

The British International School of Brussels



Parents Handbook 2015-2016

THE SCHOOL

School Philosophy

At the British International School of Brussels our children benefit from an enriching and challenging education as they follow a broad and balanced programme based on the British National Curriculum.

Within our welcoming and caring atmosphere each person is respected as an individual. We foster the essential human qualities of mutual respect, integrity, kindness, loyalty, self-discipline, independence, consideration, and self-confidence, equipping our children to become internationally aware citizens.

We guide them to develop their full intellectual, emotional, aesthetic, moral and physical potential so that they learn, think, and make responsible choices, expressing their feelings, thoughts and ideas with clarity.

Facilities

The British International School of Brussels, established in 2000, is a member of the European Council of International Schools and COBISEC, and offers a high quality, British National Curriculum education to English speaking children aged 2½ to 11. We are centrally located on two sites less than 3 minutes walk apart. The Infant School is housed in a magnificent two-storey building, which provides a pleasant working environment for both staff and children. The infant building includes 7 large and very attractive classrooms each with interactive whiteboards, laptop computers with broadband Internet connection, an outside playground and facilities for individual music practice, a separate library, and central display area. The Junior School is housed in a slightly larger four storey building including classrooms with interactive whiteboards, junior library, hall, playground and specialist rooms for Computing and French. All of our full-time teaching staff are university graduates thus holding qualifications enabling them to have Qualified Teacher Status in the UK. All prospective parents are warmly encouraged to visit the school to help them make the very important decision about how and where their child's education should continue.

Development

The small class sizes (current average is around 15) are a very significant attraction to parents as they allow a high degree of individual attention. We also strongly encourage parental involvement, which gives the school its thriving sense of community. We are continually seeking to broaden our curriculum and improve and extend the facilities. In April 2008 the school expanded into its new Junior School building where Key Stage 2 children benefit from the extensive facilities.

Calendar

The academic year has approximately 178 school days divided into three terms from early September to late December, early January to late March and late April to early July.

CURRICULUM

School Hours

Pre-Nursery and Nursery	Mornings	09.00 - 12.10 (Wednesday 09.00 - 12.25)
	Afternoons	13.15 - 15.20
Other Infant classes (Wednesday 09.00 - 12.25 for Reception class)		09.00 - 15.25
Junior classes		09.00 - 15.30

The school opens its doors at 08.30. Before this time members of staff are busy preparing for the day's teaching. Therefore because teachers' supervision responsibilities do not start until 08.30 we would ask parents to understand that a child cannot normally be accepted into school prior to 08.30. All children should be in school by 09.00.

Overview

Our Early Years Unit aims to develop social, physical and creative skills, as well as providing basic groundwork in Language, Number Work and Reading and Writing. Within the school's stimulating learning environment the children then follow the core subjects of Literacy, Numeracy, Science and French together with Music, Computing and Art and Craft. Each class from the Reception Year upwards enjoys swimming activities for several weeks on a rotational basis at a nearby sports centre and PE is taught every week for all classes. A medical certificate is required if your child is unable to take part in this activity. Throughout the school the U.K. National Curriculum is used as the basis for our teaching programme with added perspectives to reflect our location in Brussels. High academic standards are expected by our very supportive parent body and provided by our experienced and committed staff.

Homework

Our policy on homework follows a sensible and steady progression in the amount and extent of homework. This begins with a small amount 4 or 5 times per term for Year 1 increasing steadily to 2½ hours per week for our Year 6 children.

Extra-Curricular Activities

As one of our priorities is to develop the whole person we feel that education should extend beyond the purely academic and consequently we offer a variety of extra-curricular activities some of which change from term to term to accommodate a wide range of popular interests. Our staff, as well as external teachers, offer clubs such as computer club, drama, origami, book making, cooking club, karate, cricket, jazz-ballet, outdoor games, football, art and recorders. A list of the activities currently available will be sent to you during the first week of each term.

EAL

For children who are not native English speakers, our specialist EAL teacher provides a carefully structured programme, designed to bring them to a level where they can

participate fully in the mainstream curriculum as soon as possible. Approximately 50 % of our children have at least one English-speaking parent.

