

Top 10 reasons to choose ESCA – Bishkek International School

1: International Accreditation Leader - IB World School and Cambridge IGCSE

As the first [International Baccalaureate World School](#)¹ in the Kyrgyz Republic, ESCA-BIS sets the top standard for truly international education and joins over 3000 IB World Schools offering the prestigious IB Diploma for students age 16-19. Students in IB World Schools develop strong academic, social, and emotional skills and are [more likely than students in other programmes to enrol at top universities](#)². Younger students in the IB Primary Years Programme (PYP) and Middle Years Programme (MYP) also outperform other students in a number of areas. The International Baccalaureate develops inquiring, knowledgeable and caring young people who are motivated to succeed. It encourages students to be active in their communities and to take their learning beyond academic study.

ESCA-BIS was also the first school in Bishkek to offer accreditation with [Cambridge International Examinations](#)³ for Kyrgyz citizens and we continue to hold Cambridge accreditation and offer the IGCSE program and examination for students age 14-16.

2: Inspirational Learning Environment

The one stand-out difference that everyone who comes to our school mentions is that **'students are very happy in a safe and supportive learning environment'**. Students want to come to school and learn! As the Korooluev family told us, before they moved to USA: *"For us, the best thing about the school was that our kids were happy there. They integrated well and absolutely loved the school, teachers and fellow students."*

Our whole approach to learning is to create a safe and supportive environment for students where everyone is encouraged to work together to achieve their best potential. Within this happy environment we focus on providing excellent education.

3: Exceptional Teachers

Our [teachers](#)⁴ come from USA, UK, Canada, South Africa, Columbia, France, Japan, Poland and Kyrgyzstan. They bring a wealth of international teaching experience following academic studies, including many teachers with Masters Degrees and some with PhDs. Professional training at school reinforces our positive school culture and high teaching standards. With the introduction of IB programmes, teachers now have IB training workshops to ensure a truly IB approach to teaching. Specialist teachers throughout the school provide excellent programmes for ICT, PE, Music, Art and Languages. When required, individual education programmes are developed and provided with the support of our Instructional Resource Teacher and our Child and Youth Development Consultant.

With the very best teachers and low student-teacher ratio, all students receive individual attention to help them achieve much more than they could elsewhere. As the Romanens-Schmid family said before they left for their next overseas assignment: *"Our children have very wonderful memories of school, especially of their teachers who used modern teaching methods, paid a lot of individual attention to each child and created a positive learning environment. It was a real pleasure for every child to attend school."*

¹ <http://www.ibo.org>

² <http://www.ibo.org/benefits/comparing-ib-with-other-qualifications/>

³ <http://www.cie.org.uk>

⁴ <http://esca.kg/about-esca/staff/teaching-team/>

4: Extensive Extra-Curricular Activities

At this school, the classroom is only one of many opportunities for learning. Since the school was opened, parents have praised the [extracurricular programme](#)⁵ provided both at school and off-site, including wushu, chess, rock-climbing, team sports, film-making & animation, cooking, and crafts, among many others. In the words of the Lee family: *“students have many chances to present their works, doing scientific experiments, building teamwork. Through this learning process, my kids gained confidence and were not afraid of performing in front of others.”*

5: Truly International - Students from 33 Countries, working together in English

We are a truly international school with students from over 30 countries. Our students come from America, Europe, Japan, China, Korea, and many other countries world-wide. With no more than 35% of any single nationality in the school, all of our students benefit from a very creative learning environment with so many diverse cultures in the school.

While we encourage students to develop their own native languages, English is the main language of instruction and communication in the school and in the playground. By immersing your child in the English language at an early age they will have more opportunities and choice in the future since the world’s best universities and all multinational companies communicate in English.

For English learners we have a very strong programme of English as an Additional Language, with sometimes one-on-one support at the early stages, leading to full immersion of learning subjects in English. In the words of the Spagnol family: *“the school makes a lot of effort to bring non-English speaking children up to the level of “usual” classroom English, with specific assistance adapted to the level of each child.”* And as the Collingham family adds: *“The best thing is that every class has two teachers, providing English language support for those who are learning. After a couple of weeks our children had already made good progress in English. We also saw that our children were happy overall and looked forward to going to school every day.”*

6: Developing Multilingual Students

As a truly international school we place great emphasis on language learning for all of our students. As well as supporting students in continuing to develop their own native languages we provide opportunity for students to learn Kyrgyz, Russian, French and Mandarin, with new language options being added as the school grows. Students already proficient in English are encouraged to study at least two more languages. [Additional languages in the IB Middle Years Programme](#)⁶ provide students with the opportunity to develop insights into the features, processes and craft of language and the concept of culture, and to realize that there are diverse ways of living, viewing and behaving in the world.

