



STUDENT & PARENT HANDBOOK

August 2021 - July 2022

A dynamic learning community nurturing and inspiring every individual to be the best that they can be.

PRINCIPAL'S WELCOME LETTER

Dear students and parents,

I am delighted to welcome you to the British International School of Tbilisi for the 2021-2022 academic year. I am so pleased that you have chosen to be part of our dynamic and progressive school community.

BIST is a school that prides itself on the warmth of our welcome to learners of all ages and parents from all around the world. The multi-national community represented at BIST, including students, families, and staff, helps to create a learning environment which fosters a global understanding and an appreciation of each other.

Our school believes that education is essential for achieving success in today's rapidly changing world. We offer a dynamic, creative and supportive learning environment in which learners of all abilities are encouraged, and have the opportunity to realise their academic and personal potential.

The state-of-the-art facilities and resources at BIST will enrich and broaden your child(ren)'s academic, social, emotional, and physical experience. Our membership of the Council of British International Schools (COBIS) as a Patron's Accredited Member, representing a mark of global quality assurance, will help ensure we maintain our standards of excellence.

At BIST we aim to offer a high quality, comprehensive, rigorous, and engaging international education to your child(ren), to stimulate and support them to realise their full potential. We value not only academic excellence, but also tolerance, respect for diversity, social awareness and cultural understanding. I am proud of our teaching team of highly qualified and committed professionals, who challenge and inspire our students in a stimulating and caring environment, equipping them with skills and knowledge to achieve their goals and dreams.

Please take time to read the procedures outlined in this handbook. It has been compiled to give you all the information and guidance you need to ensure that you and your child(ren) have a successful and enjoyable experience at our school. Unfortunately, due to the current pandemic, there are aspects of this document that are amended slightly due to enforced changes that are required.

I look forward to having your family as an integral part of the BIST community, and liaising with you to make your child(ren)'s educational journey positive, productive, and inspirational.

A warm welcome to our very special school community from the entire academic team!

Stephen Priest
Principal

Our MISSION...

...at the British International School of Tbilisi is to equip learners with the essential knowledge, skills and expertise they need to realise their full academic and personal potential, and to succeed in work and life in the increasingly dynamic 21st century. This includes the development of academic subject knowledge and understanding, as well as developing intellectual, personal, social, emotional and physical skills.

Our VALUES...

...at the British International School of Tbilisi we believe that:

- High quality education is essential for achieving success in today's dynamic and rapidly changing world;
- Every child can learn. We can ensure each learner's personal achievement and success by providing high quality teaching with high expectations for student achievement;
- Every child should be given an opportunity to develop their potential;
- Each learner is unique and deserves attention and respect;
- Partnership between the school, the child and their family is essential to academic and social success.

Our AIMS...

...at the British International School of Tbilisi is to challenge and inspire learners in a stimulating and caring environment, prepare them for education beyond school and allow them to acquire the skills and knowledge to achieve their goals and dreams.

The British International School of Tbilisi aims to:

- Provide a caring, enriching and engaging environment where every learner can thrive;
- Motivate and engage children in their learning; encourage children by consistently acknowledging, rewarding and celebrating their achievements;
- Inspire life-long learners who enjoy learning, make progress and achieve;
- Help students develop high self-esteem and feeling of self-worth leading to them becoming confident individuals who are able to live healthy and fulfilling lives;
- Provide learners with a wide range of stimulating, practical and engaging learning experiences in and out of classroom developing their intellectual, personal, social, physical and emotional skills;
- Cultivate tolerance and respect for diversity and embrace multiculturalism;
- Develop the ability to work successfully independently and in teams;
- Encourage a strong social conscience, a sense of civic responsibility and active involvement in today's multicultural world;
- Encourage parents to become actively involved in and support their child's education.

BRIEF HISTORY OF THE SCHOOL

The British International Department of the British-Georgian Academy (BGA) was established in 2011, initially with only 22 students. Due to its phenomenal growth, and the demand for high quality British international education in Tbilisi, it was decided in 2015 to establish a separate and independent school – the British International School of Tbilisi - under the same ownership and Director as BGA. From September 2015, BIST and BGA share the same new purpose-built campus in the Lisi Lake area of the city.

FACILITIES

The BIST campus extends over 10,000 square metres. The purpose-built facilities include an academic building, an administration building, and a sports and recreation centre (including a swimming-pool, gymnasium, auditorium and outdoor sports areas). BIST has over 20 modern classrooms many fitted smartboards and purpose-built laboratories. The school also has a library, a performing arts centre, a Sixth Form centre, and designated spaces for both group work and individual study. Outdoor learning spaces and playscapes offer additional opportunities for learning and exploration. BIST has a doctor located full-time on-site, and also has a cafeteria for use by students.

FACULTY

In 2021-22 BIST has a Primary section with classes from Foundation 1 and 2 to Year 6. In the Secondary section, academic programmes run for Years 7 to 13 in a wide variety of subjects. The classroom teachers are

all qualified, experienced practitioners who are First Language English speakers. Each primary class also has a Georgian learning support. Specialist teachers supporting classes in Primary include music teachers, language teachers (French, Georgian, German, Russian, and English as an Additional Language) and Physical Education teachers. All subjects in the Secondary section are taught by subject specialists.

