmental protection and sustainable development.

We are a community school, inspiring students who reflect the power of community to achieve extraordinary transformative change for a better world. Our aim is that BIS becomes the most exceptional school in Central Asia demonstrating the benefits of our approach to education, inspiring much wider changes in education in the region.

### 1.4 Internationalism

Internationalism promotes an environment in which diversity, multilingualism, cultural awareness, communication, and a global perspective for learning are celebrated; enabling students to listen, collaborate, embrace good ideas, solve problems together, and achieve positive change on a local and global level.

## 2. DEVELOPMENT POLICY

In accordance with our Vision and Mission, BIS has a policy of continuous improvement for the school and the educational experience of our students.

### 2.1 Governance

#### **Governing Board**

The school is governed by a Governing Board (GB) of nine members which sets strategy and policy and ensures funding and sustainability as a non-profit Foundation. Three members of the Governing Board are elected by the Parents Association, three members are elected by the school Advisory Council, and three members are elected by BIS staff. Governing Board members are normally elected for a three-year period and may be re-elected for a maximum consecutive period of nine years. The Charter of the school and the Regulations of the Governing Board are available to download from the school website.

BIS recognises the importance of a strong professional Governing Board to oversee the development of the school and the provision of excellent international education. Therefore, the executive body of the school (the Management Board) has a responsibility to facilitate and support both the Governing Board, and the bodies electing members of the Governing Board, in particular the Parents Association, and the Advisory Council.

#### **Management Board**

BIS has a collegiate management structure, as defined in the Charter, with up to five members of an executive Management Board, appointed by the Governing Board, including the Chair of Management Board who is authorised to sign documents on behalf of BIS.

BIS is committed to maintain a collegiate management structure and effective teamwork amongst staff.

#### **Founders**

BIS has twelve individuals recognised as Founders:

- 1 Mark Witschi, Swiss citizen
- 2 Emma Woodcock, British citizen
- 3 Emil Umetaliev, Kyrgyz Citizen
- 4 David Grant, British citizen
- 5 Andrew Lewis, British citizen
- 6 Michael Astoparthis, British Citizen
- 7 Umar Shavurov, Kyrgyz citizen
- 8 Tolondu Toichubaev, Kyrgyz citizen
- 9 Rysbek Toktogul, Kyrgyz citizen
- 10 Jamilya Imankulova, Kyrgyz citizen
- 11 Chinara McDonald, Kyrgyz citizen
- 12 Armando Ruano, US citizen

The first six Founders listed here are the legal Founders. The legal Founders have delegated most of their power to the Governing Board, as defined in the Charter. The legal Founders remaining role is to protect the integrity of the Charter, hence any changes to the Charter require approval by the legal Founders. If the legal Founders determine that the Governing Board is operating in contradiction to the Charter, or the overall vision and mission of the school, they may also dismiss the Governing Board, temporarily appoint an interim board and request new Governing Board elections by the electing bodies.

## **Parents Association**

The Parents Association plays a substantive role in the community life of the school. All parents and/or guardians of students are included in the Parents Association as part of their agreement when enrolling their child in the school. The Parents Association represents the interests of parents by inter-alia:

- (i) Electing three members of the Governing Board;
- (ii) Meeting with the Management Board to discuss school issues and to nominate representatives for school working groups;
- (iii) Appointing Class Representatives to help parents communicate with each other and the school;
- (iv) Organising social events around the school and providing volunteers to help with school activities.

The Parents Association elects a Parents Association Management Committee (PAMC) to organise its affairs.

The Parents Association has grown into a very effective supporting body for the school, operating in a professional way with strong leadership from the PAMC. BIS is committed to maintain this positive parental involvement in the school as a vibrant community school.

## **Advisory Council**

BIS Advisory Council represents permanent institutions in the Kyrgyz Republic with an interest in development of the school. The Council helps to set and maintain the ethos and direction of the school and has the right to elect three members of the Governing Board. It meets around three times a year to discuss development of BIS, education issues in the Kyrgyz Republic and to elect members of the Governing Board.

BIS is committed to working with the Advisory Council for effective engagement with the vision, mission and activities of BIS and educational outreach for positive impact on the education sector in Central Asia.

## **2.2 Student Enrolment**

BIS opened in September 2011 with less than 20 students, aged 2 to 10 years old, with enrolment increasing to over 400 students aged 2 to 18 years old in 2024. Fifty percent of students are Kyrgyz citizens, with the other fifty percent representing over 30 different nationalities from all over the world.

