

The British International School Istanbul **Teaching and Learning Policy**

In the British International School Istanbul, we believe that all teaching and learning should aim to provide students with the opportunity and support to develop into themselves into lifelong learners who are responsible members of the global community. This vision for our students is the core of our school's guiding statements, and even more important, the foundation for all our pedagogical approaches. As such, this policy will outline the expectations for teaching and learning using our school's guiding statements' objectives.

Provide excellent international educational programmes:

- Across the pre/primary, we continually work to align the EYFS, Primary, and Secondary curriculums, horizontally and vertically. Each learning area's alignment is reviewed every two years or earlier with curriculum changes. Transition programs are also carried out between EYFS and Primary, then again between Primary and secondary. Please see the transition policy for more detail.

- In the Early years, we focus on developing children's skills and experiences following guidance from the EYFS documents. There are seven learning areas which are broken down into Prime areas and Specific Areas:
The Prime Areas are:
 - PSED (Personal Social Emotional Development)
 - CL (Communication and Language)
 - PD (Physical Development)The Specific Areas are:
 - Literacy
 - Mathematics
 - UW (Understanding the World)
 - EAD (Expressive Arts and Design)

Within EYFS1 Teachers focus on learning and development within the Prime Areas, while EYFS2 covers all areas of learning. The whole of EYFS participate in specialist music and PE lesson. In EYFS2 children also attend specialist Turkish lessons.

- In the Primary, we follow a modified British National Curriculum. The learning areas are broken down into:
 - Literacy,
 - Numeracy,
 - Science, Computing, Design Technology (DT),
 - PHSCE,
 - Humanities (Geography and History),
 - Creative Arts (Drama, Art, and Music),
 - Modern Foreign Languages (French and Turkish) and ESL,
 - Physical Education (PE).

The core subjects are Literacy, Numeracy, and Science, while the rest are foundation subjects. Core subjects are taught throughout the year, while some teachers may choose to rotate foundation subjects and in key stage one, science.

Cross-curricular topics and links are encouraged throughout the curriculum; foundation subjects often provide a focus/material for core subjects while core subject skills can be practised and developed in foundation subjects.

PHSCE follows a modified SEAL-GD program; while some teachers do have circle time, this learning area is taught through the other subjects.

Specialist teachers are provided for: French, Turkish, Physical Education, and Music.

The curriculum is continually developed and assessed by the Primary Leadership team. There are 8 Area Leaders who are responsible for a curriculum learning area and two curriculum coordinators who oversee the horizontal and vertical alignment and standards across the areas. Every teacher participates in one curriculum subject, supporting the relevant Area Leader. This system allows us

to continually renew our curriculum and teaching methodologies, as well as maintain consistency. Formal reviews and action plans are completed annually.

Challenge students to reach their potential:

- In the Early Years we fully support the principle that young children learn through play, and by engaging in well-planned activities. Teachers build on an individual child's prior experiences and interests as they progress through the Early Years.

The teaching staff will undertake ongoing assessments, in the form of observations for each child, and record these in the child's individual learning journey. This assessment forms an important part of the future curriculum planning for each child.

All EYFS classrooms have a teaching assistant who supports the classroom teacher and shares observations that they have noticed in both the indoor and outdoor learning environments with the classroom teacher.

The SEN department is also involved with the EYFS department monitoring children and helping teachers by making their own formal observations of children, working together with teachers and parents and by developing Individual Education Plans for the children who require extra support.

- In the Primary, we believe in sharing learning goals and progress with the students, often developing them together. This means that all lessons have a clear learning objective written in child-speak that is shared with the class and reflected upon in the end of the lesson. Our teachers and students both assess the learning in the lesson according to our marking policy. Both summative and formative assessment is consistently used in all subjects, supported by the marking and assessment policy.

All teachers are required to provide differentiated learning according to individual students' needs. While this does not translate that every lesson will have different content or tasks, it does mean that teachers take into account what each student needs to succeed in the lesson and that we provide appropriate scaffolding to ensure they can. As well, teachers are required to make provisions for students performing both above and below year level – we believe that all our students should work equally hard so extending and supporting is a must! Additionally, SEN provisions and lessons are available through our SEN department.

Key stage 1 classes have one teaching assistant per year group to support learning and the classroom teachers. Key stage 2 classes have one teaching assistant per 2 year groups to support learning and the classroom teachers.