Educational Visits

We appreciate the benefits of educational visits and encourage a wide variety of trips each year to various places of interest connected with the children's school work. All parents should complete a permission form when their child joins the school, giving us permission to make such school excursions and local visits. This can be sent into the school office during their first week of term. Parents are, of course, notified in advance of any excursions and provided with the details about what is to be visited and other practical details. For many visits parents are invited to participate along with their children. Over the past few years we have had visits to local parks, a farm, the market and shops; further afield to mini-Europe and the Atomium, as well as visits to the theatre and the Science, Art, History, Natural History and African Museums. Our older children (Years 4, 5 and 6) also have a week-long field trip to the UK each year.

ADMISSION

Entrance requirements

Admission is possible at any time of the school year following an interview between Head teacher and parents and child. We fully recognise the importance of a smooth and trouble-free integration into the academic and social life of the school and therefore place great emphasis on our warm and sociable atmosphere. We are a small, friendly school currently with around 130 children representing over 30 different nationalities, most of whom have experienced some relocation. We are therefore very welcoming to new children.

Fees

We always endeavour to offer a first class educational service that represents excellent value for money and so our fee structure is very competitive compared with other international schools in Brussels. We do take care to ensure that our fees are always very reasonable as we know that many parents pay these fees themselves.

Location

The school is approximately 3 km from the centre of Brussels on the eastern side of the city being very handily situated for NATO, Eurocontrol, the European Parliament and the European Commission. The school building can be found approximately 1.5km north-west of Montgomery roundabout near the city's middle ring road. We operate several door-to-door school minibus routes. Provided on a cost recovery basis, the routes cover the south, east and north east of the city. Currently nearly a quarter of the school chooses to take advantage of the minibus service.

Minibus schedule

Morning buses are scheduled to arrive at school between 08.30 and 08.45. We offer departures at both 15.35 and 16.35 to allow children to participate in after-school activities. Please note however that there is no guarantee that the minibus departing at 16.35 will cover

all routes on all days of the week. Therefore provision of a return minibus after a particular extra-curricular club must be checked by parents beforehand and not presumed. There is no minibus service at 12.30 on Wednesday; any Nursery and Reception children on the minibus must wait in garderie until the normal 15.30 departure time.

Delivery and Collection of Children

In the morning, parents of Infant department children (Nursery - Year 2) should use parking spaces on Av. Emile Max to pull in and drop their children. If no parking space is available then cars can stop a little way beyond the school where there is space to do so. Parents of Junior department children (Year 3 - Year 6) should use appropriate parking spaces on Av. Emeraude Max to pull in and drop their children. For parking you will need a blue parking disc showing time of arrival which can be purchased from any large supermarket. If no parking space is available then cars can stop a little way before the school where there is space to do so. It is not necessary for drivers to vacate the car as a teacher is on duty at the front of both buildings each morning. We offer all possible assistance to parents to help with the formation of car pools. **At no time should a car be left double-parked or blocking a garage entrance.** If a parent wishes to accompany their child into school then we strongly recommend that they use the car park in the centre of Place Plasky or along Avenue Plasky which are less than 200m from both school buildings and for which there is no charge before 09.00. **As a school we insist that all cars, even those with CD plates, are parked legally at all times.** Any persistent infraction of this request will result in a specific warning and if this is ignored our ultimate sanction is that your child would have to be excluded from school. At the end of the day as their parents arrive and are identified children are individually allowed to leave school to be handed to their parents. If they arrive early, parents should wait on the frontage in front of each school building. All parents are very welcome to come into school at any time but please note once again that you must park legally and safely before doing so. As well as within each street in which a school building is situated, this can be done at Square Plasky or Avenue Diamant at one end of the streets, or the in car parks near Diamant metro station at the other.

Garderie

To assist working parents, a garderie service is available at the school each day from the end of school until 18.00. Children are placed in a supervised area and encouraged to do homework, read or play creatively, depending on their age. There is a scale of charges for Garderie supervision as these are not covered by the normal school fees. Any child not collected at the latest by 15 minutes after the end of school or end of their after-school activity will be considered to be in Garderie and their parents will be charged accordingly. The current rate is 6 euros per hour, but subdivided into half hour periods after the first hour.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Behaviour

Pupils are expected to be well-mannered, tolerant, honest and considerate of other people and other people's property. They are expected to work to a high level in the classroom and to make every effort to be punctual (although it is accepted that occasional delays are

inevitable in a busy city). On rare occasions pupils do not behave as we would wish them to. Sanctions such as disapproval in the case of our younger pupils or a verbal reprimand in the case of the older pupils are usually sufficient to bring about the required improvement in behaviour. In extreme cases it may be necessary to deny the child access to a favourite club or activity or to keep them in school during the mid-morning or lunch-time break. If more serious disciplinary procedures are required, we would of course ask to meet the parents in order to resolve the problem. Discipline is most effective when parents and school work together to bring about desirable behaviour and we would therefore consult with parents at the earliest opportunity.

