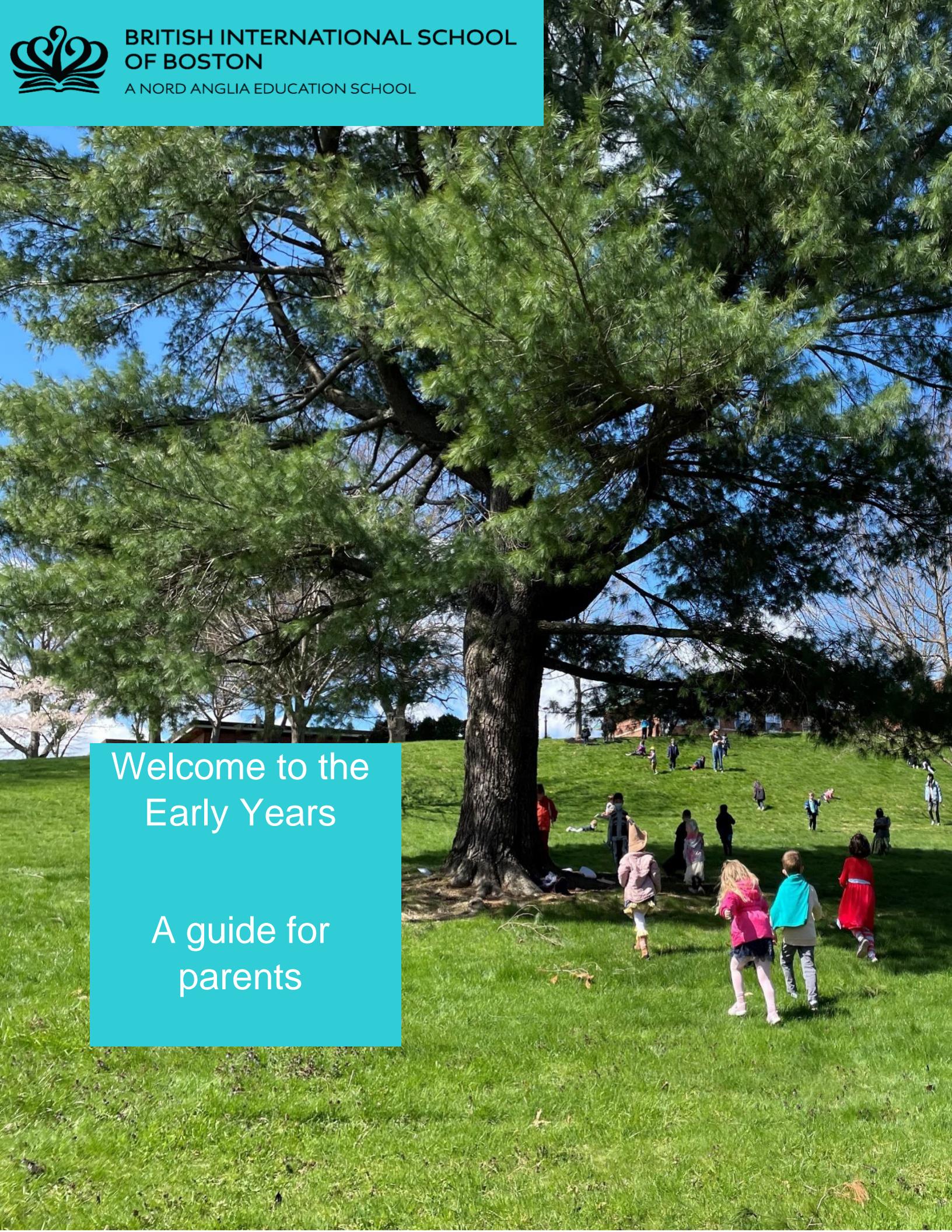




BRITISH INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL
OF BOSTON
A NORD ANGLIA EDUCATION SCHOOL

Welcome to the Early Years

A guide for
parents





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Welcome from the Head of School

Welcome to Early Years 2023-2024 at The British International School of Boston.

We have an exciting year ahead of us and I am very happy to welcome everyone to school and to introduce our new Principal, Mr Paul Keach and many new members of the teaching team to you over these coming months. We are entering the school year with lots of positives from last year to build upon, and new initiatives to enhance the BISB experience for children and families.