Appreciate and celebrate cultural diversity:

- In the Early Years, we have children from many different nationalities and backgrounds which we celebrate every day. We also look forward to celebrating cultural events within the school year. Each year the children celebrate International Day, dressing up in the costume of their chosen culture. We invite in special guests, and parent helpers to help immerse children in cultural experiences such as "Turkish dancing" and singing songs from around the world.

Children are encouraged to share about their cultures, bringing special items in for show and tell. A big part of our children's Physical Emotional Social Development is learning about what makes them special and unique and treasuring these differences among our class and school community.

- In the primary, we try to weave our students' heritages, cultural experiences into our school, as well as the local Turkish culture. Many of our units of work use global and local focuses and teachers are encouraged to use opportunities that arise in their class as teaching points. Annually, we celebrate International Week using one of the learning areas as a base to explore global connections and cultures.

Mother Tongue languages are an additional way to promote the cultural diversity in the primary. Through the Languages department, mother tongue lessons and clubs are coordinated with volunteer parents. As well, all students are able to opt for mother tongue languages parent-directed study instead of French lessons.

All primary classes participate in local day trips (field trips) to various sites around Istanbul, helping students explore the local culture. Key stage 2 classes are encouraged to participate in short residential trips outside the city.

Provide extra-curricular activities:

- In the Early Years all teachers run three clubs a year. There are a variety of clubs on offer such as move and groove, fun in the sand and construction club. In EYFS1 these clubs occur on the afternoons for whole day children. EYFS2 children can attend after school clubs. Teachers inform the Club Coordinator of the clubs they are running before the start of each term.
- In the primary, we provide three sets of club cycles – one each term. A variety of clubs are offered by all teachers and cover academic, sport, and environmental options. As well, there are private paid clubs available arranged through the school.

Promote open and effective communication within the school:

- Across the pre/primary, we publish monthly newsletters with contributions made by all teaching staff, maintain a school website with detailed curriculum information and access to all newsletters, letters, and forms, and use an SMS system to communicate events and notices.

New school families are welcomed at each campus at the start of each year before the children start by members of the Senior Management Team. In the first few weeks of a new school year class teachers run introductory meetings explaining about the curriculum, classroom timetables, routines and expectations.

Parent Teacher Conferences take place twice a year, the first meeting in October the teachers share about how the individual child has settled into classroom routines and in primary, academic progress, and the second one in April is more detailed based on the child's development within the areas of learning. Teachers complete a Teacher/Parent form for all meetings with parents and feedback from parents is noted.

Two report cards will be issued, one in December and one in June.

Parents are requested to notify the school about anything, they consider it is essential for the school to know. The class teacher will contact the parents if they consider there is something concerning a child about which they should be aware.

The Parent Noticeboard displays the weekly lunch menu, reminders of special dates, copies of the latest PTA and School newsletters as well as useful publications for parents about EYFS curriculum. Class Parents are chosen at the start of the school year and work closely with the teachers when organising special events such as providing support on class trips and with organising end of term events.

- In Early Years we are aware that children need the support of both the parents and the teachers to make good progress in school. We strive to build positive links with the parents of each child, by keeping them informed about how the children are being taught, and how well each child is progressing.

On entry into the Early Years, parents/caregivers fill out an "All about me" form to share information about their child which provides vital information to help the teaching staff to settle the new child smoothly into the new setting.

Parents are also encouraged to fill out a "parent's voice" form to give feedback about their child's learning journey. Two report cards will be issued, one in December and one in June.

At the end of EYFS2, the Early Years Foundation Stage profile is completed for the 17 Early Learning Goals. This valuable information is kept in the child's individual folder for other teachers to refer to as the child progresses through the school.

Each child has a home-school-communication-diaries for information/ newsletters to be passed between home and school. Parents and teachers are also communicate together using BISI email. Teachers regularly keep parents up to date on classroom interests and encourage parents to join in classroom and whole school events.

- In the primary, the following are primary-specific required methods of communication with parents:
 - Classroom teachers and specialist teachers will issue termly newsletters to inform parents of topics and class events;
 - All students will have home school communication diaries for notes; Year 6 will have homework diaries for notes.
 - All staff will maintain their BISI email which parents can use for communication.