The school accepts all students regardless of ability, gender, ethnicity, language, and political or religious belief and everyone is encouraged to take part in all school activities. School policy is to maintain a minimum 50% international students to ensure the international approach of the school and enhance cultural interaction with other students from many different countries of the world.

## **2.3 Scholarships**

BIS has a Scholarship Fund to be used solely for scholarships for gifted but disadvantaged children who cannot meet the School fees. Scholarships are widely advertised and available on an open competitive basis through student examination and assessment of parental wealth and income. The Governing Board establishes clear criteria for availability of Scholarships, student assessment, assessment of parental wealth and income, and application procedures. All criteria and procedures are publicly available via the School website. Any student who is awarded a Scholarship automatically receives a 20% discount on the standard school fee. This discount is made against School operating costs and is not compensated by payment from the Scholarship Fund. The Scholarship Fund may contribute from 20% to 70% of the full school fee (before discount) dependent on assessment of parental wealth and income (i.e. need). Therefore, students on the highest Scholarship award must cover at least 10% of the full fee from their



own resources or from individual sponsors, rising to 60% of the full school fee for those on the lowest Scholarship award. Any use of the Scholarship Fund must be approved in advance by the Governing Board, or by a Scholarship Committee established under the Governing Board, which reports on all decisions to the Governing Board.

One scholarship for 90% discount was awarded by open competition in December 2011 to a student who joined the preschool class at the time. Two scholarships for 70% discount were awarded by open competition in December 2013 for two 13-year-old students. Two scholarships for 70% discount were awarded in June 2014 following open competition with one 12-year-old and one 13-year-old student who started in September 2014. Since 2015, scholarships have been available to join High School, with awards from 50% to 90% discount from the full school fee, with award dependent on both academic merit and ability to pay. As of August 2024, 25 scholarship students are enrolled in BIS, comprising 18% of our High School students.

## **2.4 Staff Resources**

BIS opened in September 2011 with seven staff, increasing to 170 staff (including non-teaching staff) in 2024. For the 2024/25 academic year we have 110 teaching staff and teaching assistants, including 8 who work part-time.

## **2.5 Professional Development**

BIS is committed to professional staff development. All teaching staff have the opportunity to complete online and face to face professional development courses as agreed by the Management Board.

All staff are encouraged to continuously upgrade their skills and qualifications. BIS is supportive in providing study time and financial assistance to improve qualifications, where this also benefits BIS capacity.

Staff are offered either English language training or Russian language training as part of the standard training program provided by BIS.

Staff also receive annual training in first-aid, health & safety and child protection.

## **2.6 Curriculum & Accreditation**

BIS is accredited by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC) Commission on International Education (CIE) from November 2018. <https://cie.neasc.org//>

BIS is a fully authorised International Baccalaureate, IB World School, offering the IB Diploma Programme, the IB Primary Years Programme and IB Middle Years Programme. The IB Diploma Programme is a two-year educational programme in Grade 11 and 12 providing an internationally accepted qualification for entry into higher education and is accepted by many universities worldwide. The IB Primary Years Programme runs through Preschool and Primary School and the IB Middle Years Programme is offered in Middle School. IB World Schools share a common philosophy and commitment to high quality, challenging, international education that BIS believes is important for our students. For further information about International Baccalaureate, see [www.ibo.org](http://www.ibo.org)

The school is also accredited as a Cambridge International School by Cambridge Assessment International Education and currently provides the International General Certificate of Secondary Education (IGCSE) in Grade 9 and 10. Students normally take up to nine IGCSE subjects from five different groups to provide a broad and balanced curriculum, including two different languages, as a good base for entry to the International Baccalaureate Diploma programme.

The Government of the Kyrgyz Republic Ministry of Education and Science fully accredited BIS in May

2018 (renewed in May 2023) to deliver the national curriculum with examinations in Grade 9 and Grade 11 for the State Certificate of Secondary Education. Education licences cover preschool, primary school and secondary school.

In addition to external qualifications for the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme, the Cambridge IGCSE programme and Kyrgyz State Certificate of Education, BIS also awards a US equivalent High School Diploma to graduating students, accredited by NEASC.

## **2.7 Educational Resources**

In the early years of the school, educational resources were restricted due to high demands on limited finance in a community school reliant on bank finance for development funding. This required innovative educators to create resources and generous members of the school community to donate books and materials for students to use. BIS is very grateful for the commitment of everyone involved during this establishment phase.