The Early Years are a joyful time and a fundamental aspect of every child's holistic development, and we are delighted that you have chosen us to share in this journey with you and your little ones.

We will be inviting you into school to share the children's learning achievements and to celebrate their personal growth and progress through developmental milestones and to enjoy their EYFS journey. The Early Years are a magical time of discovery and investigation and I know that your little ones will have a fantastic year at BISB, learning through exploration both inside the classroom and in the natural environment.

Early Years children will enjoy lots of opportunities to learn through field trips, visitors to school, Forest School and in their Houses and we will be including our youngest children in EYFS Celebration Assemblies and Star of The Week Awards.

I am really looking forward to sharing this journey with you all and I know that we will have a wonderful EYFS year together.

Esther Hunter

Head of Lower School



ACADEMIC CALENDAR 2023-2024

Fall Term 2023	
Staff Induction Week	Monday, August 21 st
Start of Fall Term	Monday, August 28 th
Labor Day – No School	Monday, September 4 th
Back to School Information Evening	Thursday, September 12 th
Mid-Term Break and Columbus Day	Monday, October 9 th – Friday October 13 th
Veterans Day – No School	Friday, November 10 th
Settling in Report	Friday, November 3 rd
Parent Teacher Conferences – School Closed	Tuesday, November 14 th
Parent Teacher Conferences - Evening	Thursday, November 16 th
Thanksgiving Holiday	Wednesday, November 22 nd – Friday, November 24 th
End of Fall Term	Friday, December 15 th

Winter Term 2024	
Start of Winter Term	Wednesday, January 3 rd
Lower School Information Evening 2024-25	Wednesday, January 10 th
Martin Luther King Jr. Day – No School	Monday, January 15 th
Mid-Term Break and Presidents' Day	Friday, February 16 th – Monday, February 19 th
Target Setting Report	Friday, March 8 th
Parent Teacher Conferences – School Closed	Tuesday, March 12 th
Parent Teacher Conferences - Evening	Thursday, March 14 th
End of Winter Term	Friday, March 18 th

Spring Term 2024	
Start of Spring Term	Monday, April 1 st
Patriots' Day – No School	Monday, April 15 th
Mid-Term Break and Memorial Day	Monday, May 27 th – Friday, May 31 st
Reception, Year 2 & Year 6 Transition	Thursday, June 6 th
Juneteenth – No School	Wednesday, June 19 th
End of Year Reports	Friday, June 21 st
End of Spring Term	Friday, June 30 th

SCHOOL HOURS

The school day is from 8:20 am – 3:30pm. Children in Toddlers and Nursery who are signed up for half days can be collected at 11:55.

Students in the Early Years can be dropped off in their classrooms from 8:00 am where they will be greeted by their teachers and learning assistants. All students are expected to be in school at 8:20 am.

It is essential that students arrive at their classrooms on time for the beginning of the school day so that they can be properly registered and begin the day with their classmates and teachers. Any students arriving after 8:30am should be taken to directly to the Main Office. They will then be escorted to their classrooms.

After School clubs will be available to children in Reception and above and will take place after school each day from 3:30 until 4:30. Sign-ups for these will be sent out via the Main Office and parents will be able to sign up for clubs using School Buddy. All families will be given information on how to use School Buddy when they start at BISB.

After care is also available for all students and runs from 3:30 until 6pm. Toddler, Nursery and Reception will attend aftercare in the Nursery classrooms. You can sign your child up to aftercare for any days you need. Please email the main office with the days you would require aftercare for your child.

Children in Nursery and above can ride the bus to and from school. We have 4 different bus routes available. Our bus provider is Local Motion, which is clearly marked on both sides of the buses. Please note that you must sign up for the morning and afternoon routes separately in School Buddy.

If there are any changes to your child's afternoon bus schedule, it is essential that you request a schedule change in Schools Buddy or contact the main office by phone or email, main.office@bisboston.org, by 1pm to inform them of these changes and to ensure the bus system runs smoothly.

- The Wellesley/Needham Bus Serving Milton, Needham, Wellesley.
- The Newton/Waltham Bus: Serving Waltham, Newton, Chestnut Hill, Brookline.
- The Brookline/Cambridge Bus: Brookline (Brookline Village & Washington Square), Brighton and Cambridge.
- The Boston Bus: Jamaica Plain, Boston (Back Bay & Beacon Hill).



ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE PROCEDURES

It is essential that our students are always supervised, for their own security and safety. Therefore, we request that students wait until 8am before entering the campus, when teachers are on duty. Children should arrive by 8:20am at the latest and will head straight into their classrooms with their teachers.

Please ensure that you or your designated guardian collects your child from a member of staff at the end of each day from the classroom doors.

It is important to collect your child punctually. If, for any reason, you have been delayed, please telephone the school so that we are aware. Please also notify your class teacher or the front desk, if any other adult will be collecting your child. For security reasons, children will only be released to an authorized adult.

DROP OFF AND PICK UP POINTS

Drop-off and Pickup points for Toddlers:

Parents or helpers may park in the designated 'Toddler parking lot' and then walk their child to the Toddler classroom. At pick up time for both half day and full-time students, you will collect your child the same way. To access the Toddler parking lot, please follow the upper ring road around campus. When you arrive at the drop offline, please enter the left-hand lane, put your hazard lights on and proceed slowly to the Toddler parking lot.

Drop-off and Pickup points for Nursery and Reception:

Nursery and Reception parents can park in the lower parking. Once you enter the campus, follow signs for 'BISB drop off'. You will be able to bypass the drop off line in front of the main building and park in the lower parking lot on the right hand side. Once parked, you will be able to walk your child to their classroom doors, where they will be greeted by their class teacher.

Half day Nursery students will be walked to the lower parking lot gate by a member of staff, where they will be met by their parents.

Children in Reception and full time Nursery students can be collected at their classroom doors at pick up time.

If, for any reason, you have been delayed, please telephone the school so that we are aware and can inform your child to avoid any unnecessary anxiety. If you are unable to collect your child, please inform the school at your earliest convenience as to who will be collecting your child. For security reasons, teachers will not release a child to an unauthorized person.

For families who will be walking to school there is a designated pathway from Pond Street which extends to our school building.

Please familiarize yourself with the traffic and parking scheme in the areas around school. Our aim is to provide a safe vehicular traffic system for you and your children.

SCHOOL BUDDY

BISB use a system called School Buddy for all payments for field trips, after school clubs, early and after care and school lunch. The Main office staff will help set you up with an account at the beginning of the school year. Please reach out to the Main Office if you have any issues with using School Buddy for sign ups and payment.

EARLY CARE AND AFTER CARE

Early Care:

Early care for students in Toddlers to Year 6 will be available in the library from 7:30AM to 8:00AM. If you would like your child to attend Early Care, you will need to sign them up via School Buddy. Please contact the Main Office if you have any difficulty with logging into School Buddy. The daily fee for early care is \$10.

At 8:00AM students will be taken to their respective classrooms/play areas.

After Care:

Aftercare takes place from 3:30PM to 6:00PM. Toddlers will be escorted to the Nursery classroom and can be collected from the classroom any time between 3:30PM and 6.00PM. Nursery and Reception students will also be in the Nursery classrooms. A member of the Reception team will escort the children to the Nursery classroom for Aftercare. Children can be collected from the Nursery classroom door, on the playground, anytime between 3.30PM and 6.00PM.

Please sign up for Aftercare on School Buddy. Please contact the Main Office for up-to-date pricing for after care.



SCHOOL UNIFORM

Wearing our school uniform is compulsory for all students attending BISB. We believe that wearing the uniform in a proud and smart manner promotes positive self-esteem. Therefore, it is an integral part of our school culture. Please ensure your child arrives at school looking smart and ready for the day ahead.

All students are expected to wear our Physical Education (PE) uniform on PE days. You will be informed about these days at the beginning of the academic year.

Visit the Dennis Uniform site to purchase your child's uniform directly. Please contact the Main Office if you have any questions.

Of course, we understand that children in the Early Years enjoy participating in messy and outdoor play. Many of our students are also still learning the basics of potty training. Therefore, we require all students in the Early Years to bring a spare set of clothes (including socks and shoes) into school. These may remain in their cubbies during the term.

Both indoor and outdoor shoes are required throughout the year and should be suitable for the weather conditions. Children can wear fully black sneakers, or black shoes should be worn. All footwear must be fully enclosed. Sandals and other open-toed shoes should not be worn.

We believe that children benefit a great deal from playing outside and enjoying fresh air, even in winter. It is therefore extremely important that your child has clothes that are suitable for the prevailing weather conditions. Coats, snow pants, hats and gloves are all encouraged during cold and rainy days, while hats are recommended for bright days.





