

THE BRITISH INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL OF AL KHOBAR



PARENT-STUDENT HANDBOOK

September 2007

Next amendment due: June 2008

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to our school! We hope you have a long and positive relationship with BISAK.

The parent-student handbook is designed to give you easy access to day-to-day information about our school. The various headings are organised alphabetically with cross-references where necessary. The booklet is updated each year. If, therefore, you believe there is an omission, or an error – please let us know.

Our school was set up in 1977 and was focused from the outset on the educational needs of expatriate children in and around Al Khobar. It presently has some 440 students on its roll, representing 42 countries, and the school thrives on its internationalism.

BISAK follows the UK (England) National Curriculum so far as is possible and applicable. Classes are small – the Board of Governors has set a limit of 20 per class – and the school is well resourced both in terms of its staff and its equipment and books. We set a rigorous academic pace, developing the strengths of each individual. There is a language support unit for students who may need to improve further their language development. In addition, we have an English as an Additional Language unit to cater for students who do not initially meet our language requirements to access our curriculum and benefit from it effectively. We also offer a wide range of extracurricular activities, varying from creative to musical and sporting activities.

We operate an “open door” policy, and we always welcome parental input. Belonging to the Association of Parents and Friends (APF), and representation on the Board of Governors are just two ways in which you can play your part in the school community. Volunteering to help in school is another more direct way in which some parents show their support.

Let us work together to maintain our enviable family ethos and further help our children get the most of their learning environment!

Tassos Anastasiades
Principal

September 2007

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THE SCHOOL'S PHILOSOPHY AND OBJECTIVES

Our aims are embodied in this statement of our agreed mission:

BISAK is an educational community whose purpose and mission is to educate young people intellectually, morally and physically, and without discrimination. The ethos at BISAK seeks to encourage high academic standards through the provision of the UK (England and Wales) National Curriculum, and provide firm foundations to produce responsible citizens and accomplished human beings who demonstrate such virtues as integrity, respect, responsibility, tolerance, fairness, caring, openness, sharing and friendship.

To support these aims, the school's objectives are:

- 1 To provide a thriving learning community and an ethos where opportunities and resources encourage active participation, so that all students can maximise their potential, striving to attain the highest possible academic standards.
- 2 To provide a caring environment, where each student feels happy and secure, and a pastoral care system designed to promote mutual respect, tolerance and open-mindedness, thus promoting individual self-confidence and self-esteem.
- 3 To deliver a broad curriculum in a stimulating and rigorous way, which draws on a variety of teaching methods intended to offer students opportunities to develop lively, enquiring minds capable of independent thought.
- 4 To motivate students to develop a natural curiosity for the world around them and to foster attitudes which demonstrate a tolerance and understanding of others' cultures and beliefs.
- 5 To assist students to develop a set of moral values based on concern for others.
- 6 To establish the capacity for teamwork, enabling students to appreciate cooperative effort and the other's point of view.
- 7 To ensure that when students leave the school, they are able to make creative and informed decisions as they continue their lifelong learning, and that both students and peers are prepared as well as possible for the change.
- 8 Within accepted local parameters, to serve as a focus for the community.

NOTES

ABSENCE FROM SCHOOL

If a student has been, or is to be, absent from school for any reason, the absence must be accompanied by a telephone call, or a written and dated note from the student's parent or guardian, addressed to the class teacher or form tutor as appropriate.

ADMISSIONS

The school is open to any student who has satisfied its entrance assessment (see under this heading). It does not, however, cater for boys and girls with diagnosed specific learning difficulties, if it believes it does not have the resources available to do full justice to the child concerned.

The registry is the first point of contact for potential entrants. At the same time, there are application forms online (www.britishschool-ksa.com). The registrar will be pleased to talk to you around the school, and the principal looks forward to showing you around. The registrar will give you a copy of the school's admissions process.

Priority is given, as a matter of policy, and in order, to siblings, British passport holders, returning students, and all others chronologically.

All applications except those from British passport holders have to be sent to the Ministry of Education for their written approval before admissions can take place. Again, our staff will be pleased to talk this through with you. The process is straightforward.

The school will require you to complete a medical declaration, which includes a section on "vaccinations received". Our school nurse will be pleased to advise you.

Our school is often waitlisted at the lower classes – especially reception and years 1 and 2, so that early application is advised.