All staff members are encouraged to keep open communication with parents. This may entail extra parent meetings if appropriate, letters, telephone calls, or emails. Telephone calls will not be put through during lessons. If any concerns arise, the head of primary and/or deputy head of primary can join in meetings.

As well as these direct methods of communication, we believe homework should also act as a method of communicating and sharing the students' learning, progress, and targets.

Across the primary, we feel it is essential to be able to communicate students' progress and attainment as they progress vertically through the primary. All teachers are required to keep student attainment records in accordance with the assessment policy. These are to be shared with the teacher who takes over the class.

Encourage active involvement in the school, local and global communities:

- Across the pre/primary, the whole school community nominates then votes on the school's annual charities. Together, we select one local, one national, and one global charity to which all school fund-raising events support equally.
- In Early years children attend field trips based on learning throughout the school year from visiting a local farm to exploring under the sea at the Aquarium.

The Early years Department fully participates in whole school fundraising events for charity from Friday Fun Days, Wacky Wednesday to the book and bake sale events.

The Early Years Department is working on looking after mother earth by promoting recycling in all the classrooms across campus by using the blue waste paper recycling bins supplied.

- In the primary, each year group has different local and global learning units. As well, all classes are encouraged to participate in local and national (KS2) field trips. Local experts may also be invited in to support lessons. Additionally, our PHSCE curriculum scaffolds the students' development related to community.

Prepare students to become independent thinkers and lifelong learners:

- Across the pre/primary, we believe in the concept of lifelong learning and in the idea that both adults and children learn new things every day. Through our teaching we equip children with the skills, knowledge and understanding necessary to be able to make informed choices about important things in their lives. We believe that appropriate teaching and learning experiences help children to lead confident, happy and rewarding lives and to prepare them for the next phase of their education. We maintain that learning should be a rewarding and enjoyable experience for everyone; it should be fun.
- In EYFS, we use the Characteristics of Effective Learning to promote independent thinkers and lifelong learning. The ways in which the child engages with other people and their environment – playing and exploring, active learning, and creating and thinking critically – underpin learning and development across all areas and support the child to remain an effective and motivated learner. We want the children to question their ideas (I wonder why?) and share their thoughts and then preserve to explore these further. It is all about the process rather than the finding the correct answer.
- In the primary, we encourage enquiry based learning, value creativity, and strive to ensure that our students are always active in their learning. Meta-cognition is encouraged to be developed according to the students' readiness! Students are explicitly aware of the learning objectives, they

are supported in developing their own targets and learning about learning ensures they can transfer strategies to independent opportunities. Additionally, our SEAL-GD program (PHSCE) scaffolds learning about learning and the self throughout the primary.

Strive for continuous improvement:

- Across the pre/primary, have one INSET week in August and one INSET day at the start of the second and third term.
- In the Early Years we strive to be an excellent outstanding team of teachers full of enthusiasm and passion for teaching young children. We have high expectations for all children in our care and want them to be able to reach their highest potential by valuing the whole child socially, physically, emotionally and intellectually. We provide enriching safe learning environments both indoors and outdoors where children have many opportunities to fully engage themselves in a variety of self-initiated and teacher led activities.

As a team we are working on sharing best practise, learning from each other and in turn developing consistency between campuses. Teachers are encouraged to observe each other's lessons both across campus and within.

Meetings are held on fortnightly basis on all campuses relating to upcoming events, ongoing projects, policy reviews and learning areas focused on during the yearly cycle relating to the whole school development plan.

EYFS2 teachers are involved in meeting with Key Stage 1 teachers moderating writing and sharing baseline assessment to aid smooth transition for those children into the Primary School Setting.

The Early Years Co-ordinator reviews assessment and planning that is in place and provides constructive feedback to teachers.

- In the primary, the staff strive for continuous improvement by annually reviewing our subject action plans, holding termly subject group and year group meetings, and having regular staff meeting INSET times. Curriculum coordinators and area leaders regularly review and monitor curriculum, assessment, and teaching strategies, maintaining an up-to-date knowledge base of current requirements and research.

In the primary, we also aim to instil drive for continual improvement in our students. This is done by ensuring authentic learning opportunities, weaving in the students' interests, backgrounds, and cultures, and by ensuring students are active participants.