INTERNATIONAL ACCREDITATION

In 2015, BIST became a member of the Council of British International Schools/[COBIS](#) and in 2019 was awarded the COBIS Patron's Accreditation. This represents a mark of global quality assurance, and also offers BIST a valuable network of global support through contacts, consultancies, and marketing. Membership also expands opportunities for professional development for staff, including through conferences, webinars, seminars, and sharing good practice and learning. BIST is a Cambridge Examinations Centre. BIST is a founder member of the Black Sea Schools group of COBIS schools. BIST is the only Duke of Edinburgh's International Award licensee and International Computer Driving License (ICDL) centre in the Caucasus.

ACADEMIC PROGRAMME / CURRICULUM

Early Years

In Early Years, BIST follows the IEYC with the English National Curriculum used for coverage of Numeracy and Literacy. Students follow age-appropriate structured learning in Numeracy, Literacy, IEYC topics, PSHE, PE, Music and Singing.

Key Stage 1

In KS1, BIST follows the IPC with the English National Curriculum and Cambridge Primary used for coverage of Numeracy and Literacy. Students follow age-appropriate structured learning in Numeracy, Literacy, IPC topics, ICT, Art, PSHE, Languages, PE, Music and Singing. Abacus Maths is used specifically for Numeracy.

Key Stage 2

In KS2, BIST follows the IPC with the English National Curriculum and Cambridge Primary used for coverage of Numeracy and Literacy. Students follow age-appropriate structured learning in Numeracy, Literacy, IPC topics, ICT, Art, PSHE, Languages, PE, Music and Singing. Abacus Maths is used specifically for Numeracy.

Key Stage 3

In KS3, BIST follows the English National Curriculum and Cambridge Lower Secondary. Students follow age-appropriate structured learning in Mathematics, English, Science, Geography, History, Global Perspectives, Art, ICT, PSHE, Languages, PE, Music, Drama and Singing. Cambridge Secondary 1 programmes are followed for Mathematics, English and Science.

Key Stage 4

In KS4, BIST follows the Cambridge International Examinations IGCSE programme. Students follow age-appropriate structured learning in Mathematics, English, Literature, Sciences, Geography, History, Economics, Sociology, Art, Computer Science, PSHE, Languages, PE and Singing. Mathematics, English, Literature and Science are compulsory examined subjects. Geography, History, Economics, Sociology, Art, Computer Science and Languages are optional examination subjects. PE, Singing, PSHE and Georgian Language are compulsory non-examined subjects.

Key Stage 5 - The Sixth Form

In the Sixth Form, BIST follows the Cambridge International Examinations A Level programme. Students follow age-appropriate structured and independent learning in 4 AS and A Level subjects of their choice. These could include: Mathematics, Literature, Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Geography, History, Economics, Sociology, Psychology, Art, Media Studies, Computing, French and Spanish. Additional non-examination courses and lessons include: University Guidance, PE, Singing, Community Service, PSHE and Georgian Language. IELTS and SAT support sessions are also provided as required.

GENERAL PROCEDURES

ADMISSIONS AND PLACEMENT

Applications are accepted and admission is granted on a rolling basis. Eligible children are enrolled on a *first-come, first-served* basis; children who apply after their year group is full are placed on a waiting list. The granting or denial of admission is the responsibility of the Principal. The maximum class size for Early Years classes is 16 children, for Years 1 and 2 it is 20 and for all other year groups it is 22 children. The school does

not have the resources to meet the needs of learners with significant severe disabilities or learning difficulties who might require specialist teaching, but will support, where possible, those with individual needs.

Year level placement is primarily determined by age at the start of each academic year, together with reports from their previous school(s). On occasion parents request a student is placed outside their chronological age group - this is reviewed on a case-by-case basis and, if agreed to by the school, parents must sign a waiver absolving school of any responsibilities for the impacts of this in later life. See the following chart for more details:

	Early Years	Key Stage 1		Key Stage 2				Key Stage 3			Key Stage 4		Sixth Form (KS5)	
AGE ON 1st SEPT	3 or 4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
BIST / UK	Foundation 1 & 2	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	Year 11	Year 12	Year 13
US equivalent	Pre-school	Kinder garten	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8	Grade 9	Grade 10	Grade 11	Grade 12

CLUBS & CREATIVITY PROGRAMME (AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES)

The Clubs & Creativity Programme is part of the normal school day for children in Key Stage 2. A range of activities is provided 5 days a week to children in Years 3-6 which take place from 2.30pm - 3.20pm, (followed by an afternoon snack). Children will rotate through a wide variety of artistic, sporting or other activities throughout the school year. Children in Key Stage 1 can opt into the 5 day programme on a termly basis.

In Key Stages 3 to 5, students opt into activities that take place from 3.30pm - 4.25pm.

ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL

Arrival

The school day begins at 8.30am sharp for all classes. Children are welcome on the school premises from 8.15am. They must be dropped off at the main school gate and use their personal ID card to enter the school. For safety and security reasons, children are not allowed to leave the school campus during the school day without prior consent from a parent in the form of written permission.