The constantly growing library has moved five times within the school to accommodate our expanding collection. Library staff educate students to find and use resources both from our own library and via the internet, including online library catalogues. Diploma students also have access to the library resources of the American University in Central Asia and the National Library of the Kyrgyz Republic by special agreement between the school and these organisations. Textbooks and course-book requirements are reviewed every spring with purchase in time for the following academic year.

The ICT room has 20 desktop computers, with more in libraries for student use and chromebooks available for in class use. All classrooms have overhead projectors.

Three fully equipped science laboratories were commissioned in 2017. In 2018 a new Art room was built with a Music room added in 2019. In 2021 a new Creative Arts Centre (CAC) was built to accommodate art classes and Makerspace, and new classrooms added to existing buildings every year.

Sports facilities include an indoor sports hall for basketball, volleyball, soccer and PE, a Primary Years Gym, a full-size outdoor basketball court and an outdoor natural grass area for play.

## **2.8 Buildings & Facilities**

In July 2011, BIS purchased premises at 67A Bronirovannaya Street which were originally built as a Kindergarten for the 'Lenin Factory' in Bishkek. The kindergarten building and land were sold by the factory to a private owner in the early 1990's, then sold to a western sponsored bible school in the late 1990's. The bible school ceased operations around 2008 and the premises were derelict when purchased by BIS. Although BIS is a Kyrgyz Foundation, several BIS Founders are foreign citizens which means that BIS is not legally allowed to own land. To facilitate land ownership, the Kyrgyz citizen co-founders of BIS separately founded the Kelechek Education Endowment Fund (KEEF) to own the school land, with purchase paid for by a long-term no-interest loan to KEEF from BIS.

Prior to school opening in September 2011, the northern wing of the school was renovated to allow the school to open with four classrooms, school hall, kitchen and canteen. In summer 2012, the southern wing was completely renovated to add six classrooms and administration block, and the outside area renovated to add the basketball court, football field and play area for preschool children. In summer 2013, the kitchen was completely renovated and the adventure play area added for older children. In summer 2014 all areas of the school were renovated but with a focus on substantial improvement of educational resources rather than new buildings.

In summer 2015, improvements included:

- A new 'Educational Resource Centre' (e-center) built on the staff car-park, with separate libraries

for Primary and Secondary plus two medium size classrooms for secondary classes and one language teaching room for smaller groups.

- New outdoor covered seating and play area for students beside the e-center.
- A two-level extension to the west end of the north wing of the main building, providing one more room for preschool (first floor) and one classroom for primary school (second floor).
- Foundations installed for new building in the central entrance courtyard, to enable major building extension in summer 2016.
- Replaced the water supply, electric supply and sewage systems connecting the main building to public systems.

In 2016/17, improvements included:

- Completed the central entrance courtyard to the second floor providing an open plan cafeteria and reception on the first floor and space for ICT and library/media rooms on the second floor.
- Added a 3rd floor across the main building, to accommodate two new science laboratories, a sports hall and more classrooms.
- The total new build area added 1540 square metres to the existing 1200 square metres in the main building, which more than doubled the size of the school.
- New substation to provide power to the school.
- Security fence and gates.

In 2018, improvements included:

- New security cabin, security fencing, PA system and video system.
- Air conditioning in the main hall and essential rooms.
- Replaced the workshop & covered area with 2 classrooms and built a new workshop
- Added an additional staff room
- Re-laid the basketball surface outside.

In 2019, improvements included:

- Air purification equipment for all rooms in the school.
- Building a second floor on the Annex, with a Music Room and Makerspace room.
- Equipment for the second floor of the Annex.
- Treehouses, music area and climbing walls in the main playground.

In 2020, improvements included:

- Adding a study café terrace to the roof of the E-Centre for Diploma students and staff.
- Renting two buildings opposite the main gate and completely renovating them to provide:
  - External reception with meeting rooms and to receive parents and visitors as only students and staff are allowed on-campus during COVID-19 controls;
  - Study rooms for Diploma students to free up space in the main campus for younger students;
  - Extensive study and lounge rooms for teaching staff to free up space on the main campus for students;
  - A medical isolation room.

In 2021, improvements included:

- Converting the café terrace on the E-Centre roof to classrooms for year round use;
- Renting another site opposite the main gate and adding classrooms for a 'Creative Arts Centre';
- Adding additional play equipment and covered seating on the grass field area.

