



BIS School Handbook

Last Reviewed: September 2021



CONTEXT

At BIS, education caters for a diverse community of students spanning six continents, with teaching staff sourced both locally and internationally to create a harmony of culturally-blended experience, and a learning environment that fosters global citizenship.

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CHAPTER 1 - GENERAL INFORMATION

1.1 Vision, Mission and Philosophy

Vision

The British International School and Montessori Education caters for a diverse community of students spanning 30 countries, with teaching staff sourced both locally and internationally to create a harmony of culturally-blended experience and a learning environment that fosters global citizenship.

Mission

“Follow the child to greater heights”

Philosophy

The Montessori approach is a unique method of introducing the child to a life time of enjoyable learning. Special materials, largely manipulative in nature, help to answer the child’s developmental needs and enable them to experience the excitement of learning by their own choice. The child is helped to develop all their natural tools for learning so that their abilities will be at a maximum in future situations.

1.2 The School Day

BIS is made up of the following age groups. School start and finish times differ with age groups, as do the drop-off and pick-up points. Please familiarise yourself with the following information and adhere to dropoff / pick-up times to ensure your child’s experience is as smooth as possible.

Nursery	16 months – 2.5 years
Nursery students can be dropped off 0800-0900 direct to their classrooms. School finishes for these students at 1400 when they should be picked up direct from their classroom. However, these students may be picked up from 1200. Students will be supervised until 1500 for those families who need to collect older siblings at 1500.	
Pre-School	2.5 – 3.5 years
Pre-school students can be dropped off 0800-0900 direct to their classrooms. School finishes for these students at 1400 when they should be picked up direct from their classroom. Students will be supervised until 1500 for those families who need to collect older siblings at 1500.	
Lower-Kindergarten	3.5 – 4.5 years
Lower-Kindergarten students can be dropped off 0800-0815 at the school entrance. Classes begin at 0815 and school finishes for these students at 1400. Students should be picked up from the building entrance 1400-1415. NB: On Wednesdays school finishes at 1300 for all students.	

Upper-Kindergarten	4.5 – 5.5 years
Upper-Kindergarten students can be dropped off 0800-0815 at the school entrance. Classes begin at 0815 and school finishes for these students at 1400. Students should be picked up from the building entrance 1400-1415. NB: On Wednesdays school finishes at 1300 for all students.	

Key Stage 1-2 / Classes 1-6	5.5 – 11 years
Primary school students can be dropped off 0800-0815 at the school entrance. Classes begin at 0815 and school finishes for these students at 1500. Students should be picked up from the school entrance 1500-1515. NB ¹ : On Wednesdays school finishes at 1300 for all students. NB ² : Students who are attending Extended Curriculum Activities (1500-1600) should be picked up at 1600 from the main entrance.	

Key Stage 3-4 / Classes 7-11	11 – 16 years
Secondary school students can be dropped off 0745-0800 at the school entrance. Classes begin at 0800 and school finishes at 1500. Students should be picked up from the school entrance 1500-1515. NB: Students who are attending Extended Curriculum Activities (1500-1600) should be picked up at 1600 sharp, from the main entrance.	

Late Arrival / Early Dismissal

It is imperative that all students arrive on time for the start of the school day – for their own learning and that of their classmates. If arriving after class has started, students should be accompanied to their classroom by their parent / guardian. Students who arrive more than 15 minutes late will be registered as late. If this occurs more than three times in one term a letter of concern will be issued and recorded.

If for any reason, a student needs to arrive late or be dismissed early from school, an explanatory letter should be sent by the parent / guardian to the school’s Senior Leadership Team in advance.

Late Pick-Ups and After-School Care Program (ASCP)

Students who are more than 30 minutes late being picked up from school will be placed in the ASCP. Parents / guardians will be charged accordingly for the programme, and a letter of concern will be issued and recorded. If the occurrence is related to picking-up from Extended Curriculum Activities (ECA) it may result in expulsion from the ECA programme.

Absence

If a student is to be absent, a member of BIS’s Senior Leadership Team should be informed by official lines of communication. Reason for absence and anticipated length of absence should be included and updates given as necessary. If the absence is prolonged as a result of medical reasons (three or more days), a medical certificate should be presented.

Families are requested to respect the school calendar when making travel plans, and schedule doctor, dentist and other appointments outside of school hours whenever possible.

Extended Curriculum Activities

The school provides a range of Extended Curriculum Activities for students in Kindergarten upwards. Information on the selection of activities is sent by email at the beginning of each term.