There is a drop-off circle immediately in front of the school security gate, which is designed explicitly for the purposes of dropping off passengers. Parents must refrain from parking in this area at all times, as parked vehicles will block school buses and other cars. Parents who wish to accompany their child(ren) to the classroom should use the designated parking spaces towards the front of the school.

Dismissal

Children in primary school not participating in the Clubs & Creativity programme can be picked up at 2.30pm or (by prior arrangement at the beginning of the academic year) travel home on the school bus which departs from the school at 3.30pm. Children participating in the Clubs & Creativity programme should be collected at 3.30pm or travel home on the school bus.

Students in secondary school not participating in the Clubs & Creativity programme can be picked up at 3.30pm, or (by prior arrangement at the beginning of the academic year) can travel home on the school bus. Those students who are participating in the Clubs & Creativity programme can be picked up at 4.30pm or travel home on the school bus.

Parents who are picking up their children must wait in the school's Atrium. Parents must grant prior written permission for someone other than the parent/guardian on record to pick the student up from school.

Children must be collected and leave the school premises at the latest by 4.45pm, as all teaching staff will be leaving the school before or at this time.

Students who independently travel to and from school must have a completed Independent Travel Form filed with Administration. Independent travel is only an option for secondary students.

ASSESSMENT

A comprehensive guide to the school's assessment policies and procedures can be found on the school [website](#).

GL CAT Testing and Progress Tests

As part of the admissions process and at the start of Years 4, 7, 10 and 12, all students sit an online assessment from GL. This is a Cognitive Abilities Test. The test is age appropriate and is not something that students can or should be revising and preparing for. Parents are informed in advance that the tests will take place, but the data from these tests is for internal school use and is not usually shared with parents. As per freedom of information best practice however, parents can request a report on the CAT test. In Years 4-9, CAT data is used by teachers to support individual students and as an indicator as to whether a student is performing below, at or above expectations. It is, however, just one tool to assist in this assessment. In Years 10-13, the CAT test does give predictive grades that are used to set targets for the IGCSE, AS Level and A Level examinations. These are, however, only baseline targets and we believe that all students are capable of exceeding such targets.

In Years 2-9, students will sit in May or June the GL Progress Tests in English, Maths and Science (in Year 2 only English and Maths). These are summative tests done online in a similar format to the CAT tests, but measuring progress against the age-related expectations of the English National Curriculum. These tests can be prepared for by reviewing and revising the material covered in that academic year and teachers will prepare the students to take the tests. They are not public examinations though and for internal use. Therefore, we do not teach with the aim of scoring well on such tests, but rather to provide a well-rounded education. Parents will receive a report on the Progress Tests.

Assessment Data

As a school, we collect an enormous amount of assessment data on students through a variety of methods including the work students produce, baseline assessments, summative tests and assessments, etc. This data is kept confidentially and is only shared with students, parents and staff. Data is crucial for schools and teachers so that they can better support students in their learning.

ATTENDANCE

It is important for children to be active participants in their education. Children should avoid missing school days unless absolutely necessary for medical or personal reasons. Parents are encouraged to schedule holidays and trips in the school holidays to avoid disrupting the educational progress of their child(ren). If a child is absent from school for any length of time, it is the parent's responsibility to ensure that a child catches up on work missed. Please note that absences and punctuality are reflected in school reports.

If a child must be absent for any reason, parents must send an email to the class teacher/mentor, copying the administrative office, as soon as they know, or at the latest by 8.30am on the day of the absence. It is very important for child safety reasons to ensure that absentees are accounted for.

Parents who wish to pick up their child before the end of the school day must arrange this with the teacher, who will inform the administrative office for record-keeping purposes. Parents collecting their children before the end of the school day should visit the office in person before collecting their child(ren).

Children arriving at school later than 8.30am are marked on the attendance record as *Late* (tardy). They must go to the administrative office to pick up a tardy slip before they go to class, which is then placed in their file. After five tardy arrivals in short succession, parents are contacted by the school administration requesting their attention to the importance of timely arrivals.

COVID-related absence - students on self-isolation or absent for other COVID related reasons who attend lessons online are recorded as present.

BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS

BIST allows age-appropriate birthday celebrations in classrooms during the afternoon snack time (between 3.20pm – 3.30pm or at 2.20pm for Early Years). If parents are sending in cakes or other treats, they must ensure that they are nut-free and considerate of any other food allergies in the class. Carbonated drinks are also not allowed. Parents must manage the distribution of such treats, bring all necessary cutlery, etc and ensure all waste is disposed of. Parents must make arrangements with the teacher at least one week in advance.

Teachers are not responsible for alerting classmates to birthday celebrations. Children must distribute invitations themselves prior to the event or announce it in class, and must include all classmates.

Invitations to private birthday parties outside of school may be distributed at school only if all children in the class are invited.

BULLYING

The school does not tolerate bullying in any way, and is committed to creating a safe and comfortable environment for all students. BIST does not tolerate physical or verbal harassment of students or staff members, and disciplinary action will be taken with individuals who choose this behaviour. Children are asked to report acts of bullying immediately to their classroom teacher.