AFFILIATIONS

BISAK is a licensed member of the Foreign Education division of the Ministry of Education in Saudi Arabia.

BISAK will seek readmission to the Council of International Schools (CIS) and the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC) during the 2007/08 school year. It is a member of the British Schools of the Middle East (BSME) Heads' Conference. It is also a member of the Saudi Arabian Heads of International British Schools (SAHIBS) Conference and of the Saudi Arabian Intra-Kingdom Activities Conference (SAIK-AC), as well as being a recognised examination centre. The School is registered with the Department of Education and Skills (DfES) in the United Kingdom.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The school's annual general meeting is normally held on the last Tuesday of November each year. Notice of this meeting is served in the weekly newsletter on several occasions before the due date.

During the meeting, the chairperson gives his annual report, along with reports from the treasurer and principal.

ARABIC CLASSES

Arabic classes are held each weekday afternoon from 1330 until 1500. Fees are charged separately for these classes.

The nature and number of classes can change annually in response to demand for places.

Parents should ensure adequate transport arrangements for their children at 1500 and that the boys and girls have adequate snacks and drinks to see them through the longer school day.

Students who enrol for Arabic are allowed to attend one club weekly after school, but must make up any work missed.

It is not expected that a student who is sick enough not to attend morning school will be able to attend Arabic classes in the afternoon. Likewise, students attending morning classes are expected to attend Arabic classes each day.

ARRIVAL AT SCHOOL EACH DAY

Students should reach school no earlier than 0710 and no later than 0720. The entry point depends on the student's method of transport.

Students arriving by bus use the rear, black double gates. Each compound bus is assigned a school number, and the compound administrators sign a security declaration before being allowed to come to BISAQ. The compounds are told in advance of their buses' numbers.

Students walking or bicycling to school from the compounds to the south of the school, eg Al Bustan, Al Zahra, enter via the pedestrian gate close to the custodian's building and next to the bicycle racks.

The red gate is used by students arriving by car and is opened at 0710.

Pre-school children are brought into the pre-school area by their parents, guardians or drivers, who remain with the children until 0715, when they then go into the pre-school room. Such young children should not be placed in the care of other students.

All gates are locked at 0740 and the only point of entry is then via the front, pedestrian gate after reporting to the security guard (see "Lateness to school").

ART SHIRTS

Students in the middle and upper schools are sometimes asked to bring old shirts or similar to cover their labelled school uniform at certain stages of the art and design programme. The newsletter will inform you accordingly. Coveralls are, however, available in the art and D&T rooms.

ASSEMBLIES

School assemblies are held weekly. These can be for the whole school (usually at the start and end of each term), or more commonly for the separate schools.

Lower school assemblies take place on Sundays from 1115 to 1150, and on Tuesdays from 1205 to 1240 (this is an achievement award assembly to which parents are invited).

The middle school holds its assemblies from 1005 to 1040 on Wednesdays, and the upper school on Wednesdays from 1205 to 1240.

Individual school assemblies may be conducted by an individual member of staff, or be led by a particular class. If there is a class-led assembly, parents will be invited by the class teacher or form tutor.

Assemblies are secular, though they may refer to the great world festivals.

ASSESSMENT OF STUDENTS

Teachers assess student achievement on an ongoing basis in a variety of ways, ranging from marking classwork or homework assignments, oral questioning, periodic tests or quizzes etc, and written and oral examinations in the Upper school.

National Curriculum Tests (England) are applied independently at the end of each key stage. (see also “Examinations”).

ASSOCIATION OF PARENTS AND FRIENDS (APF)

The APF is a voluntary organisation of parents and friends, who work together for the students of the school by meeting and welcoming new parents, organising fund-raising events and arranging certain school trips, for example. A new committee is elected early in term 1.

The APF publishes its own newsletter, which is issued to all parents, and is a semi-autonomous body with its own constitution and banking facilities.

It is the ambition of the APF committee to reactivate the former Class Mums system, in which each class had a voluntary “Class Mum” who greeted newcomers to BISAK and introduced them to other parents in their children’s class. She also prepared a class list so that parents could, if they wished, contact each other for their children’s birthday parties etc.

You will find a welcome letter (Annex A page 34) from the APF in the back of this handbook

Parents interested in helping the APF should contact existing committee members, or the principal's secretary.