1.3	School Security Procedures
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Access to the BIS Site – Visitors

All visitors to the school are required to report to gate security who will escort them to the school office where they are required to sign in.

Access to the BIS Site – Drop-off / Pick-up

The school gates will open at 0745 each morning. Before this time, there will be no staff on duty and students will not be allowed on site for safety reasons. It is not permitted to leave students unattended outside of the school gates. Gates reopen at 1300-1330, 1400-1430 and 1500-1530 for pick-up.

Access to Classrooms

Only parents / guardians of Nursery students are allowed to accompany their children to the classroom. All other parents / guardians should not enter the classrooms without being explicitly invited by a member of staff and / or having made an appointment.

Use of Cameras

For Safeguarding and Child Protection purposes; the use of photographic and other recording devices is not permitted on site unless authorisation has been given by the Senior Leadership Team.

Authorised School Pick-up

If a student is to be picked up by someone other than their parent / guardian; a Pick-up Authorisation Form must be completed. Any last-minute changes or in the event that a person who is not named on the Pick-up Authorisation Form will be picking up a student; the Senior Leadership Team must be informed.

1.4	Snacks and Lunch
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All through the day, be it before, during or after school; students are supervised. This includes break and lunch time. Countless studies have shown that students learn better when they have had regular opportunities to move freely and have physical exercise, especially outdoors.

Break Time

There is a 15 minute out-of-class (weather permitting), morning break allowing students to consume a healthy snack and drink, and to use the bathroom. Parents / guardians should provide the healthy snack, daily. We discourage students to eat part of their main lunch meal as their morning break snack because (i) if they finish it; they'll have no lunch, and (ii) morning break is only 15 minutes.

Lunch Time

Lunch time is 45-60 minutes long, with students' time being split between the eating areas and the playground (weather permitting). There are no staffed catering / cooking facilities on-site and thus all students must bring their own ready-to-eat lunch with them daily.

Parents / guardians should ensure lunch boxes are easily identifiable. We encourage our students to eat healthy and balanced lunches that should include fruit and / or vegetables. We discourage lunch boxes that are regularly made up of sweets, chocolate, fizzy drinks, sugary juices and heavily fried food.

Drinks

Given the restricted access to drinking water in Sierra Leone (IE: it doesn't come out of the tap), we urge parents / guardians to ensure all students attend school with enough water to see them through the day. This may require students to be sent to school with two, full, reusable water bottles.

Fruity Friday Initiative (FFI)

We promote healthy foods and snacks such as fruit every day. However, on Fridays; students are encouraged to bring freshly prepared fruit to share during our FFI.

FFI is a joint parent / school initiative to encourage students to (i) explore different choices (ii) eat healthy snacks, and (iii) to be open-minded in their food choices.

Allergies - Banned Produce

BIS is a nut-free zone. This includes products that include or may include nuts, peanuts and seeds. Please see Annex 2 (*Nut-free Policy*) for full details.

1.5 Equipment

From primary school and up, students are expected to arrive at school each and every day with the necessary equipment to participate in learning:

- A pencil-case
- Pen
- Pencil and pencil sharpener
- Eraser
- Ruler
- Coloured pencils, pens or crayons
- A basic, mathematical instruments set (year 5+)
- USB stick (year 5+)

Please ensure all your child's belongings are clearly labeled with their name and class. Students will be supplied with other necessary classroom materials, including note books, textbooks and arts and crafts supplies. Additional supply lists may be sent home by individual teachers during the school year.

For more information regarding students' belongings and in particular - uniform - please refer to Annex A3 (*Dress-code Policy*).

1.6 Student Diary

Student Diary

From Kindergarten up; students will be given a school diary to record their homework and upcoming activities and events. This diary is also used as a form of communication between home and school, it is vital that parents / guardians check the diary and sign at least once a week.

1.7 Valuables and Lost & Found Items

Students are asked not to bring valuables to school including laptops, tablets and phones. Occasionally, students may wish to bring valuable items into school as part of a project or other piece of school-related work. Under these circumstances, any valuables should be given to the school office for safekeeping. Unless items are deposited with the school office, the school takes no responsibility for the loss or theft of valuables.

A lost and found box is kept in the school office. We ask that all your child's articles be clearly labeled with his / her name. At the end of each term, any uncollected items are sent to a charitable organisation. The school accepts no responsibility for lost belongings.

1.8 Dangerous Items

Whilst at school, students should not be in possession of anything that may pose a danger to themselves or others. Such items can include but aren't limited to: fireworks or other explosives, knives, guns, weapons or items that can be used as weapons, either real or imitation.