BUS TRANSPORTATION

A school bus service is offered to students who live in the Tbilisi central area. Users are expected to follow these regulations when on the school's bus service:

1. Students are not allowed to eat or drink on the bus, with the exception of water.
2. Students must remain seated with their seat belts fastened at all times.
3. Students must use the same 'inside voices' and behaviour on the bus as on the school grounds. Shouting, the use of profanities, and other inappropriate behaviour is not allowed.
4. Students are allowed to board and exit the bus only at the bus stop on record for them. Students who wish to disembark with friends at a different bus stop must receive prior written parental permission.
5. Students in Years 1-6 must be met at the bus stop by a known adult.

The school reserves the right to suspend anyone from using the bus service as a result of behavioural issues.

CONTACT INFORMATION & GUARDIANSHIP

It is essential that the administrative office has a current telephone number and other contact details on record for the parents of each student plus emergency contacts (a minimum of 3 contact numbers in Georgia are required per student). Parents are requested to inform both the classroom teacher/teaching assistant, and the administrative office, if home contact information (including address, phone numbers, email addresses) changes.

If parents leave home temporarily and leave their child(ren) in the care of someone else, it is important that they notify the school in advance, providing names, numbers and pertinent information about the guardian(s), as well as the dates during which parents will be absent.

COMMUNICATION: HOME AND SCHOOL

EMAIL

Email is the usual form of communication with parents, whether by the classroom teacher or the administrative office, and therefore **it is important to regularly check emails** and to keep the teacher and the administrative office informed of any changes to parent email addresses. Emails from the teacher may include the weekly class newsletter, information regarding an upcoming event, or individual student-related information. Emails from the administrative office may include information regarding events, holidays, after-school activities, the school bus service, student conferences, and the school newsletter.

PHONE CALL

When the school has an immediate or individual question regarding your child, or urgently needs to contact a

parent in an emergency, the teacher or administrative office may choose to call directly. Parents are requested to ensure their phone contact details are up-to-date to facilitate this direct communication as required.

CHANNELS OF COMMUNICATION

BIST recognises the need for home and school to address concerns effectively and has therefore created a procedure for constructive discussion. The steps outlined below must be strictly followed:

Step One: Parents should confer with the classroom teacher, mentor or subject teacher for any classroom-related concerns (see examples below).

Step Two: If a parent is not satisfied with the response received, they should contact the Head of Primary or Secondary or the relevant Key Stage Coordinator.

Step Three: If the matter is not resolved and parents require further discussion, appointments with the Principal may be requested. Parents may expect a response within five days.

Questions relating to:	Person responsible:	Method of contact:
Classroom issues - student progress - behaviour - class routines & schedule - curriculum / home learning	<i>Class teacher in Primary Lead mentor in Secondary Subject teacher in Secondary (for subject specific issues)</i>	<i>Email teacher directly - a list of emails will be supplied.</i>
Classroom issues not resolved with the teacher - please contact the Heads of Primary or Secondary or the EYKS1, KS2, KS3 and KS4 Coordinators or the Head of V1th Form	Head of Primary - Alex Backhouse Head of Secondary - Adam Whybro EYKS1 Coordinator - Alex Timmis KS3 Coordinator - James Miller KS4 Coordinator - Sadie Rodea Head of V1th Form - Les Pemberton	a.backhouse@bist.ge a.whybro@bist.ge a.timmis@bist.ge j.miller@bist.ge s.rodea@bist.ge l.pemberton@bist.ge
Classroom issue still not resolved - please contact Principal	Principal's PA - Sophie Kasrashvili	s.kasrashvili@bist.ge
School organisation, parent liaison, changes in parental details, fees, invoices and billing, re-enrolment, withdrawal & departure, requests for reports, school events, etc	Head of Administration / Human Resources - Tumika Sthapit	t.sthapit@bist.ge
School bus service and after-school activities programme	Principal's PA - Sophie Kasrashvili	s.kasrashvili@bist.ge
Admissions Office	Adm. Officer - Tumika Sthapit	admissions@bist.ge
Complaint regarding actions of a teacher or staff member	Principal and Director (via Principal's PA)	Submit to Principal's PA or via director@bist.ge email address

NEWSLETTER

The school sends out a weekly newsletter by email. This contains information about upcoming events, reports on recent events and important news items. The newsletter email also contains letters and other such informative attachments.

SOCIAL MEDIA

The school currently uses Facebook and Twitter as it's main social media outlets. It is hoped that parents follow both. Although social media informs of events, all such events will also be emailed about and/or appear in the weekly newsletter. Social media is generally used as a celebration of school life. The school has an image use policy that is adhered to on social media.

INFORMATION REQUESTS

When requesting information from the school, parents are requested to respect the following timeline:

- For documentation requests from the administrative office (files, copies of reports, home-school agreements, etc), allow 5 working days to retrieve the information.
- For questions about a learner's academic progress or other classroom-related issues, allow the teacher 24 hours to prepare, collect information and reports, and to reply via phone or email.
- When requesting a meeting of any kind, allow at least 24 hours to arrange this. In emergency situations, the school will accommodate requests as soon as possible.
- Reference / Letter of Recommendation requests - please note BIST will not supply reference letters to parents. References will only be supplied as confidential documents directly to a receiving institution.

DEVICE PROTOCOLS

Students are allowed to bring mobile devices such as phones, tablets and laptops into school. The school accepts no responsibility for either loss or damage to any such device whilst students are on the school site or an offsite activity. It is recommended that, if brought to school, it is clearly labelled, as with all possessions brought to school.