7: The Power of Community

Our school was established by the community for the community and we never lose sight of the benefits of working together. We encourage - and indeed thrive because of - the active involvement of parents. At this school, every voice counts! Our Parents Committee is actively engaged in school governance, has structures to provide feedback to the management and plays a leading role in organizing many of the school events like the annual Nooruz festival. [Studies show](#)⁷ that students whose parents are involved in their schooling are more likely to have higher grades and test scores, attend school regularly, have better social skills, show improved behaviour, and adapt well to school.

⁵ <http://www.esca.kg/esca-education/extracurricular-activities/>

⁶ <http://www.ibo.org/programmes/middle-years-programme/curriculum/language-acquisition/>

⁷ <https://www.responsiveclassroom.org/what-research-says-about-parent-involvement/>

We believe that when parents are involved at school, the performance of all the children at school, not just their own, tends to improve. As the Weyerhaeuser family told us before they moved on to Thailand, *“This is a real community school. Everyone who wants to engage will be able to play a role. As a parent you realize that the idea to leave education and character building to a school isn’t going to work unless you get engaged and work hand in hand. The school provides that environment for engagement and does their part very well, and always has an open ear for children and parents!”*

We practice a strong culture of open parent and school communication, and invite everyone to have their say to help guide how the school operates. This is evident in [our school policies](#)⁸, and all policies – from ‘child protection’ to ‘health and safety’ to ‘language policy’ – are available for parents to read and to suggest improvements.

Everything that we have achieved with the school has been because of our joint commitment to success, so even when the going is tough, we always believe that **“together, we can do this!”**

8: Fully Non-Profit - Focused on Education

Our [school was established by the community of parents](#)⁹ in Bishkek as a liberal secular non-profit school with transparent governance and operations. We are primarily focused on providing excellent education for students at ESCA-BIS; however our wider mission is also to have a positive impact on education throughout the Kyrgyz Republic. All school fees from parents are used to cover school operational costs or are invested in improving the school or providing [merit-based scholarships](#)¹⁰, and will ultimately be used to develop partnerships to strengthen teaching and the education sector in the country. We model good governance: inclusion, accountability, and transparency, with a Governing Board (GB) fully elected by parents, staff and the school Advisory Council. The GB is responsible for policy, strategy and financial sustainability, and comprises experienced professionals who bring an abundance of cultural and professional experience to their roles. The GB ensures the best possible conditions for school management to focus on providing high quality education, since excellent education is the only reason for this school to exist.

The Governing Board is also proud of our commitment to compliance with local regulation, in line with the [ethics policy](#)¹¹ of the school. This commitment means that despite being ‘non-profit’ and not the largest school in Bishkek, [ESCA-BIS pays more tax than any other school](#)¹². Paying our legal taxes is one way we help to support better public education in the country.

9: Quiet Central Location - with the Largest Outdoor Play Area

While being within central Bishkek, not far from the Bishkek Humanitarian University on Manas Avenue, the actual school location is in a quiet residential area well away from the traffic fumes and other dangers of major roads. This is a wonderful safe place for children to spend the day, where the only disturbance might be the occasional sound of a cockerel in a neighbour’s garden!

One of the main reasons for choosing this site was the large outdoor play area. We now have a full size basketball court and a real grass field for soccer and other games, giving students the space they need to play and enjoy themselves at break times.

Development of the school site has avoided building over play areas, so that our school still has the largest outdoor play area of any international school in Bishkek.

⁸ <http://esca.kg/about-esca/policies/>

⁹ <http://www.esca.kg/about-esca/our-history/>

¹⁰ <http://www.esca.kg/admissions/scholarships/>

¹¹ <http://esca.kg/Files/File/ESCA%20Ethics%20Policy%20November%202015.pdf>

¹² <http://esca.kg/Files/Tax/Tax-Payments-by-Selected-Schools-in-Bishkek-ENG-RUS-2016.pdf>

10: Constant Improvement - New Facilities for Indoor Sports, Libraries & Science

We encourage a culture of constant improvement within our students and within the school as a whole. This is true in all aspects of school life but is most visible in the annual improvements to the physical facilities of the school.

For example, in 2015 we added:

- A new building with three classrooms and two libraries
- An extension of the main building for two new classrooms
- A fully equipped new science laboratory and a new ICT room

And in 2016 we will complete:

- A new multi-purpose hall of almost 300 m² for indoor sports and school performances
- Two new large library/media/ICT resource rooms
- Two new science laboratories
- Six new classrooms
- A new café style dining and entrance area

We never sit still and rest on our achievements. We always work hard to be even better in future!



Architects impression of ESCA-BIS main building after construction in summer 2016