1.9 Emergency Procedures

Fire drills, evacuation and lockdown exercises are carried out regularly throughout the year. Parents visiting the school should contact the school office and/or read the signs posted around the school for more information, and to become familiar with emergency procedures, as well as referring to BIS's Health and Safety Policy for more information.

1.10 Fieldtrips and Offsite Activities

In order to give students a varied and rich education, BIS believes it's beneficial to take them out of the school setting for an extended period, so as to allow them to come into contact with different environments, and to encounter new experiences. Fieldtrips and offsite activities may take place for curricular, well-being, sporting or other extra-curricular reasons.

When possible, each class will usually attend two trips per academic year. These trips usually consist of one curriculum-based fieldtrip (E.G: to Bunce Island as part of year 8's learning on the Atlantic Slave Trade) and one other offsite activity (E.G: attending the Chinese Gardens as part of Chinese New Year).

Some fieldtrips and offsite activities are included in the school fees. Others are subsidised, whilst others are not.

Students participating in school trips are representatives of BIS. As such they are expected to abide by school rules, to follow appropriate standards of behavior and appearance, and to demonstrate maturity and concern for the wellbeing of themselves and others. If for any reason a student's class teacher or the school's SLT believes that a student is not capable of the aforementioned, they may not be permitted to attend a fieldtrip and / or other offsite activities.

Parents / guardians / students are referred to BIS's *Behaviour Policy*, *Fieldtrips and Offsite Activities' Policy (Parents / Guardians)*, and *Health and Safety Policy* for more information.

1.11 Communication

Good communication between home and school is essential. The following information will assist you in identifying where information may be found and with whom you may wish to speak.

The school strives to model sustainable development and this means taking active steps to reduce our carbon footprint. Therefore, we have paperless communication whenever possible, and this can be summarised as follows:

Formal Communication:

The school will email parents with news about specific events, special announcements, fieldtrips ETC. In addition, all updates to school policies, procedures, documents and forms are sent via email, so it is very important that your email address is valid and that you check your email account regularly for school news. Additionally, each student has a BIS diary (see chapter 1.6) which their class teacher may use to communicate directly with parents.

Informal communication:

The school uses social media and online forums including WhatsApp to keep parents updated on school activities and/or changes to our normal routine at short notice. This may be due to school closure as a result of a national emergency, dangerous weather and/or last-minute confirmation by the government regarding a

national holiday. We strongly recommend that you check these regularly to keep up-to-date with school events and activities.

1.12 Meeting the Team

To avoid being turned away due to schedule restraints, BIS requires and must insist that all parents / guardians arrange a meeting by phone to ensure (i) they're directed to the correct member of staff (ii) that the specific member of staff is available at the requested time (iii) that appointments made are recorded, and of course (iv) to ensure the school is aware of all visitors on site.

Of course, appointments will be organised at the soonest possible opportunity at a time that suits both parents and staff.

Except for parents / guardians of students in the Early Years department who are permitted to enter classrooms for drop-off and pick-up at the specified times (see 1.2 – The School Day), parents / guardians are not permitted to enter their child's classroom without appointment and / or invite by the class teacher.

1.13 Personal Information

It is of utmost importance for the school to have complete and up-to-date information about all of its students. Please ensure that you have submitted all the necessary paperwork that the school requests, including the Authorised Collection Form, the Parent Terms, Conditions and Commitments Form, and the Registration Form - which includes medical information and next of kin details.

If there are any necessary changes to be made to any of the details provided on the forms, please send them via email to the Principal at: britishinternationalschoolf@gmail.com

Changes may refer to the following examples: your child contracts a communicable disease, your child develops an allergy, you / the other person listed under 'next of kin / emergency contact' leave town for more than one day.

1.14 Student Welfare

Parents are required to inform both their child's classroom Teacher and the SLT of any short or long-term health conditions, and any needs / requirements. If the child needs specific medication during the day, it is vital to communicate the administration details of this to the school, in writing, accompanied by a valid prescription. BIS cannot / will not administer drugs without written authorisation from parents / guardians.

BIS is fully stocked and prepared to deal with the vast majority of injuries encountered in a school environment, including; cuts, grazes and sprains. However, should a more serious incident occur, parents / guardians will be notified immediately and the appropriate action will be taken as per the First Aid Responder's / SLT's judgement. This may include, in the absence of an available ambulance; driving a student to the hospital.

Parents / guardians / students are referred to BIS's Health and Safety Policy for full details on dealing with and managing student welfare and treatment.

1.15 Behaviour and School Rules

Many school rules are derived from and created as a result of BIS policies. All policies are created with and developed by BIS's staff and SLT, as well as the School Advisory Committee and the Parent-Teacher Association.