In Primary School, mobile phones should be kept in school bags, set to silent, and not used during the school day unless in extraordinary and staff supervised circumstances. Laptops and tablets that specifically assist learning can obviously be used in school after discussion with the class teacher.

In Secondary School, mobile phones should also be kept in school bags, set to silent, unless a teacher invites a student to use them for learning purposes. Laptops and tablets can be used in class as a learning tool, however, this again is following agreement with the teacher.

Education is becoming ever more communications device linked and although they can be expensive and it is always a family decision, it is advisable for students to have access to a suitable device at home. Alternatives to communication and working online are always available if a student does not have access to a device at home.

The use of mobile devices during break times and lunchtimes is not permitted as the students should be engaging with their peers and not spending these times online.

At all times during school hours, students must adhere to the ICT User policy that is shared with students and parents.

Mobile devices can be used on the school bus, however, their use and content viewed will not be monitored by school staff at this time.

DRESS CODE

Students are expected to wear the designated school uniform at all times, unless otherwise indicated by the teacher or the administrative office for special events or field trips or in Early Years classes. If students arrive at school not wearing the designated uniform, parents will be contacted immediately and requested to bring the correct clothing to school. Hair longer than shoulder-length should be tied up for neatness and safety. School badges, available for purchase at the school administrative office, should be visible on shirts/jumpers/cardigans and blazers.

Boys	Girls
Trousers or shorts – navy blue	Trousers or shorts – navy blue
Short-sleeved polo or light cotton shirt with logo – light blue	Short-sleeved polo or light cotton shirt with logo – light blue
Long-sleeved polo or light cotton shirt with logo – light blue	Long-sleeved polo or light cotton shirt with logo – light blue
Cardigan/jumper/vest (or blazer for Years 7-9) with logo – navy blue	Cardigan/jumper/vest (or blazer for Years 7-9) with logo – navy blue
Navy blue socks	Navy blue tights or socks
	<i>NB: Coloured tights are not allowed</i>
Dark-coloured shoes	Dark-coloured shoes
	Dress/pinafore with logo – navy blue or navy blue gingham
	Skirt – navy blue

Students are expected to bring the correct clothes for swimming and Physical Education (PE) to school, as follows:

- For PE class, a t-shirt, shorts (or tracksuit/leggings), and sports shoes/trainers
- For swimming class, a waterproof/plastic bag containing a swimsuit (one-piece for girls), a swimming hat (compulsory), goggles, and a towel (pool shoes are optional)

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

Fire safety, earthquake and lockdown drills are conducted once per term. Classroom teachers prepare children for these drills.

ENGLISH AS AN ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE (EAL)

EAL support is provided for students from Year 1 who require targeted English language support. EAL support takes place as stand alone lessons and in-class support. BIST has an EAL Coordinator who assists the classroom teachers with assessment and progression for those learners who need an extra focus on their English language skills. A certain amount of EAL support is provided at no extra cost, however if additional support beyond this is required an appropriate additional fee will be levied.

EXPECTATIONS ON CAMPUS

Respect, consideration and tolerance for others is an expectation of all members of the community. Students must also maintain an awareness for health, hygiene and safety in and around school. All children, parents, staff and visitors are expected to treat the school grounds with care and respect. Anyone causing unreasonable damage or mess may be issued a fine to pay for repairs / clean up.

The school reserves the right, subject to applicable data protection legislation, to monitor a student's e-communication and internet use including for the purpose of ensuring compliance.

Further details of the school's Positive Learning Behaviours Policy and Procedures can be found on the school website.

FEES

Details of fees are produced annually and supplied in the Tuition Fee Schedule. There are 6 types of fee:

- Tuition fee - these are to pay for the general schooling of children. As children move up the school and the costs of resourcing and staffing older year groups increase, the fees increase.
- Admission & Assessment fee - this is to pay for the administration of admissions testing and to register an interest in a student being admitted to BIST.
- Registration & Enrolment fee - this is a one-off payment to initially register and admit a student.
- Re-enrolment fee - this is an annual fee to register re-enrolment for the next academic year.
- Security deposit - this is returnable when a student leaves BIST if sufficient notice of departure is given and there are no incurred debts.
- Bus fees - these are for use of the optional school bus service.
- Examination fees - external exams (e.g. Cambridge IGCSE) fees must be paid in addition to the cost of tuition. Fees at IGCSE level are approximately 850GBP for a full set of exams and at AS/A Level approximately 600GBP.

Additional costs are for school trips, extra swimming lessons, extra EAL sessions and one-to-one music lessons.

FIELD TRIPS

Field trips are organised throughout the year and are designed to build community, cultural understanding, and/or relate to a particular study unit in the classroom. For whole-day trips, the school cafeteria can provide if necessary a packed lunch though children should bring along a bottle of water. The Administration office organises buses for field trips, and parents are requested to pay a small fee for the bus and other costs such as museum entry fees.

Parents/guardians are required to sign a permission slip at the start of the school year allowing their child to participate in day field trips.

All field trips begin and end at the school. Parents must arrange to have their child at school to begin the field trip, and the field trip will not officially end until all learners have returned with their teacher to the school.

