



School Handbook

Updated August 2021

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British International School of Brussels

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THE SCHOOL

School Philosophy

At the British International School of Brussels our children benefit from an enriching and challenging education, following a broad and balanced programme based on the National Curriculum for England.

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 and calm self-confidence.

Facilities

The British International School of Brussels, established in 2000, offers a high quality, British National Curriculum education to English-speaking children between the ages of 3 and 11. We are centrally located on two sites in adjacent streets. The Early Years Foundation Stage (Nursery & Reception classes) and Key Stage 1 children (Years 1 & 2) are housed in our magnificent two-storey Acorn building, which provides a very pleasant environment for both staff and children. There are seven spacious and attractive classrooms, each with interactive whiteboards, a large outside playground and garden with appropriate play equipment, a music room, extensive library and beautiful central hall.

Our older, Key Stage 2 children (Years 3, 4, 5 & 6) are housed in the Oak building close by - a slightly larger four-storey building including classrooms with interactive whiteboards, a very well-stocked library with interactive cinema screen and stage area, a hall area used for collaborative activities and drama, and specialist rooms for Learning and Language support and French. There is also a fully equipped Science and Art studio and a walled outside playground and garden area.

All of our teaching staff are university graduates with experience from around the world and are native English speakers or are fully bilingual. Prospective parents are warmly encouraged to visit the school to help you make the very important decision about how and where your child's education should continue. We look forward to welcoming you.



Development

The small class sizes (current average is around 16), with full-time teaching assistant cover in both buildings and additional support provided by specialist teachers, ensure that each child enjoys a high degree of individual attention. Parental involvement is welcomed and strongly encouraged, both inside and outside the classroom, creating a sense of partnership and collaboration which gives the school its thriving sense of community. We are continually seeking to broaden our curriculum and improve and extend the facilities.

Calendar

The academic year has approximately 178 school days divided into three terms from September to late December, early January to late March and late April to early July. Schooling in Belgium is compulsory from the age of 5 and children are expected to attend throughout the school year.

CURRICULUM

School Hours

Acorn Building:

Pre-Nursery and Nursery

Mornings	09.00 - 12.10
Afternoons	13.15 – 15.20

Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 09.00 - 15.25

(Wednesday 09.00 - 12.20 for Reception class)

Oak Building: Years 3, 4, 5 & 6 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 and children are therefore not admitted. Children may arrive at school from 08.30 and will be welcomed into the classrooms to get ready for the day. Lessons start promptly at 09.00 and children should be in school before then. Parents should inform the school office of absences or late arrivals.



Overview

Our Early Years Foundation Stage aims to develop social, emotional, 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 follow the core subjects of Literacy, Numeracy, Science and French, together with Music, IT and Art and Craft. Each class from Year 1 upwards enjoys swimming activities for several weeks on a rotational basis at a nearby sports centre and PE is taught regularly 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 National Curriculum for England 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

Homework is an important part of the learning journey, fostering positive attitudes and habits and reinforcing the essential school-parent partnership. Our policy on the type and quantity of homework follows a sensible and steady progression through the classes and each teacher will have their own preferred schedules and methods. Emphasis is placed both on the child working autonomously to revise, reinforce and extend work carried out at school, thus giving them the chance to reflect on their own learning, and on the sharing of learning with parents, thus enhancing the learning conversation between home and school.

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 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 after-school clubs ranging from yoga, drama, origami, cooking, karate, cricket, dance, outdoor games, football, art and recorders. A list of the activities available for each term is sent out during the first week of each term. These extra-curricular activities are not included in the school fees.

EAL

English is our working language and is spoken at all times of the day. For children who are not native English speakers, our specialist EAL teacher provides a carefully structured programme designed to support their learning in the classroom and to bring them to a level where they can participate fully in the mainstream curriculum as soon as possible. We place great



emphasis on language development throughout the curriculum, with particular attention being paid to oral communication, and find that children very quickly reach impressive levels of proficiency in reading, writing and oracy.

French

French is a core subject in our curriculum and starts from the Reception class. We are aware that many of our children will go on to attend local Belgian secondary schools and therefore place great importance on French language acquisition so that the transition to a French-language environment is as smooth as possible.

The French curriculum covers essential grammar, reading and writing skills and focuses particularly on building communication skills, ensuring that the children are able to understand the language around them and to communicate confidently in reply. It also includes the core history and geography material covered in Belgian schools.