Rules exist to ensure the school functions as a productive learning environment for everyone, whilst promoting (i) acceptable behaviour (ii) the safety of the BIS community and (iii) the development of each and every student.

Parents / guardians / students are referred to BIS's *Behaviour Policy* as well as the *Anti-bullying Policy* and *Health and Safety Policy* for more information on expected behaviour, and school rules.

1.16 Parent Volunteers

We like to involve our parents or other appropriate interested parties in the daily life of the school. Our parent / guardian population especially is extremely rich in experience, networks and culture, and we recognise that students benefit greatly from exposure to this. We welcome and encourage parents' / guardians' input in the following ways:

- Give a presentation on your country
- Demonstrate / teach your special talent in music, language, sports or crafts
- Host or chaperone fieldtrips or social events;
- Assist with the work and inclusion of students with additional learning needs - Share your career experience or expertise with students; - Help out in the library.

This is of course not an exhaustive list and if you have time to spare and your own ideas then please let us know!

BIS has a strong commitment to the protection and safeguarding of its students, and thus parents who are regularly scheduled to volunteer or who are employed to work on-site in any capacity are required to submit a C.V. with professional references.

1.17 School Library

The school has its own, ever-growing library with books and publications to suit all of our students. All students are taught the rules of the library, including checking out books only via the librarian, checking books in before passing them onto a friend, and looking after them carefully both in school, and at home.

If a student loses or damages a book beyond acceptable repair; the bill will be sent to the parent / guardian.

Studies have shown that benefits of reading include but aren't limited to: improved concentration, increased vocabulary and language skills, development of imagination and empathy and overall increased scholastic improvement. Given the wonderful array of benefits of reading, all students are encouraged to read, with primary school classes having a dedicated 30 minutes of reading each day. Student are also encouraged to read at home.

1.18 School Advisory Committee

The School Advisory Committee works with the school's Senior Leadership Team (SLT) in an advisory capacity to improve administration and facilities.

The committee is made up of parents and guardians who have shown an interest in children's education and welfare, and therefore make a valuable contribution to the school's programme by guiding and providing support as an adviser, mediator and facilitator between the principal, parents and staff.

The Advisory Committee generally meets three times per academic year.

1.19 Parent-Teacher Association (PTA)

The BIS PTA is a registered non-profit organisation, the main purpose of which is as follows:

- To support and advance the moral, academic, cultural and physical growth of all BIS students
- To promote understanding and cooperation amongst and between students, parents, and teachers, as well as the community at large
- To submit proposals to BIS's Advisory Committee and SLT regarding any observed needs of the school community in general and its students in particular
- To mobilise resources for activities, to provide additional support, and advance the welfare and education of all students

At the discretion of the PTAEA (Parent-Teacher Executive Committee) the association can provide a forum for the discussion of important issues, and where appropriate; inform the SLT and Advisory Committee of the opinions of the members of the committee.

All parents / guardians of students enrolled at BIS are automatically members of the PTA. At the beginning of each school year, parents / guardians will receive a PTA annual contribution form. BIS urges parents / guardians to remember that the PTA can thrive and fulfil its duties only through the contribution of each and every one of them.

The PTA welcomes participation from all parents / guardians and encourages them all to contribute in any way they can.

1.20 Student Council

All students are represented by their peers via the Student Council. This body usually and ideally consists of students from Secondary School year groups, which are elected by all of the students in Key Stage three and four.

The Student Council is consulted on important decisions regarding students in the school and is mandated to represent individuals and groups of students on the PTA.

CHAPTER 2 – SAFEGUARDING, CHILD PROTECTION AND STUDENT WELL BEING

2.1 Child Protection Policy

BIS is committed to maintaining the highest standards in the area of Child Protection and has a very clear *Child Protection Policy* (Annex A8) addressing the school's and individuals' responsibilities to protect the children in our care. If any member of the community has any questions or concerns about Child Protection or our policy regarding it, they should contact either the Principal or the PTA School Wellbeing Subcommittee.