GUESTS

From time to time, a student may request to have a visiting friend or relative attend the school for a short period of time. Permission must be obtained in writing from the Principal in advance of such a visit, and it will only be approved if the dates are considered suitable by the classroom teacher. Prior to the visit, the parents

of the visiting child must provide a written acknowledgement that their child will conform to the BIST Code of Conduct.

HOME LEARNING and HOMEWORK

Home Learning refers to any work or activities which students in Key Stages 1 to 3 are asked to do outside lesson time, either on their own or with parents. Home Learning grids and tasks are sent out to parents and students at regular intervals and contain a number of different tasks of different styles and genres that are appropriate to a range of ability levels. The purpose of home learning is:

- To make study outside of school an enriching, engaging and enjoyable experience.
- To develop an effective partnership between the school and parents in raising the achievement of all children.
- To consolidate and reinforce skills and understandings, particularly in Maths and English.
- To extend school learning.
- To encourage students, as they get older, to develop the confidence and self-discipline needed to study on their own, in preparation for secondary school.

Younger and less fluent readers benefit from regular reading to parents at home, and the classroom teacher can give further guidance on this to parents. It is also important for more fluent readers to have quiet time at home for reading on a regular basis.

Homework refers to the assignments given to students in Key Stages 4 and 5 to complete at home. These should be completed without undue parental (or other adult) assistance.

LANGUAGE STUDIES

BIST provides all students from Year 1 to Year 6 courses in a rotation of languages as part of the curriculum. In Years 1 and 2 the children study 3 languages (French, Georgian, German) in a fun and interactive way. Language classes in Key Stage 2 are offered 3 times per week during school hours. Each year the students will study each of the four target languages (French, Georgian, German, Spanish). In Years 7 to 13 all students have the option of native or non-native speaker lessons in Georgian. Secondary students in Years 7 to 11 must opt to follow an examined course in French, German, or Spanish (unless withdrawn from this for additional English support). Russian for native (or relatively fluent) speakers is available once per week in Secondary and as a weekly after school session in Key Stage 2. After school native speaker sessions are also available in French, German and Spanish.

If a student is assessed as requiring English as an Additional Language (EAL) support, then s/he will initially study extra English instead of a second language, until his/her level of English is deemed to be at the appropriate level.

LIBRARY / READING

BIST encourages students to read for fun, as well as for information and intellectual development. Parents are encouraged to involve themselves in their child's reading progress.

In addition to their weekly class library session, students may spend time in the library for a variety of reasons, including for class projects and activities. When not scheduled to visit the library with the classroom teacher, students must refer to the librarian or assistant librarian.

Student can use the library to:

- Study
- Use the technology
- Check out and/or play educational games
- Check out books

In the case of lost or damaged books, materials, games etc from the library, students will be responsible for replacing the item(s).

The school participates in an international book club, and periodically students will receive catalogues showcasing a variety of fun and educational books. These books can be purchased online, or through the administrative office, and will be subsequently delivered to the student in the classroom. The school earns credit for each book ordered, which is then used to purchase additional books for the school library.

LOST AND FOUND

Students are encouraged to have name labels on their uniform and PE clothing, so that lost items may be returned to the owner. Unlabelled clothing and items found on the school premises will be kept in the school reception area. Any items not retrieved by the end of each school term will be sent to a charitable organisation.

LUNCH/CAFETERIA

A hot lunch is provided for students each day. The daily menu includes a main dish (with a vegetarian option), fruit and vegetable, and compote/water. A morning snack is also provided for Early Years children.

A healthy afternoon snack is provided for all students in the cafeteria each afternoon at 3.20pm. Parents are requested to provide a healthy snack each day to be eaten during the morning break. This might include such items as fruit, yoghurt, carrot sticks, granola bars, pretzels, juice, etc. **It does not include chocolate, crisps, cakes, sweets, flavoured drinks, etc.**

Students are also allowed to purchase ice cream, juice and other treats at the cafeteria on Fridays. The school prohibits the purchase of more than 1 sweet item, and students have a 1.5 GEL/day limit on their card, which parents can choose to increase if they wish. The school also restricts students from purchasing snacks for other students.

**COVID restrictions currently apply and, at the time of writing, the school cafeteria is not available for use. This means that lunches and snacks are supplied in a plastic reusable container. The usual choice available to students is therefore curtailed.*

MEDICAL ISSUES

BIST employs a full-time doctor with access to general medical supplies. The doctor is locally-trained and is trusted to respond to minor medical issues.

It is very important that student health records are provided to the school and kept up-to-date, and that pertinent medical information, addresses, telephone numbers, and immunisation records are submitted to the administrative office. Teachers and staff involved with a student with specific health problems are informed on a confidential basis about his/her condition.

The school's policies on administration of medicines and intimate care can be found on the website.

Students who need to take prescription or over-the-counter medication should, if at all possible, do so at home. If it is necessary for a student to take medication at school, parents should arrange this with the teacher/learning support and school doctor. **Under no circumstances should children have medication in their schoolbags and self-administer.**

Parents are asked to disclose if a student has had any infectious illnesses such as chicken pox, measles, scarlet fever, mononucleosis/glandular fever, tuberculosis, impetigo, meningitis, or hepatitis as soon as this has been confirmed by a doctor. Students with these conditions must return to school with a doctor's note stating they are no longer contagious, or stating which special precautions must be taken. Incidents of head lice must be fully treated before a student returns to school.