WHAT TO BRING TO SCHOOL

Water bottles:

Each student will be asked to bring their own reusable water bottle to school, clearly labelled with their name on it. The bottle will be returned home daily to be washed. Only water should be contained in the bottles – no juice, tea, carbonated or flavored drinks. Water dispensers will be available at school for refills, whenever required.

Nap bedding

All the children in the Early Years classes have a designated nap time. This is a Massachusetts state law. The age of the children will dictate how long the children's nap time will be. If you would prefer your child to not sleep during nap time, or you would like to limit the number of minutes they sleep for, please let your child's class teacher know. Children who do not sleep or nap for a shorter time than their classmates will have 'quiet time' on their nap beds. All children will need to bring in a child size sleeping bag and a comforter if required. Nap beds can remain in school for the week and will be returned home on Friday to be cleaned, ready for the following week.

Spare clothes

It is important to send in spare clothes for your child, including socks. Children in the Early Years will be participating in activities which may get messy and may require them to change into clean clothes. Many children in the Early Years are also getting to grips with potty training and therefore the occasional accident is expected.

Weather appropriate clothing

We encourage our students to play outside in all weather conditions, therefore it is vital children have weather appropriate clothing in school. We would never encourage children to play outside in extreme, dangerous weather conditions, but we do utilize raining or snowy days to enhance their learning of the natural world.

Masks (temporary provision)

Masks are optional within school. We will support children who choose to wear a mask.

SCHOOL LUNCH

Families have the option of either providing their child with a packed lunch from home or signing up for School lunch. Families who wish to pack their child a home lunch are encouraged to send food that their child enjoys and can eat with minimal support. We are unable to heat any food in school, so we recommend using thermos flasks for foods that children would prefer to eat warm.

Parents can sign their child up for school lunch via School Buddy. Our school lunches are provided by the company Lunchbox. At the start of each month BISB will send out a menu, so parents can decide if they wish to sign their child up to receive school lunch. There will be a weekly menu that will stay the same for the month. Each day will have one option. The price of the prepared lunch is \$5.50 per day. Lunchbox require you sign up for the entire month and do not offer a pay by day option.

SNACKS

Classes in the Early Years will provide time during the morning and afternoon for children to have a small snack, if needed. This should consist of fresh fruit or a wholesome, nutritious snack. BISB discourages sugar-laden foods for health reasons and because they can have a negative effect on concentration and learning. Under no circumstances should snacks be shared amongst students. Occasionally, families send in a small individual cupcake for each child to celebrate a birthday. Please avoid sending in one large cake.

Please note that, due to the potential for serious allergic reactions, nuts are strictly not allowed on Campus. BISB is a nut-free zone.



BEHAVIOR

At BISB, we have very high expectations of behavior and always encourage children in Lower School, even from a very young age to make positive choices, start and end every day with kindness and to always try their best. However, we do understand that, from time to time, children sometimes find this challenging. This will always be dealt with in a sensitive way and the child will be reminded of acceptable behavior and how to make good choices. With the Early Years children we encourage them to think about their choices as they are developing empathy at this age, and how to reflect on actions and their impact on others. If a problem persists, you will be notified, and an appointment will be made for teachers and parents to discuss any issues or concerns and to support the child in making better choices.

In all Lower School classes, we follow a positive approach to behavior management. We consistently praise the children for their good behavior to reinforce their motivation to make good choices, which leads to improved learning outcomes. We reward the children for their positive behavior and attitude to learning in a variety of ways, including House Points, Star of the Week Awards and Miss Hunter's Star Stickers. Children love receiving positive reinforcement from their teacher and Head of School, and we celebrate these achievements in a weekly, values-based assembly. All EYFS classrooms also celebrate a Star of the Week which is linked to the Personal Goals from the IPC (International Primary Curriculum).

Once your child has been accepted to BISB, they will be allocated a 'House'. Each House has a color associated with it and your child will be able to purchase a gym shirt in this color. We award children with House Points for academic or personal achievements. Each week the House with the most House Points wins the House Trophy. Throughout the year we have a variety of house events, including Sports Day, in which your child will participate, and they will be given lots of opportunities to earn House Points and House Point Awards. For these events your child should come to school in their house color t-shirt. You will be notified of your child's house color once your child enters the school. Siblings will be assigned to the same house.