Anti-Bullying Practice

At BISB we do not tolerate bullying and parents who suspect that it is taking place should inform the Headteacher immediately. Our definition of bullying is persistent long-term oppression by one child, or a group of children, against another child in the form of physical or psychological pressure. All racially motivated, sexist and homophobic remarks and/or behaviour will be treated as bullying.

Specific anti bullying practices include:-

- An annual bullying survey held in June to determine and monitor the extent of the problem.
- BISB's curriculum which seeks to promote kindness, communication, cooperation, and friendship and includes lessons and activities stressing empathy, anger management, and conflict resolution skills.

And also at the individual level:

- serious talks with any bullies and victims.
- serious talks with the parents of any bullies and victims.
- role playing of non-aggressive behaviour with bullies.
- role playing of assertive behaviour with victims.

Possible sanctions include having the bully

- apologise;
- discuss the incident with the teacher, headteacher, and/or parents;
- pay for any damaged belongings;
- spend time in the office or another classroom;
- forfeit break time, golden time or other privileges.
- weekly meetings to communicate to students clear and consistently enforced expectations and to engage them as resources in preventing bullying behaviour.
- ongoing communication with parents.

The key components of our bullying intervention practice are increased adult supervision in all areas of the school, increased consequences for bullying behaviour, and a clear message that bullying will not be tolerated.

Attendance

Regular and punctual attendance at school is essential to the progress and level of achievement of every pupil and is encouraged by all staff. If a pupil is absent through illness,

parents are required to inform the school on the first morning of absence. It is also essential to let us know if the illness is serious or infectious. If a pupil is likely to be absent for an extended period of time the school office needs to be notified as early as possible. This will allow teachers to prepare work for the pupil, if required. The school does not guarantee to prepare advance work without adequate notice. For occasional absence other than through illness, a request should be submitted to the Headteacher although unauthorised absences are not encouraged. A medical certificate is required if a child is absent owing to illness for more than three days. If children are taken out of school early or are returned to school after hospital appointments, please notify the school office by e-mail or written note. All parents should be aware that Belgian law places them under an obligation to ensure that children resident in Belgium above the age of six are in full time education.

Uniform

All children from the Nursery year upwards are obliged to wear our attractive, distinctive and practical uniform. This can be obtained in school. On timetabled PE days children are expected to come to school wearing tracksuit trousers, which should be grey or green along with their white polo shirt. On swimming days, children should bring appropriate swimming costume, bath towel and goggles (optional). All children must wear a swimming hat and swimming shorts are not permitted by the swimming club regulations.

Health and Safety

The health and safety of each child is of paramount importance to the school. However, accidents may occasionally occur or children may be unwell during the school day. In either event every effort will be made to ensure that parents are notified immediately. The emergency contact numbers provided by parents are used to notify parents or their nominated representative. Please ensure also that you have returned your medical release form to the school. It is also very important that the emergency contact numbers are regularly updated by parents so that we have access to you or your nominated contact during the day.

Furthermore parents should be aware that the school has a responsibility to implement procedures for identifying and reporting cases, or suspected cases, of abuse to the Belgian police. This includes cases of potential neglect through parental incapacity due to drugs or alcohol. It goes without saying that in any such cases the school would base its actions and decisions on what is necessary, in accordance with recommendations from the Belgian authorities, to support such pupils who have been abused.

Medical

Parents are asked to ensure that a school medical form is completed before, or on the first day their child attends school and this should be returned to the school office.

If your child has any allergies or suffers from any condition such as asthma, please ensure you discuss this directly with the class teacher.

The School does not allow staff members to dispense medicine to pupils without written consent from the parents. The appropriate form for this can be obtained from the school office. Any medicine coming into school must also be clearly labelled with the child's name

and prescribed dosage. No responsibility can be accepted if a dose is missed. Asthma inhalers must be marked with the child's name and handed to the class teacher for safe keeping.