Emergency Medical Care

- **Accidents:** In the event of an accident, the parents will be notified, and if needed an ambulance will be called. If treatment is necessary but it is not an emergency, parents will be called and requested to take the student for medical care.
- **Illness:** In the event of severe illness, the parents will be notified, and are required to make arrangements to transport the child to their own doctor for treatment. If, however, the illness is so severe that there is not sufficient time for the parents to come to the school, an ambulance will be called and the child will usually be taken to the nearest hospital.

- **Insurance:** Parents are responsible for costs associated with medical services their child receives beyond that of the regular school medical care. The school does not carry medical insurance for students. It is recommended that parents ensure adequate medical insurance cover for their children.

School activities are specifically designed to provide a positive and successful learning experience for all students. In attending a regular school day, a student is expected to participate in all school activities, including PE, swimming, and outdoor play break, unless a doctor's note has been shared with the classroom teacher/mentor.

**COVID-related health protocols*

For students who have symptomatic, asymptomatic or close contacts, the return to school guidance can be found [here](#).

Any student with any symptoms of COVID should remain at home and school needs to be informed immediately. Testing is strongly recommended as this assists school in assessing risks to other members of our community. Siblings of a student with symptoms should also remain at home until such a time that it is proven to not be COVID via a test or a doctor's note confirming the ailment something other than COVID.

Students who arrive at school and record a 37°C+ temperature will be held at security and the temperature retaken after 15 minutes. If the high temperature persists, parents must take the student home.

Students who develop symptoms during the school day will be isolated and parents contacted.

PARENT CONDUCT POLICY

BIST is an orderly and safe school, where relationships between staff and visitors, especially parents, must demonstrate mutual respect and recognition of shared responsibility for students' welfare and educational progress. Parental involvement is an important factor in educational success and in dealing with emerging problems at an early stage.

Parents and other adults must wear BIST provided ID cards at all times. Any visiting adults without a BIST ID card need to wear a visitors' pass provided at the school entrance. ID cards can be arranged through the school administration.

In a minority of cases, the behaviour of a few parents can cause severe disruption or result in abusive or aggressive behaviour towards staff. BIST is responsible for protecting the health and safety of school staff and students, and all members of the school community have the right to expect that their school is a safe place in which to work and learn. Violence, threatening behaviour and abuse against school staff or other members of the school community is not tolerated. Such acts include, but are not limited to, threatening or actual physical violence, intimidation, unwarranted verbal or written threats of legal or police action, shouting, swearing or inappropriate emails.

Where such behaviour does occur, school staff must know that their employer plays a proactive role in taking all possible action to deal with it. This includes the following stepped sanctions which are applied according to the severity of the incident:

1. A written warning to parents from the Director
2. A parent being temporarily suspended from campus
3. The expulsion of the student from the school.

The school may seek the involvement of the police and/or an embassy if required. Advice is given to BIST staff on procedures to follow in dealing with such incidents.

PARENT VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Parents are considered an important and integral part of the BIST school community, and are encouraged to participate in and support special events and activities, such as International Day, charity-related events, after-school activities, etc. If a parent wishes to volunteer time at the school in addition to these activities, they can contact the administration to discuss possibilities. Parent volunteers are representatives of the

school at all times and as such, are expected to abide by the school rules, follow appropriate standards of behavior and appearance, and demonstrate concern for others' well-being.

Field Trip Parent Volunteer

Role: The parent volunteer is considered an additional responsible adult on the trip, and is responsible for the whole group, not just their own child. In participating in a field trip, parent volunteers are expected to assist with the students' learning, which may include preparing some questions to provoke students' thoughts on what to look out for on the trip.

Security: When responsible for a small group on a field trip, the parent must keep the group together at all times. If a student needs the toilet, the parent volunteer must hand over the rest of the group to the class teacher.

Privacy: Parent volunteers must ask permission before taking photos of the children.

Role Model: The parent volunteer is expected to be a positive role model for students. This includes not smoking in front of the children and minimising the use of mobile phones.

Class Parent Representatives

To strengthen the school community, and particularly to reinforce the linkages between and within the parent community, BIST encourages parents to volunteer for the role of 'Parent Rep'. The school has at least one Parent Rep per class, who serve as a valuable link between the teacher, the other parent reps, and school administration. The Parent Rep's main responsibilities include helping with class and whole-school special events, communicating with class parents about upcoming class or school events to encourage parental involvement, organising parent social events and welcoming new families to the class. At all times, the Parent Rep liaises closely with the classroom teacher/mentor, and must commit to keeping all parent contact details confidential. The Parent Rep is not responsible for mediating parent/teacher issues, discipline or security concerns, or academic issues.

Contact details of parents will only be shared with class parent reps and/or parent 'nationality' reps with prior permission.

