



S18. BIST Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Policy

The British International School of Tbilisi, as a school and an employer, is committed to encouraging diversity, equity and inclusion among our student body, our staff and our parent community, and eliminating unlawful discrimination both within and beyond school.

Our aim is to promote and raise awareness and cultivate understanding of the principles of diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI), for our community to be representative of all sections of society, and for all community members to feel valued and respected.

As an institution serving young people at all phases of education, from a variety of different backgrounds, we strive to maintain a critically reflective, mindful and inclusive environment, where differences and equal access are recognised as central to a quality education. As a learning centre dedicated to supporting and educating the whole child for an increasingly diversified and globalised world, we seek to support our students, staff, and parent community in reflecting this mindset in their conduct within and beyond the school.

Our policy's purpose

This policy's purpose is to:

1. Provide equity, fairness and respect for all in our employment, for all students in our care and for all members of our community.
2. BIST will not unlawfully discriminate against protected characteristics of:
 - age
 - disability
 - gender
 - gender identity
 - marriage and civil partnership
 - pregnancy and maternity
 - race (including colour, nationality, and ethnic or national origin)
 - regional identity
 - religion or belief
 - sexual orientation
 - socio-economic background
3. Oppose and avoid all forms of unlawful discrimination. This includes in:
 - employer relations, pay and conditions
 - student opportunities and access
 - parent and other community relationships
4. Promote amongst our staff, student and parents communities the need for equity, diversity, and inclusion and the rights of individuals and groups.

Our principles

Principle 1: Every child can learn, and is equal and valued member of our community, irrespective of:

- Whether or not they are differently-abled or disadvantaged in any way,
- Their ethnicity, culture, religious affiliation, national origin, national status, gender or sexual orientation.

Principle 2: We respect and celebrate diversity in all its forms, including:

- Those who are differently-abled, whereby reasonable adjustments are made;
- Ethnicity, so that different cultural backgrounds and experiences of prejudice are recognised;
- Gender, so that the different needs and experiences of all individuals, regardless of identity, are recognised;
- And that all forms of discrimination are challenged.

Principle 3: We are a diverse, multicultural community, aiming to provide a safe space for all students and staff, parents, and visitors to thrive by fostering an inclusive environment characterised by empathy towards:

- Differently-abled people, and an absence of ableist policies, rhetoric and harassment;
- Groups and communities different from each other in terms of ethnicity, culture, religious affiliation, national/regional origin or status and an absence of prejudice-related bullying and incidents;
- All individuals, irrespective of gender identity and sexual orientation through a culture of zero tolerance towards sexual harassment or any forms of discrimination.

Principle 4: Policies and procedures should benefit all stakeholders and potential employees, for example in recruitment and promotion, and in continuing professional development:

- Whether or not they are disabled, and irrespective of their ethnicity, culture, religious affiliation, national origin, national status, sex, gender identity or sexual orientation.

Principle 5: We aim to recognise, address, and work toward removing inequalities and barriers that already exist between:

- Disabled and non-disabled people;
- People of different ethnic, national, cultural and religious backgrounds;
- All individuals, irrespective of gender identity and sexual orientation.

Principle 6: As an international school with a diverse multicultural community, we intend that our policies and activities should benefit society as a whole - locally, nationally, and internationally - by fostering greater social cohesion, and greater participation in community life of:

- Disabled people as well as non-disabled;
- People of a wide range of ethnic, national, cultural and religious backgrounds;
- All individuals, irrespective of gender identity and sexual orientation.

Our commitments

BIST commits to:

1. Encourage equity, diversity, and inclusion in our community through policy, procedure and learning processes;
2. Challenge discrimination and misconceptions whenever they occur;
3. Create an environment free of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination, promoting dignity and respect for all, and where individual differences and the contributions of all community members are recognised and valued;

This commitment includes training staff and raising awareness amongst students and other community members about their rights and responsibilities under the Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Policy.

Responsibilities include staff conducting themselves to help the school provide equal opportunities in educational access and opportunities, employment, and prevent bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination.

All community members should understand they, as well as the school, can be held liable for acts of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination, in the course of their interactions with others.

4. Take seriously complaints of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination by members of our community and any others in the course of the school's activities;

Such acts will be dealt with as misconduct under the school's grievance and/or disciplinary procedures, and appropriate action will be taken. Particularly serious complaints could amount to gross misconduct and lead to the dismissal of employees without notice, the removal and restriction of access to the campus of parents or procedures leading to the permanent exclusion of students.

Furthermore, unlawful discrimination and a number of other discriminatory acts are illegal and therefore a criminal offence which may lead to the involvement of the local authorities.

5. Make opportunities for educational access, training, development and progress available to all students and staff, who will be helped and encouraged to develop their full potential.

6. Make decisions concerning students and staff based on merit and contextual data or other sources of contextual evidence according to the needs of the individual.

7. Review student enrolment, educational processes and employment practices and procedures when necessary to ensure fairness, and also update them and the policy to take account of changes in the law and in best practice;

8. Monitor the make-up of the staff regarding information on the protected characteristics in encouraging diversity, equity and inclusion, and in meeting the aims and commitments set out in this policy.

Monitoring will also include assessing how the policy, and any supporting actions, are working in practice, reviewing them annually, and considering and taking action to address any issues.

Promotion of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion within School.

BIST promotes Equity, Diversity and Inclusion through the following methods:

- The activities of the EDI working party and its advice given to leadership and management and its work with staff, students and parents
- Specific training events for staff on practice and awareness both in a face-to-face environment and via online sources
- Awareness raising amongst students through specific programmes such as the PSHE curriculum, within subject content, special events such as assemblies and an annual dedicated EDI week
- Awareness raising amongst parents through special events and information sessions
- Keeping abreast of best practices and relevant legislation through links with COBIS, other Black Sea Schools and other agencies and organisations.

Agreement to follow this policy

The Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Policy is fully supported by the Directorate, Senior Management and Leadership of the school and has been agreed with the staff. Where appropriate agreement will be

discussed and made with students and parents.

Annex 1 - Reference to other policies

This policy should be read as relevant to the individual in conjunction with the school's policies on: Acceptable Use of ICT, Admissions, Anti-bullying, Attendance, Community Outreach, Complaints, Curriculum & Assessment, English as an Additional Language, Feedback & Marking, Health & Safety, Intimate Care, More Able and Gifted & Talented, Positive Learning Behaviours, Safeguarding, Safer Recruitment, School Counsellor procedures, Staff Conflict of Interests, Staff Disciplinary procedures, Staff Safeguarding Code, Student Support, Whistleblowing, Volunteers & Visitors as well as the Student-Parent Handbook, Georgian Legal Code and Staff Standards documents.

Annex 2 - Key Definitions

Equity is the guarantee of fair treatment, advancement, opportunity and access for all individuals while striving to identify and eliminate barriers that have prevented the full participation of some groups and ensuring that all community members have access to community conditions and opportunities to reach their full potential and to experience optimal well-being and quality of life. It includes all the ways in which people differ and encompasses all the different characteristics that make one individual or group different from another. It is all-inclusive and recognises everyone and every group as part of the **diversity** that should be valued. A broad definition includes not only race, ethnicity, and gender — the groups that most often come to mind when the term "diversity" is used — but also age, national/regional origin, religion, disability, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, education, marital status, language, and physical appearance. It also involves different ideas, perspectives, and values. Authentically bringing traditionally excluded individuals and/or groups into processes, activities, and decision/policy making in a way that shares power. **Inclusion** refers to the practice of authentically bringing traditionally excluded individuals and/or groups into processes, activities, and decision/policy making in a way that shares power.

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