



# European School in Central Asia

## Introduction

ESCA is a non-profit community school providing excellent international education in a safe, supportive and happy environment. Our warm and friendly atmosphere is a major factor in helping our students to maximize their potential. Small class sizes, an attractive well-resourced location and vibrant teaching all contribute towards an educational environment that enables students to achieve success.

Our values promote intercultural understanding and respect, diversity and equality, free expression and tolerance, critical thinking and lifelong learning, social justice and protection of human rights. We encourage international mindedness as we learn and prosper together, enriched by our many different cultures, traditions and languages.

Continuous improvement has been a constant feature of the school, with governance by the community to build a great institution with solid foundations providing excellent education.

This document gives an introduction to ESCA. More information is available at [www.esca.kg](http://www.esca.kg)

## Education at ESCA

ESCA provides education for children from two to sixteen years of age. Every year we add more classes at higher levels so that students joining now will be able to complete their full school education to 18 or 19 years old with ESCA.

ESCA is accredited with Cambridge International Examinations, the world's largest provider of international education and qualifications for school students. The Cambridge Curriculum is founded on the values of the University of Cambridge and is designed to develop students who are confident, responsible, reflective, innovative and engaged. Each curriculum framework is designed to engage students in an active and creative learning journey, with a comprehensive set of progressive learning objectives providing a solid foundation upon which the later stages of education are built.

Beyond the standard academic curriculum ESCA provides a comprehensive education program including PE, Art, Music, Dance and a wide range of extra-curricular activities so that our students learn and appreciate a full and active life. Our students love the varied, interesting and active curriculum and they are always happy to come to school and learn.

Since ESCA education is normally provided in English language, optional language and literature lessons in both Russian and Kyrgyz are provided after school every day to enable students to also fully develop their skills in these languages.

**Preschool** accepts children from age 2 to 5 in three classes: Preschool 1 (Age 2 on 1<sup>st</sup> Sept), Preschool 2 (Age 3 on 1<sup>st</sup> Sept) and Preschool 3 (Age 4 on 1<sup>st</sup> Sept). Preschool follows the British Government Early Years and Foundation Stage Framework focused on “learning through play” which fosters confidence and language acquisition through active involvement.

From 2016/2017 ESCA will start the IB Primary Years Programme in the Preschool 2 and Preschool 3.

**Primary education** runs from age 5 to 11 (Primary 1 to 6). Each class has two teachers and small class sizes to ensure that each student reaches their potential and that English learners are not left behind. Students work in small groups or individually according to their needs in each area. A



broad education is provided including English, Mathematics, Science, Art, Music, Physical Education, Dance, ICT, Geography, History, and Russian or Kyrgyz language as a second language option and French or Mandarin or extra English as a third language option. Independent assessment of achievement is made at the end of Year 6 with the Cambridge International Examinations Checkpoint Test.

From 2016/2017 ESCA will start the IB Primary Years Programme in the Primary School. Further information about the programme <http://www.ibo.org/programmes/primary-years-programme/>

**Secondary education** runs from age 11 to 16 (Secondary 1-3 and IGCSE 1&2)

In Secondary 1-3, specialist teachers cover a wide range of subjects, including Art, Music, Physical Education, ICT, Geography, History, Russian or Kyrgyz, and Mandarin or French or extra English, in addition to the core subjects of Mathematics, English and Science. The core subjects are assessed using Cambridge assessment tests at the end of each year to give a recognized assessment of student progress. At the end of Secondary 3, students take Cambridge Checkpoint tests which are independently assessed by Cambridge.

In IGCSE 1&2 (age 14 to age 16) students study the Cambridge International Certificate of Secondary Education (IGCSE) with examination at the end of Year 11. ESCA offers 18 different course options for IGCSE and all students must choose at least seven IGCSEs from five different subject groups so that they qualify for the International Certificate of Education Group Award (ICE). The ICE Group Award provides a broad and balanced curriculum and is ideal for students to move on to the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme for their final two years in school before University.

In practice, ESCA students choose to study between 9 and 12 different IGCSE subjects, including 7 from the 5 different subject groups so that they all receive the International Certificate of Education Award as well as success in the individual IGCSE subjects.

Much more information on the Curriculum for each age group, including the 18 subjects taught at IGCSE, is available at <http://esca.kg/esca-education/curriculum/>

From 2016/2017 ESCA will start introducing the IB Middle Years Programme in the Secondary School. Further information about the programme: <http://www.ibo.org/programmes/middle-years-programme/>

**The IB Diploma** is for students' age 16 to 19 years old.

ESCA is the first International Baccalaureate World School in the Kyrgyz Republic and is authorized to provide the IB Diploma Programme. IB World Schools share a common philosophy and commitment to high quality, challenging, international education that ESCA believes is important for our students. The IB Diploma enables students to go to university anywhere in the world including the USA, Europe, UK, and Asia.