In 2022, improvements included:

- Building two additional primary classrooms;
- Building a Primary Gym;
- Incorporating an additional building and converting it into a Preschool.

In 2023, improvements included:

- New treehouses in the playground;
- Additional Preschool classroom;
- Five additional classrooms for Middle/High School teaching.

In 2024, improvements included:

- Two additional teaching rooms on the 3rd floor of the main building;
- Additional study room for Grade 11 & 12 in the IB Diploma Programme
- Additional student toilets in the main building.

The school is now fully equipped to accommodate up to 450 students from age 2 to age 18 years old.

To develop new campus facilities, land has been identified on the south side of the city at two different locations; one close to Orto-Sai, and the other close to Tash-Dobo. Plans are in process for full campus development. The [New Campus Concept](#) brochure sets out our vision for the new campus which will be built as soon as planning approvals are received and funds allow for development.

## 2.9 Funding

BIS is a public, non-profit, foundation, 'owned' by the community. Twelve founders gave donations of \$5000 each in 2010/11 to provide some of the initial capital to get the school established. Three of the Founders provided additional donations of \$5,000 to \$30,000, for a total of \$50,000 to assist various aspects of school development.

Purchase of the school building and land, development costs for renovation and school opening were covered by a seven-year loan of \$300,000 from Kyrgyz Investment and Credit Bank (KICB) at 12% interest per annum and unsecured loans from two founders of \$500,000 in total, for up to 3 years at 10% interest per annum. All private loans were repaid in 2014 and replaced by a new KICB loan for \$250,000 at 12% interest over 5 years. An additional 5-year loan of \$300,000 was secured from KICB in January 2016, and a private loan secured to complete all new building work in 2016/17. Many loans have been repaid, with outstanding loans down from a peak of \$900,000 in spring 2017 to \$40,000 in January 2021. Further loans were secured from KICB in February 2021 and April 2024 to support new campus development, with \$400,000 outstanding in August 2024.

To support initial school development costs, a differential was charged on school fees for the first five years of operation when the school fee was paid by a 'Renowned Institutions', defined as an Embassy or international institution representing countries with over \$30,000 per capita GDP and major investors with over \$300 million investment in the Kyrgyz Republic. The differential was used to invest in new facilities, teaching resources and programs for all students and to support scholarships for gifted but disadvantaged children who could not afford school fees.

In 2019, the school introduced a higher school fee for students whose fees are at least 75% funded or refunded by an organisation, in order to improve school facilities for all students now and in future. The

increased fee component goes into the School Development Fund (SDF) with spending controlled by the Governing Board. Approximately 50% of the SDF income is used for capital investment in new facilities on the current campus, and 50% used for new campus development.

Loan repayment, teacher salaries, educational resources and school development are all paid for from school fees which are set at a level to ensure sustainability. Any surplus made is reinvested in the school. School fees are capped by a Charter condition, that school fees in USD cannot increase more than the USD inflation rate in the Kyrgyz Republic. Fee costs for long term students are also held down by a 20% platinum discount on school fees after attendance for three full academic years.

## **2.10 Strategic Vision for BIS**

In February 2021, the Governing Board approved the Strategic Vision for BIS in 20 years' time as:

1. A fully inclusive non-profit community school offering excellent international education in a happy environment, supporting all students to achieve their academic, creative, and sporting potential in a safe and healthy environment.
2. A reputation for transparent governance, constant improvement, lifelong learning, critical thinking, and a clear focus on content based learning and written curriculum for students.
3. Facilities in Bishkek for up to 1,000 students, with no more than 50% of any single citizenship, including boarding facilities for international high school students to maintain this balance.
4. A campus with exceptional space inside and outside, that students and staff enjoy working in, and can easily host international school events without major disruption to the school.
5. All buildings and land owned by BIS or affiliated parties, with no effective rental payment, no debt, and a substantial cash reserve to provide financial security and cash flow cover.
6. Complete adherence to the BIS Environmental Policy, with clear impact on the wider community in protecting the natural environment, including a 'zero carbon', 'zero waste' campus, as autonomous as possible from external services.
7. Very influential in society, serving as a role model for others, transmitting positive civic values to parents and society as a whole; with substantive impact on both state and private education in the Kyrgyz Republic through internships, training, mentoring, and curriculum development.
8. An extensive network of alumni professionals and donors who contribute to the 'Scholarship Fund' and 'Development Fund' for BIS scholarships and capital improvements.