



**Bishkek
International
School**

Vision Mission & Development Policy

Reviewed by the Management Board: August 2019
Previous Review: August 2018

Approved by the Governing Board: August 2019

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 diversity and inclusivity;
- Promotes the well-being of the whole school community;
- Contributes positively to 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. Inclusive Education Policy
4. Language Policy
5. Academic Honesty Policy
6. Assessment Policy
7. Health & Safety Policy
8. Child Protection Policy
9. Educational Visits Policy
10. Ethics Policy
11. Environmental Policy
12. 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 in June 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 'ESCA-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 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 further information about International Baccalaureate, see 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.

1. **Inquirers:** Develop a natural curiosity that allows them to become lifelong learners.
2. **Knowledgeable:** They explore ideas of importance and dig deep into its meaning creating a balance of their learning.
3. **Thinkers:** They apply thinking skills that allow them to tackle complex problems in creative ways.
4. **Communicators:** They understand and can articulate information in confident, creative ways, including a second language.
5. **Principled:** Students are honest, fair, just and full of integrity. They strive to solve their own problems and to take responsibility for their own actions.
6. **Open-minded:** Students understand and embrace other cultures. They recognize and celebrate their own backgrounds and learn tolerance for others.
7. **Caring:** Students actively care about others and participate in active service.
8. **Risk-Takers:** Students are brave in the face of new challenges. They strive to take on new roles and to defend their own beliefs.
9. **Balanced:** Students understand the need to be emotionally, physically and mentally balanced. They strive for this in themselves and others.
10. **Reflective:** Students reflect on their own learning. They are able to adjust for weaknesses and strengths.

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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 in June 2014, with further review and amendment in 2018

1.1 Vision

To be the best international school 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 diversity and inclusivity;
- Promotes the well-being of the whole school community;
- Contributes positively to 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 an 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 and cultural awareness are celebrated and advanced. Internationalism maintains a global perspective for learning; encouraging students to inquire, act, and deepen their cultural perspectives and interconnectedness. BIS students acquire and refine skills of listening, collaborating, embracing good ideas and leading constructive problem solving towards positive change and development 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 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 the school Founders, though Founders have delegated these elections to school staff since 2016. 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. 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 i.e. the Parents Association, the Advisory Council, and the Founders.

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 authorized 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 listed are the legal founders in the Charter. Others joined as founders after Charter registration. Founders have delegated most of their powers under the Charter to the Governing Board but retain the right to elect three members of the Governing Board (currently delegated to school staff), a right of veto over decisions of the Governing Board and the right to approve any changes to the school Charter. The right of

veto has never been used and is unlikely to be used except in a case where a Governing Board decision contradicted the intentions of the founding Charter or BIS vision, mission and commitments.

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) 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. Regulations of the Parents Association are available to download from the school website.

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. Regulations of the Advisory Council are available to download from the school website.

BIS is committed to further development of 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 280 students aged 2 to 18 years old in 2019. Forty-five percent of students are Kyrgyz citizens, with the other fifty-five 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 at least 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.

BIS may open a boarding option if there is demand for this from parents. Outline plans exist for this option, with residential premises to be rented close to the school.

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 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. 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 the IGCSE and IB Diploma programs, with awards from 40% to 90% discount from the full school fee, with award dependent on both academic merit and ability to pay. As of August 2019, twenty-six scholarship students are enrolled in the school, including over 30% of our High School students in 2019/20.

2.4 Staff Resources

BIS opened in September 2011 with seven staff, increasing to over 105 staff (including non-teaching staff) in 2019. In September 2019 we will have sixty seven teaching staff and teaching assistants, including five who work part-time. Staff resources continue to expand in line with the expanding school curriculum and students numbers.

2.5 Professional Development

BIS is committed to professional staff development. All teaching staff complete online and face to face professional development courses as designated by the Director of Studies and/or the Head of School.

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. This is particularly important for national teachers studying for international qualifications.

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

Staff also receives 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 authorized International Baccalaureate, IB World School, offering the IB Diploma Programme, the IB Primary Years Programme and IB Middle Years Programme. The IB Diploma is a two-year educational programme primarily aimed at students aged 16–18 that provides 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

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) and the International Certificate of Education Group Award (ICE). Students choose at least seven IGCSE subjects from five different groups so that they also qualify for the ICE (International Certificate of Education) Group Award. The ICE Group Award provides a broad and balanced curriculum, including two different languages, and is 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 to deliver the national curriculum with examination 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 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 in these early years.

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 and Makerspace added in 2019.

Sports facilities include an indoor sports hall for basketball, volleyball, soccer and PE, 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 Bronirovanaya Street which were originally built as a Kindergarten for 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. Therefore the Kyrgyz citizen co-founders of BIS also 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' 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 'Educational Resource Centre'
- A two storey 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 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.
- Improved ground and internal areas.

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 meters to the existing 1200 square meters 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.
- Improvements to grounds and all internal areas.

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.
- Maintenance & improvements for the whole building and grounds.

In 2019, the school introduced a 'Capital Fund Fee' (CFF) component of school fees to improve school facilities for all students now and in future. The CFF is normally paid by families whose employer covers at least 75% of school fees. The CFF goes into the School Development Fund with spending controlled by the Governing Board. Approximately 50% of CFF income is used for current capital investment in new facilities and 50% retained for future new campus development. In 2019, spending was approved and used for:

- 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.

Other school funds covered maintenance and improvement for the whole building and grounds.

The school is now fully equipped to accommodate up to 300 students from age 2 to age 18 years old, which is the maximum capacity on the current site.

Future Development

In spring/summer 2018 the whole school community reviewed options for future development. All proposals were considered by the Governing Board, who decided to:

- Continue the focus on constant improvement of the current school, including hiring and retaining excellent teachers;
- Constantly improve educational resources and provision for inclusive education within current school facilities;
- Seek funding and/or land for a new campus, either for the whole school to move or to accommodate middle/high school on a new campus, provided the new location enables close integration with the current site.

The search for land and donation to enable new campus development is ongoing.

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 also made additional donations to provide a further \$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 \$250,000 in summer 2019.

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 with the objective of ultimately reducing school fee levels to make BIS education more accessible.

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 'Capital Fund Fee' (CFF) component of school fees to improve school facilities for all students now and in future. The CFF is normally paid by families whose employer covers at least 75% of school fees. The CFF goes into the School Development Fund with spending controlled by the Governing Board. Approximately 50% of CFF income is used for current capital investment in new facilities and 50% retained for future new campus development.

2.10 Educational Outreach

The Kelechek Education Endowment Fund (KEEF) was established by the six –founders of the European School in Central Asia who are Kyrgyz citizens. KEEF was legally registered on June 11, 2012 with initial funding provided by a BIS Founder.

The mission of KEEF is to “create the enabling environment for improved access to quality pre-school and school education of children in Kyrgyz Republic”.

KEEF supports the operations and mission of BIS by:

- Legally owning the school land, leased to BIS;
- Facilitating the charitable work of BIS in the wider education sector of the Kyrgyz Republic;
- Providing a platform to attract charitable funding for education in the Kyrgyz Republic.

From 2012 to 2014 KEEF worked largely independently from BIS in providing training in orphanages and in running a university scholarship programme for rural youth. From 2014, the work of KEEF is more closely integrated with BIS activities, though KEEF is administered by a separate Board from BIS.