Further information about the programme: <http://www.ibo.org/programmes/diploma-programme/>

### **English language support**

To accommodate non-English speakers ESCA provides full support to English learners with specialist teachers and Cambridge ESL curriculum to learn English as a Second Language. This enables English learners to integrate into the main school curriculum as quickly as possible. With



small class sizes and two teachers in each class, students also receive individual educational support. Many students who started at ESCA with no English are already fluent in English.

## Extra-Curricular Activities

ESCA offers a variety of Extra-Curricular Activities (ECA) from 15.30 to 16.30 every day, with students choosing their own options.

Activities vary according to the time of year but include: Wushu, Art, Drama, Musical, Chess, Calligraphy, First Aid, Jewellery Making, Creative Design, Outdoor Games, Animation, Origami, Swimming, Art, Newsletter, Dance, Tennis, Rock-climbing, Horse-riding, and Soccer.

## Homework

Students from 5 years old receive homework on a daily basis to enable parents to be involved in the education process. Homework may take between 20 to 60 minutes each day and may be in any subject.

## Teaching Staff at ESCA

ESCA has over thirty teaching staff combining the best international teachers with wide experience with the best national teachers with specialist skills and fluent English. In 2015/16, our twenty international teaching staff are from the USA, UK, Japan, South Africa, Switzerland, Columbia, Poland, and France. A full list of staff can be found at <http://esca.kg/about-esca/staff/teaching-team/>

## Students at ESCA

Our students come from a wide range of backgrounds and ESCA is proud to educate over 140 children from over thirty different countries and nationalities.

ESCA welcomes all students regardless of ability, gender, ethnicity, language, or religious belief and everyone is encouraged to take part in all school activities and to achieve their full potential.

Our policy is to maintain at least 50% international students to ensure the international approach of the school and enhance cultural interaction with other students from so many different countries of the world.

## School Facilities

ESCA owns a purpose designed school building meeting full architectural standards including earthquake readiness. Buildings have been completely upgraded in recent years to give a light open feel and to provide a safe environment for learning. All groups have spacious well-equipped classrooms, with specialist rooms for science, art, ICT and library.

Large open school grounds provide a full basketball court, which doubles up as tennis and volleyball court, a bigger grass area for football and sports, and an adventure playground, as well as a separate Preschool outside play area with play equipment and sand.

During winter time the school is provided with several alternative sources of energy and in case of power outage the school has an electric generator. No matter what the winter weather is like or what power or gas supply problems there are in Bishkek, ESCA should still be open.



## Educational Resources

In the early school years, educational resources were limited due to high demands on finance in a community school reliant on banks for development funding. However, over the last year development of educational resources has been a top priority.

New textbooks and workbooks following the Cambridge curriculum are now available for most subjects, with requirements constantly under review and new books purchased as required.

The Library is well laid out and has an ever expanding catalogue of books for students to use for coursework and for their own reading pleasure. ICT room facilities include seventeen computers, electronic whiteboard, graphics tablets and Raspberry Pi computers. All classrooms are equipped with overhead projectors for multimedia presentation.

## School Day and Term Times

The school is open from 7.45 am. Students should be in class at 8.00 and lessons start at 8.15. Formal school finishes at 15.30 but afterschool activities and aftercare run to 17.30 so that students can be collected either at the end of the formal school or after extra-curricular activities.

The academic year runs from the start of September to the end of June, with 180 school days. July and August are summer vacation. A mid-term break during the first term is usually one week at the end of October or early November. The winter break is normally from around 20 December to 10 January and the spring break is normally for one week in the last week of March or first week of April. ESCA is normally closed on national public holidays in the Kyrgyz Republic. The most recent calendar is here <http://esca.kg/news/school-calendar/>

## Dress Code

ESCA does not have a school uniform but a dress code is given in the Student Handbook. As well as keeping to the dress code, students should be sensibly dressed for an active life so that they can use play equipment and sports areas at break times. The Student Handbook and the Parents & Guardians Handbook can be downloaded here: <http://esca.kg/about-esca/policies/>

## Lunch & Snacks

ESCA has a fully equipped kitchen and dining hall and dedicated full time catering staff providing students with morning snack, lunch and afternoon snack. The school menu caters to our international student group with specific dietary needs met for students with different allergies.

Lunch and snacks are included in the overall tuition fee price.

## Health & Safety

Our full time Doctor oversees health issues at the school to minimize any problems and infections. Each student must have a complete vaccination record and ESCA also provides an optional vaccination support service. Our Doctor is also available to deal with any medical incidents at school in case a child falls ill or has a scrape in the playground.