The French classes include trips to local libraries, museums and theatres and we invite local French speakers and organisations into school to present workshops and activities that will help to familiarise the children with French as a working language. Music lessons are also given in French by a native speaker.

Educational Visits and Workshops

Educational visits form an essential part of the curriculum, and each class will have an extensive range of trips and workshops that reinforce and extend the work carried out in the classroom. Parents complete a permission form when their child joins the school giving permission for their child to participate in these trips and workshops. This must be returned to the school office during the first week of the school year. Parents are notified in advance of any outside excursions and provided with details of the visit and other practical information for the day. 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 theatres, libraries and art galleries, along with the wide range of museums in and around Brussels. Outside visitors and organisations are welcomed into school to give workshops and to share their expertise within the classroom. Our Key Stage 2 children have a week-long residential trip each year within Belgium.



ADMISSION

Entrance requirements

BISB is a non-selective school providing an international, English-language education. Admission is possible at any time of the school year following an interview between the Headteacher and parents and child. We fully recognise the importance of a smooth and stress-free integration into the academic and social life of the school and therefore place great emphasis on our warm, family-centred atmosphere. We are a small, friendly school, currently with around 145 children, and pride ourselves on welcoming new children and families, helping them to settle within a new environment and doing our best to provide a supportive infrastructure that is there to help in the relocation process.

Fees

Our priority is to offer a first-class educational service that represents excellent value for money, and we take care to ensure that our fees are reasonable as we know that many parents pay these fees themselves. Our Financial Manager is available to discuss any financial issues.

Location

The school is approximately 3 km from the centre of Brussels on the eastern side of the city and is well situated for NATO, Eurocontrol, the European Parliament and the European Commission. The school buildings can be found approximately 1.5km north-west of Montgomery roundabout near the city's middle ring road. There is an extensive network of public transport and many children come to school by bike, scooter or on foot. Bike racks are provided directly outside the school buildings.

Delivery and Collection of Children

Parents of Acorn Department children (Nursery – Year 2) should use parking spaces on Av. Emile Max to pull in and drop their children. Parents of Oak Department children (Year 3 – Year 6) should use appropriate parking spaces on Av. Emeraude to pull in and drop their children. 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 carpools. Please do not park cars in front of a garage entrance or leave them double-parked. If a parent wishes to accompany their child into school, please use the car park in the centre of Place Plasky or spaces along Avenue Plasky, both are less than 200m from the school buildings. All cars, including those with CD plates, must be parked legally at all times.

At the end of the day, parents should wait in front of the respective building and have their child's name card (provided by the school at the beginning of the year). Each child will be allowed to leave the building once their parent has been identified by the teacher on the door. Parents who wish their child to be collected by a third person should notify school office (or the Oak Department for children In Years 3 - 6) with details of the person's identity and the dates on which the child will be collected by them. School office must be notified of any late changes to collection arrangements.

Garderie (After school care)

To assist working parents, a garderie service is available at school each day from the end of school until 18.00. Children spend the time in a supervised area and are encouraged to do homework, or read or play creatively, depending on their age. If the weather permits, they may also play outside under supervision. There is a scale of charges for Garderie supervision as these are not covered by the normal school fees. Any child not collected by the end of school, or by the end of their after-school activity, will be considered to be in Garderie and their parents will be charged accordingly. The current rate is 6,50 euros per hour, which is subdivided into half hour periods after the first hour.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Behaviour

BISB fosters a strong sense of community, both within school and in wider circles when working with outside organisations or welcoming visitors and parents into school. We pride ourselves on our warm, caring atmosphere in school and on the exemplary behaviour of our children. This sense of community is built around our core values of respect for others, tolerance, honesty, consideration and the readiness and ability to listen and take account of the ideas and opinions of other people.

We have very high expectations of the children at all levels, encouraging them to believe in themselves, to try hard and to do their very best, both in and out of the classroom. Children are expected to be supportive of each other and to work collaboratively, respecting other people and understanding that everyone has something positive to offer.



On the rare occasions that pupils do not behave in an appropriate manner this will be discussed with them in depth with appropriate staff members to ensure that they understand how their behaviour affects other people and why it is unacceptable. Sanctions are taken if deemed necessary. Should the inappropriate behaviour continue, parents will be invited into school for a discussion with the class teacher and a member of the SMT if deemed appropriate. Discipline is most effective when parents and school work together to bring about desirable behaviour, and we therefore consult with parents at the earliest opportunity.