PROHIBITED ITEMS

Students are not allowed to bring the following items to school:

- Weapons of any kind, including replica weapons as toys
- Drug and alcohol-related items
- Fireworks, lighters, matches, cigarettes
- Expensive toys, particularly electronic toys
- Computer games
- Inappropriate books, magazines or pictures
- Water pistols
- Rollerblades and skateboards (unless approved)
- Jewelry, except for ear studs/sleepers and items of religious practice
- Chewing gum

If prohibited items are brought to school, the school cannot be held responsible for the damage, loss or theft of these items. If items are in a student's possession and cause disruption, the classroom teacher, teaching assistant or administrative staff may confiscate the item until the parent retrieves it.

RELIGIOUS AND CULTURAL AFFILIATION

BIST is a private educational institution and is not affiliated with any cultural or religious belief system. The school believes that sharing and learning about other faiths and cultures is an important part of an international education. A variety of beliefs and cultural practices are discussed and studied for educational purposes, however, the school does not require, expect or promote any single belief system.

SAFETY AND SECURITY

Student safety and security is a high priority for the school. BIST has a secure entrance with enclosed gated facilities with 24-hour security guard presence, a high fence circumnavigating the school grounds, and cameras located around the campus (both in the public areas of the building and around the perimeter fence) to ensure a safe environment for all. All individuals presenting at the school's gated entrance will be required

to show a personal ID, and to wait until an appointment with a staff member is confirmed before being allowed to enter. Parents who come to regularly pick up or drop off their children are required to wear their school-issued ID card to access the campus. Parents should wait outside the building or in the Atrium for classes to be released.

Students are issued with personal ID cards, which they must bring to school each day. Students use their ID cards at a turnstile to gain entrance to the campus, and again when departing the school premises at the end of the school day. The student ID card is very important for safety and security purposes, as in the event of an emergency, this system is used to determine which students are on the campus and accounted for. If a student loses his/her ID card, parents should contact the administrative office to request and pay for a replacement immediately.

SCHOOL EVENTS

Whole-school events offer an opportunity for students to enhance their cultural, social and civic awareness, as well as getting to know students in other classes. Regular events and activities are planned to coincide with holidays, local cultural celebrations, and other academic and socially significant dates. Parents are informed of such events via email, including specifics about any dress-code changes, lunch/snack adjustments, and changes to the normal schedule. These events are considered an integral part of the learning process and school programme, and are therefore a required component of the academic calendar.

Please note that as per our Image Use Policy that it is a parent's responsibility to withdraw their child from a school public event if they do not want their child's image appearing on social media.

SCHOOL POLICIES

School policies are available on the [website](#) or on request through the school administration.

SCHOOL SCHEDULE

The school day commences at 8.30am sharp. The end of the school day for Early Years and KS1 is at 2.30pm (unless parents of Year 1 and 2 children opt for participation in the Clubs & Creativity programme). Classroom lessons for KS2 end at 2.25pm and then children follow the Clubs & Creativity programme which runs from 2.25pm to 3.20pm. This is followed by afternoon snack from 3.20pm to 3.30pm. At 3.30pm, students are released to parents, start embarking on buses or, for those with siblings in Secondary, join our Tea Time Extra club. Lessons for secondary students end at 3.20pm and are followed by a snack and then after-school activities until 4.25pm.

A link to the school's annual calendar can be found on the [school website](#).

SCHOOL SUPPLIES

A list of class-specific school supplies required, including both classroom and art supplies, is issued to parents by each classroom teacher before the start of the school year. The school provides most learning materials, including textbooks, workbooks, major art supplies, etc. At various times during the year, teachers may request students to bring in specific supplies for a particular classroom project.

STAFF APPRECIATION

Parents must please note the school's policy on staff appreciation and gifts for teachers (on birthdays, Christmas, end of school year, etc...). Any gift given to staff members above an estimated value of 10 GEL must be declared and staff have voluntarily agreed to hand over any such gifts for auction amongst all staff. (Please note that this policy was voted on by staff and overwhelmingly supported). The funds from such auctions are then used to pay for a staff party in the summer and at Christmas. We encourage parents to contribute to the Class Parent Representatives' staff appreciation fund where all BIST staff are given a gift at the end of the year. We also encourage parents to use gift giving as a learning opportunity - a card and a small cake made by a student would mean a lot to a teacher. The school does understand that parents of many cultures would like to present gifts to teachers. However, we feel that to avoid any perception of impropriety and to ensure all staff are rewarded equally that our procedures for staff appreciation are appropriate.

STUDENT DOCUMENTATION

Documentation such as school reports are given to parents via the Parent Portal only. Printed copies can be made at a cost of 5 GEL per side - please request by email to the school administration and allow 5 school days before collection. Printed copies of school documents can be stamped and signed for free - please also allow 5 school days for this process. Any translation from the original English and subsequent notarisation is the responsibility of the parents.

WITHDRAWALS

Parents are requested to notify the Head of Administration if they wish to withdraw their child from the school, and a withdrawal form must be completed. Parents should allow adequate time for the teachers and administrative office to prepare any necessary documentation and reports (minimum 5 school days). Details regarding BIST's withdrawal/refund policy and possibilities for tuition fee reimbursement are outlined in the Home-School Agreement and Tuition Fee Schedule, and any such requests must be submitted in writing. Student progress reports, certificates of attendance, and other school records will not be released if money beyond the value of the security deposit held is owed for school fees, lost library books, etc. Please note that failure to inform school of withdrawal within 30 school days of said withdrawal will lead to loss of security deposit.