2.2 Support for All

BIS and the BIS School Wellbeing Sub-committee of the PTA is dedicated to supporting each student by promoting positive attitudes, choices, and behaviors. The sub-committee's objective is to support both the school's mission and objectives, and aims to:

- Develop transferable skills in compassionate thinking, self-development and self-management
- Develop skills to resolve conflict peacefully
- Promote the development of physical health, ethics and social behavior
- Encourage lifelong learning
- Provide an environment where students feel secure and welcome
- Promote respect for the rights of everyone

The School Wellbeing Sub-committee's ethos is to encourage everyone in our school community to promote and maintain appropriate conduct, and this is characterised as behavior which:

- Values and respects the rights of others, especially the right to learn
- Fosters a happy, safe and secure environment
- Recognises that each member of the BIS community is unique
- Treats others fairly
- Expects members of the community to take responsibility for their actions
- Promotes compassion and tolerance
- Values and respects others and their differences
- Addresses inappropriate behavior
- Upholds the school's mission, objectives and ethos

2.3 Responsibilities and Rights

All students and members of the BIS community have rights and responsibilities, the predominant ones of which include:

Students have a right to:	Students have a responsibility to:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Learn and play in a safe and clean environment- Learn and play in a supportive environment- Be respected- Access adequate and appropriate facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Actively promote safe and clean practices whilst at school- Participate in school activities to the best of their ability

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Express their opinion - Express themselves in an appropriate manner - Privacy - Learning experiences which cater to individual requirements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Respect the rights of others - Care for school facilities in a respectful manner - Tolerate opinions of others - Express themselves in a socially acceptable way - Allow others their privacy - Respect the learning styles of peers - Report perceived bullying
Parents have a right to:	Parents have a responsibility to:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Be respected by staff, students and the wider community - Feel welcomed at our school - Have their child's full potential realised within the limitations of available resources - Meet with staff and discuss issues relating to school policies, procedures, and their child's progress - Have their opinions valued 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Show respect towards staff, students and the wider BIS community - Model appropriate behavior, including language, and express themselves in a socially acceptable way - Be available to discuss their child's progress - Ensure their child is sent to school prepared to be involved whilst adhering to relevant policies - Allow others their privacy - Report welfare concerns

Declaration (page 1 of 2)

The British International School requires parents / guardians to acknowledge that they have read, understood, and agree to abide by the information, guidelines, rules and procedures provided in this School Handbook, including any referenced secondary sources and annexes.

The British International School also requires and expects that parents / guardians commit to teaching their child about the contents of this School Handbook, including any referenced secondary sources and annexes. Students are expected to be aware of and agree to abide by the information, guidelines, rules and procedures within.

The declaration pages can either be printed, signed and handed to a member of SLT, or be signed electronically and emailed to principal@britishinternationalschoolf.org. Completed declarations must be received before a student's first day in school (new students) and/or the start of the new academic year (existing / returning students).

3.1 Parental / Guardian Agreement and Consent

I have read, understood and agree to abide by all of the information, guidelines, rules and procedures within this School Handbook, including any referenced secondary sources and annexes.

I have conveyed the information, guidelines, rules and procedures to my child(ren) using age-appropriate language and acknowledge that he/she/they have understood the contents of the aforementioned despite the language and way I have chosen to convey the content to them.

Name:	
Relationship to student:	
Contact telephone numbers:	

Student(s) name(s):	
Student(s) class(es):	
Signature:	
Date:	

NB: Student declaration(s) can be found on the next page

Declaration (page 2 of 2)

3.2 Student Agreement and Consent (Student 1)

I have read, understood and agree to abide by all of the information, guidelines, rules and procedures within this School Handbook, including any referenced secondary sources and annexes.

I have had and spent enough time with my parents / guardians going through the information, guidelines, rules and procedures and have had the opportunity to ask questions about anything I am unsure of.

Student's name:	
Student's class:	
Signature:	
Date:	

3.2 Student Agreement and Consent (Student 2)

I have read, understood and agree to abide by all of the information, guidelines, rules and procedures within this School Handbook, including any referenced secondary sources and annexes.

I have had and spent enough time with my parents / guardians going through the information, guidelines, rules and procedures and have had the opportunity to ask questions about anything I am unsure of.

Student's name:	
Student's class:	
Signature:	
Date:	

3.2 Student Agreement and Consent (Student 3)

I have read, understood and agree to abide by all of the information, guidelines, rules and procedures within this School Handbook, including any referenced secondary sources and annexes.

I have had and spent enough time with my parents / guardians going through the information, guidelines, rules and procedures and have had the opportunity to ask questions about anything I am unsure of.

Student's name:	
Student's class:	
Signature:	
Date:	

Annexes (A1-A8)

A1	Fieldtrip and Off-site Activities' Policy (Parents / Guardians)
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A2	Information Communications Technology and Digital Learning Resources Policy
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A3	Nut-free Policy
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A4	Dress-code Policy
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A5	Behaviour Policy
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A6	Anti-bullying Policy
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A7	Health and Safety Policy
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A8	Child Protection Policy
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