Anti-Bullying Practice

Bullying is not tolerated in any form and parents who have concerns should inform the class teacher and Headteacher immediately. Our definition of bullying is persistent 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:

- Regular reviews and discussion in staff meetings to highlight behaviour that may have been noticed that may suggest tensions between children.
- Discussion in School Council meetings based on the children's perception of playground and classroom behaviour.
- BISB's curriculum and core values, which promote kindness, communication, cooperation, and friendship and include lessons and activities stressing empathy, anger management, and conflict resolution skills.

Incidents will be addressed through:

- Serious talks with any children demonstrating bullying behaviour and with their victims.
- Serious talks with the parents of the children involved.
- Weekly meetings to review the clear and consistently enforced expectations and to engage all pupils in being aware of and preventing bullying behaviour.
- Ongoing communication with parents.

Attendance

Regular and punctual attendance at school is essential to the progress and level of achievement of every pupil and to the social cohesion and working of the classes. Children are expected to be in school ready for the lessons to start promptly at 09.00. Children who arrive



late miss out on essential information and disturb the orderly start of the school day. Parents should notify the school office of any late arrivals.

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 should 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.

A medical certificate is required if a child is absent owing to illness for more than three days. If a child is being taken out of school early or is returning to school after a hospital appointment, please notify the school office by email or written note.

For occasional absence other than through illness, a request should be submitted to the Headteacher, although it should be noted that unauthorised absences are not encouraged. All parents should be aware that Belgian law places them under an obligation to ensure that children resident in Belgium above the age of five are in full time education.

Uniform

All children from the Nursery year upwards wear our distinctive and practical uniform, which can be obtained from the school office. Please send an email listing the items required, along with the size and quantity. The uniform and payment advice will be sent home with the child on the same day. On timetabled PE days, children should come to school wearing the uniform jogging bottoms and their white or green PE t-shirt. On swimming days, children should bring an 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. However, accidents may occasionally occur, and children may be unwell during the school day. In either event every effort will be made to ensure that parents are contacted immediately. The emergency contact numbers provided by parents are used to notify parents or their nominated representative. Please ensure that you have returned your child's medical form to the school and that you update the emergency contact numbers if necessary, so that we have access to you or your nominated contact during the day.

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 that you discuss this directly with the class teacher.

The school does not allow staff members to dispense medicine to pupils. Asthma inhalers or Epipens 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.

Safety at School

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 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 an 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, a member of staff will 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 updated regularly.



Information to Parents

A weekly Newsletter and Home School Letter are sent out each weekend by email.

The Newsletter gives an overview of the main school events during the week, along with important information on upcoming trips, calendar dates or specific reminders.

The Home School Letter is a compilation of teacher reviews of the work and activities carried out in each class during the week and will also include reminders relevant to particular classes, along with photos of the children working and playing and examples of work produced during the week.

Urgent points of information may also be sent out during the week by email and repeated in Friday's newsletter.

Edmodo

The Edmodo educational platform is used across the school as a means of communication between class teachers, pupils and parents. Please check class pages for information on your child's class and on work that may have been posted.

School Website

The School Website features information of general interest about the school and is regularly updated with photos of class and department activities. Any urgent news updates are displayed on the website's home page. 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:

❖ Parents' Evenings

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

❖ Reports

Parents will receive two written reports of their child's progress during the year. These are sent home before the end of the first half of the Spring term and just before the end of the school year in late June. The February report is a progress report and will highlight areas for improvement during the rest of the school year. The Summer report is a summary of the child's progress and achievements over the year. The reports outline the pupil's progress in all areas of the curriculum and are written by the teachers responsible.

❖ Individual Appointments

Parents are welcome 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 email address for direct contact, or they can be contacted via the class Edmodo page. They do not however have the opportunity to check these during the day and so some time may elapse before a message is received and a reply given.

❖ Home/School book

Children In EYFS and KS1 (Nursery, Reception and Years 1 & 2) 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.

❖ Email

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



School Notice Board

Our school notice board in the Acorn Building 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 checked by the Headteacher or School Office.

Other

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

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

PARENT INVOLVEMENT

All 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 during our family events throughout the year, principally 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.

Regular coffee mornings, hosted by one or two members of staff, are held to which all parents are warmly invited. This is the ideal opportunity to meet new parents from across the school and to chat over a cup of tea or coffee (and the essential biscuit or two!). Parents are welcome to borrow books from our Parents' English-language library selection.

School Calendar

A detailed school calendar listing term dates and important school events is published each year and sent to all parents of pupils of BISB. This is regularly updated through the year as further events are planned. The calendar can also be viewed via the school website.

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.