HEALTH AND ABSENCES

HEALTH AND SAFETY

Regular daily attendance is expected though sometimes absence is unavoidable. Please telephone the Main Office in the morning if your child is not able to attend.

If your child has had vomiting or diarrhea, please keep them at home for 24 hours. If they have a contagious illness such as flu or chicken pox, please keep them home until a doctor certifies that they are no longer contagious.

Please advise us of any medical problems your child may have, particularly when there is a contagious condition or an allergy to materials or food. Serious food, drug or insect allergies requiring Epi-Pens must be accompanied by a Food Allergy Action Plan (or any other allergy) completed and signed by the doctor and the parents. This form is in the Health Forms Packet on the VBISB website under Parent Essentials

A health questionnaire must be completed and returned to admissions prior to entry. Medicines will only be given in special circumstances and then the medicine must be clearly labelled with your child's name and dosage. If you would like us to administer medicine to your child at school, you will be required to sign a 'medicine approval form' obtainable from the school administration staff. Prescription medications will be given only with a written Doctor's Order and written Parental Consent. These forms are in the Health Forms Packet. Any prescription medication must be in the original pharmacy packaging with the original pharmacy label attached

During certain times of the year there are often ticks around the school grounds. The school grounds are treated however, some ticks inevitably remain. In the warmer months, we recommend applying insect and tick repellent to your child each morning.

We always have a qualified nurse on the school premises in case of accidents or illness. In addition to this, all staff receive formal first aid training from qualified medical staff every two years. Most minor accidents and illnesses are dealt with at school by the school nurse and if necessary, these accidents/ illnesses will be communicated to you via email. In cases of serious accidents or illnesses parents will be contacted immediately and your child will be taken to a hospital/ doctor of your choice.

Throughout the year we will also be practicing fire and active intruder drills. During our fire drills we will show the children where are assembly point is. During our active intruder drills we will practice with the children what we should do in the event of an active shooter in school. We follow the ALICE protocols. We will talk to the children, in child friendly language, what we need to do to keep ourselves safe. We do not believe sheltering in place is always the safest thing to do. Instead, we will work with the children to practice evacuations, as well as sheltering in place.





COVID POLICY

As the CDC relax COVID protocols, we are all looking forward to providing our students with in-person experiences that will offer rich learning opportunities, robust extra-curricular activities, and an educational environment for positive social interactions among students and between students and staff.

With COVID-19 vaccines now readily available, treatments accessible to those at higher risk for severe disease, and widespread availability of self-tests, we will be aligning our policies with the most recent CDC guidance:

- Children and staff who test positive must isolate for 5 days. If they are asymptomatic or symptoms are resolving and they have been fever free, without the use of fever-reducing medicine for 24 hours, they may return to school after Day 5 and should wear a mask through Day 10. Upon request, prior to the start of the school day, asynchronous work will be provided for students during their isolation period.
- Symptomatic individuals can remain in school if they have mild symptoms, are tested immediately onsite, and that test is negative. Masking would be required until symptoms are fully resolved. For symptomatic individuals, DPH recommends a second test within 48 hours if the initial test is negative.

Masking:

Masking at BISB will continue to be optional on campus and on the bus, however, there will be some exceptions as outlined below:

- As stated above, a positive individual will be required to wear a mask from day 6 through day 10, when back at school.
- If an individual has mild symptoms and has tested negative, masking would be required until symptoms are resolved.

As mask-wearing will now be a family choice, students and staff will be respected and supported to wear masks, if this practice is in support of their comfort and feelings of safety.

We will continue to monitor the positivity rates throughout the year, and will adapt our policies, if necessary.

THE EARLY YEARS CURRICULUM

Your child's first experience at school is fundamental to beginning their learning journey for the rest of their life. The Early Years setting at BISB is committed to ensuring that your child grows into a creative, happy, confident lifelong learner. All children arrive with different knowledge, skills and understanding; therefore, personalized learning is at the heart of our provision. The way that your child engages with other people and their environment - active learning (Motivation), creative and critical thinking (Thinking) and playing and exploring (Engagement) – underpin learning and development across all areas of their holistic development and support the child to remain an effective and motivated learner.