Pupils who are obviously not well, who have sickness or diarrhoea or who have a fever should not be sent to school. In the case of communicable diseases the school should be notified immediately, so that other parents can be informed. Should your child become unwell during the day we would ask that he or she is collected from school as quickly as possible to minimise discomfort to the child and the risk of infecting others.

There are regular fire drills to ensure safety in the event of a real emergency. Teachers and children are made aware of the location of fire extinguishers at the school, the alarm system, the means of evacuating the building, and of course the need for calm and quiet at all times. After evacuating the building children will line up with their teacher and the register will be called. Fire drills are held at least once per term.

In case of accident

If your child has a serious accident at school, you will be notified immediately. All minor accidents will be treated at school if possible. When a child needs medical care, parents will be asked to accompany the child to the hospital or doctor if at all possible. If parents are unable to come, the class teacher will generally accompany the child.

For less serious incidents the school will administer whatever first aid measures seem necessary if a child is sick or injured at school. The school will then telephone the parents to have them authorise any further treatment needed. If neither parent nor the parents' emergency contact person can be contacted, the school will proceed with any measures that are deemed essential. All staff members receive first-aid training which is regularly updated

Information to parents

Weekly Newsletter

A weekly newsletter is sent out each Friday by e-mail. This newsletter outlines events that concern the school and also reports on general items of interest. A hard copy is also displayed on the school notice board, alongside copies available to pick up if individual parents do not receive a copy by e-mail.

Urgent items are occasionally sent out during the week by e-mail and repeated in Friday's newsletter.

School Web site:

The school Web site is updated regularly by teachers and pupils. All information of general interest about the school is included in this site. Urgent updates e.g. if the school routines are disrupted by heavy snowfall, are displayed on the website's home page. Personal information such as names and addresses are not published on the site. Photos are only included with the consent of the parents or teachers concerned.

Academic Communications with Parents

The evaluation and assessment of children's academic and general progress is an integral part of the child's life in school. The communication of this information takes the following forms:

1. Parents' Evenings

In each of the three terms parents will be invited to attend a parents' evening. Here parents can meet with teachers and discuss their child's progress and work.

2. Reports

Parents will receive two written reports of their child's progress during the year. These will be taken home early in the New Year and just before the end of the school year in late June. Reports will outline the pupil's progress in all areas of the curriculum and are written by the teachers responsible.

3. Individual Appointments

Parents are able to make an appointment to see a member of staff at any time during the school year to discuss the progress of their child if they feel it is necessary. A regular weekly slot is made available by each teacher for parental appointments if required. Each teacher also has their own school e-mail address for direct contact. They do not however have the opportunity to check these throughout the day and so some time may elapse before a message is received and a reply given.

4. Home/School book:

Each child will have a Home/School book in which the teacher will communicate to parents the work being carried out each week, and in which the parents may communicate with the teacher if desired. This is also sent out each week by e-mail.

5. e-mail

Each teacher has an individual e-mail address for both sending and receiving school related information.

School Notice Board:

Our school notice board is a useful means of communication for parents and others. Please note that any parent wishing to place a notice on the board should first have the notice initialled by the Headteacher.

Other

Letters to parents are sent out by the Headteacher as the need arises.

The school should be notified immediately in writing of any change of address, contact numbers or emergency contact person.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT

Friends of BISB

All new parents are encouraged to participate on as active a basis as possible and the school warmly welcomes parental involvement. Parents can help in a variety of ways, for example by

assisting on a school excursion, helping in the library, listening to children reading or running an extra-curricular activity. If you would like to help we would love to hear from you.

Parents are also most welcome to become involved in helping the school and the children through the medium of the Friends of BISB.

The Friends of BISB is principally involved with organising and helping to run events for the children such as Diwali, Craft mornings etc., and from time to time social events at which parents are able to meet each other. Some fund-raising is carried out through the year to support local or international charities.

Parents Telephone Directory:

A telephone directory listing the names of children, e-mail addresses and telephone numbers of all consenting parents is published by the school administration soon after the beginning of each year and updated regularly. This is only for use by parents and numbers should not be given out to anyone else without permission.

School Calendar:

A detailed school calendar listing all term dates is published each year in March and given to parents of all pupils of BISB. This is also regularly updated through the year as further events are planned and the current version is sent out each week with the Friday newsletter.

Useful Addresses and Contacts in Brussels

The school has a selection of magazines and books available for reference by people new to the area. These are to be found in the school library / main entrance hall. Please do not remove them.