ESCA has a comprehensive Health & Safety Policy and Child Protection Policy which all staff adhere to. Both policies are available to download from the website <http://esca.kg/about-esca/policies/>



Students are secured by 24 hour security guard and video surveillance. All staff members are subject to police record checks and medical examination to protect child health & safety.

## Location

The school is well located in a quiet residential area, not far from the centre of Bishkek but away from main roads and other dangers. Directions and map are here <http://esca.kg/contact-us/map-and-directions/>

## Governance

ESCA is a non-profit foundation, founded by the community as a liberal secular school with transparent governance and operations. ESCA was legally registered on December 1st 2010 and the first Advisory Council meeting was held with the President of the Kyrgyz Republic, Roza Otunbaeva, on May 16th 2011 in the Ministry of Education. The school opened for students in September 2011.

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 ESCA becomes an exceptional school in Central Asia demonstrating the benefits of our approach to education, inspiring wider changes in education in the region.

## Governing Board

The school is governed by a voluntary Governing Board 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 school Founders; three members are elected by the Parents Association, and three members are elected by the school Advisory Council. 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 Chair of the Governing Board is elected by the Board members for a two year period and may not be re-elected for consecutive terms. More information is available at <http://esca.kg/about-esca/governance/governing-board/>

## Founders

ESCA has twelve individual Founders; however the Founders have delegated most of their powers under the Charter to the Governing Board. The Founders retain the right to elect three members of the Governing Board, a right of veto over decisions of the Governing Board and the right to approve any changes to the school Charter. More information is available at <http://esca.kg/about-esca/governance/founders/>

## Parents Association

The Parents Association plays a substantive role in the community life of the school. All parents and/or guardians of students in ESCA 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) Organizing 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. More information at <http://esca.kg/about-esca/governance/parents-association/>

### **Advisory Council**

The 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 three or four times a year to discuss development of ESCA, education issues in the Kyrgyz Republic and to elect members of the Governing Board. More information is available at <http://esca.kg/about-esca/governance/advisory-council/>

### **Management Board**

ESCA has a collegiate management structure with up to five members of an executive Management Board, appointed by the Governing Board, including Chair of Management Board who is responsible for International Baccalaureate leadership and development of the school; the Head of Education responsible for all education provision; Head of Administration, responsible for organisation, facilities and finance, and Head of Admissions, responsible for enrollment and communications.

### **Scholarships**

ESCA has a Scholarship Fund 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.

One scholarship for 90% discount was awarded by open competition in December 2011 to a student who joined the pre-school class at the time. Two scholarships for 70% discount were awarded by open competition in December 2013 for two 13 year old students. Three more scholarships for 70% discount were advertised in May 2014 for award to start in September 2014 for 11 to 14 year old students.

Future scholarships will only be offered when they can be funded by the Scholarship Fund.

### **School Fees**

ESCA is a public, non-profit, foundation, 'owned' by the community. Although ESCA receives small donations from founders and others to help get the school established, we have no major sponsor or benefactor for capital investment in school facilities. Purchase and development of the school building and land is therefore funded by bank loans, which are expensive in the Kyrgyz Republic. Loan repayment, teacher salaries, educational resources and school development are all funded by school fees, which are set at a level to ensure sustainability. If any surplus is made it is reinvested in the school, with the objective to ultimately reduce the cost of fees to make ESCA education accessible to more families.

**For the 2015/16 Academic year, the annual school fees are \$7,608 for Preschool, \$11,645 for Primary and Secondary 1-3, and \$11,875 for IGCSE.** To support scholarships and the development costs of ESCA, a higher fee is charged when the school fee is paid by a 'renowned institution' i.e.: any international organisation, development agency, or embassy representing a country with GDP



over \$30,000 per-capita, or a corporation with over \$300 million investment in KR. For information on the different rates and the benefits, discounts and options for paying by term or month see <http://esca.kg/admissions/school-year-fee-structure/>

## **Enrolment**

Enrolment forms are available to download <http://esca.kg/admissions/school-year-enrolment-form/>

Enrolment is subject to availability of places in the required class and approval of the Management Board. A one-off administration fee of \$200 is charged per family at the time of first application.

## **Visit the School & Taster Days**

If you are in Bishkek and interested in your child joining the school, you can visit at any time. Just email [admissions@esca.kg](mailto:admissions@esca.kg) or telephone 214406 to arrange a meeting. If after seeing the school you are still not 100% sure, then sign your child up for taster days in their potential class in ESCA with no obligation or cost. Email [admissions@esca.kg](mailto:admissions@esca.kg) for more information.