We provide the children with the tools to develop their learning characteristics, which will lay the foundations for the skills they will need in years to come. We encourage children to have investigative learning attitudes, form positive relationships and believe in themselves. If children can learn to "have a go", learn from mistakes and try again, they will succeed in their future learning becoming resilient risk takers. When children are provided with open ended opportunities where there are no right and wrong answers they learn to think creatively, lead their own learning, and become independent learners. The curriculum is based on the new Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum incorporated with additional IEYC (International Early Years Curriculum) units to make sure your child is getting the best possible education. We ensure that there is a balance of adult focused and child-initiated learning throughout the day, which take place indoors and outdoors. Your child will experience practical play-based activities to ensure they reach their full potential. It is our priority that all children have the time to learn, play, make friends and grow. The EYFS is based around 7 areas of learning, each area is of equal importance and are planned to follow the interests of the child that is purposeful and creative.

The three prime areas are:

- Personal, Social and Emotional Development – to develop a positive sense of themselves, and others; to form positive relationships and develop respect for others; to develop social skills and learn how to manage their feelings; understand appropriate behavior in groups; and to have confidence in their own abilities.
- Physical Development – to develop co-ordination, control and movement. To understand the importance of physical activity and to make healthy choices in relation to food.
- Communication and Language – to develop confidence and skills in expressing themselves and to speak and listen in a range of situations.

The four specific areas are:

- Literacy – to link sounds and letters and to begin to read and write.
- Mathematics – to develop skills in counting, understanding and using numbers, calculating simple addition and subtraction problems and to describe shapes, spaces and measures.
- Understanding the World – to make sense of the physical world and the community.
- Expressive Arts and Design – to express and explore a wide range of media and materials. To share their thoughts, ideas and feelings through a variety of activities in art, movement, dance, role-play and design and technology.

ROLE OF THE PARENT

At BISB, we acknowledge the importance of involving our parents in their child's education and we encourage the support of parents throughout the school. The Parent Association is a fantastic way to get involved in school life. More details of how to join the Parent Association will be distributed once the school year begins.

Each class will have a class communication rep. These class representatives are often involved in supporting a school trip or other school or social events. If you are interested in becoming a class rep, then please feel free to contact your child's class teacher.

In addition to your role within school, we also encourage your support with your child's learning at home. The enjoyment and knowledge that young children get from books is invaluable at this age and we encourage parents to read with their child as often as possible at home. Once children are in Reception, they will start to bring home reading.

General Home Learning for EYFS Students

To help a child develop an active and curious mind, parents can:

- Encourage children to develop independence.
- Share books together and discuss them.
- Use fine motor skills (painting, drawing, cutting, building, etc).
- Encourage children to ask questions and discuss their own ideas.
- Facilitate plenty of free play and exploration.
- Encourage physically active games and exercise.
- Ensure children sleep 10-11 hours per night as a minimum. This is essential to learning!

Toddlers and Nursery

In Toddlers and Nursery, home learning can promote independence around the home (e.g., encouraging/teaching your child to take off and put on their own shoes and coat and eating by themselves). These are new but important skills to master for a young child. Your child will also bring home a library book to share with you each week. Parents can foster a deeper interest in the topics being covered at school. Any home play, reading or exploration will help develop a healthy sense of curiosity.

Reception

Children will also begin to bring home their own reading books, as well as a self-selected library book. We strongly encourage family reading sessions at home to develop both reading skills and a general love of literature. Any reflective questions or discussions with your child will help achieve this goal. Children may also bring home exercises to practice individual sounds or short words, in order to develop their reading repertoire. To develop Math skills, we encourage you to look for opportunities to count objects, identify shapes, use mathematical language, identify everyday patterns and develop a strong familiarity with numbers to 10 and beyond.

Home/school Communication:

Teachers in the Early Years classrooms are available on the door at the beginning and end of each school day to answer any questions that do not require a long response. If you have a question or issue that requires a deeper answer, then please email the class teacher to set up a meeting. All staff members are available via email as well. Staff email addresses follow the following format: firstname.lastname@bisboston.org. If you email a class teacher, you should expect a response within 24 hours.

Each week your child's class will send out a newsletter discussing upcoming dates and learning that will be taking place the following week. The school will also send out a weekly newsletter, so you can have a wider view of what is happening throughout BISB.

IN SUMMARY

We hope that this handbook provides an informative introduction to the school. Should you need any further guidance, please feel free to contact the appropriate member of the school for further advice. We look forward to working with you this academic year.



Contact us

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