BCG VACCINATIONS

The BCG vaccine protects against tuberculosis (TB). Before entry to BISAK, parents must provide evidence of either a negative TB skin test, ie no vaccination needed, that has been produced in the past two years, or a BCG vaccine certificate.

If the student has not undergone a recent BCG check, we advise parents to repeat the TB skin test every two years.

BICYCLES

Students living on Al Bustan and Al Zahra compounds may ride to school unaccompanied. Students coming from Lotus III and Rushaid 1 or 2 compounds by bicycle must be accompanied by an adult. The bicycles should be dismounted at the rear, black double gates and walked across the playground to the racks. The school cannot accept liability in the event of a bicycling accident to or from school, or bicycle theft or damage.

BOARD OF GOVERNORS

The Board of Governors is the school's controlling body. It comprises 9 voting members as follows:

Chairperson, treasurer, 2 parent representatives, 4 community representatives and a representative from the British Embassy. The Board elects from among the parent and community representatives a deputy chairperson. The principal is present at Board meetings as a non-voting member.

The parent representatives are mandated to pass on to the Board any concerns that a parent may have about the school, and are elected by the parent-body every two years.

BOOKS, missing

Nearly all the school's library and text books are obtained from overseas, and are precious commodities. In the event that a book is declared "lost", the school will assess its cost, and pass this to the parents by letter.

Students are urged to look after their books extremely carefully, and to ensure their safe return to the library on the appointed date.

BREAK TIMES

There are two official break times each day, viz from 0945 to 1005, and from 1150 to 1205. At these times all students are expected to be outside unless there is a specific medical reason why they should not (see "Sickness"). In the event of inclement (usually too hot, dusty or wet) weather, indoor arrangements are put into force (see "Weather").

BUSINESS AND FINANCE OFFICE

The business and finance office is open for visitors each workday from 0725 to 0925, and from 1145 until 1315.

CHARITY WORK

In keeping with the school's mission, each year the school works hard to raise funds for a deserving, child-centred charities. It is the school's belief that BISAK students benefit inwardly from focusing on the needs of children far less fortunate than themselves.

The school is involved in an ongoing global awareness project centred on the needs of the children of Pishigu in northern Ghana.

CHOIR

Students in years 4 to 9 can join the school choir, which meets once a week after school. If a student is interested in joining the choir, s/he should contact the performing arts coordinator. Adequate transport arrangements must be made for choir members at 1415.

CLASS TEACHER

Each class from reception to year 6 has a class teacher, and the class designations refer to the class teachers' names. The class teacher is responsible for the day-to-day running of the class, including registration and the passing on of information to parents. S/he is also responsible for various amounts of class teaching, depending on year group. In general, the class teacher teaches at least the core subjects (English, mathematics and science, but not ICT) and geography and history, and is responsible for the production of the twice-yearly written reports to parents.

CLUBS

The school organises a range of after-school activities for students from years 3 – 9 from 1315 to 1415, although such clubs are generally not available on Saturdays, which are given over to meeting times for staff. There are some (usually sporting) exceptions to this, however. The club roster changes each term, and each student receives a returnable request slip termly.

Students in certain clubs, which thrive on continuity, eg choir and orchestra are expected to attend for a full school year.

Occasionally a small charge is levied for certain clubs, eg cookery or craft, where special materials have to be purchased.

It is important that parents arrange adequate transport after school at 1415 if their children are involved in clubs, and that they are collected promptly.

CODE OF CONDUCT

Students from BISAK traditionally display high standards of personal and social responsibility, so that the school enjoys a pleasant and friendly ethos.

Class teachers and form tutors are most closely associated with the students on a daily basis, and deal on the spot with minor infractions of sensible behaviour, good sense and responsible action. A system of yellow and red cards is used in the Middle and Upper schools where a student fails to respond positively to advice and counselling. The issuing of 3 yellow cards leads to a red card, which remains on the student's file. Yellow cards are removed at the end of each term. Parents are contacted whenever a card is issued.

The school's code of conduct makes clear to staff and students the consequences for actions which fall outside the school's expectations and is available for inspection from the registry or the principal's secretary.

It is believed that if the parent and the school work closely and consistently together, students will have a trouble-free and enjoyable passage through BISAK, and will have much to contribute to the life of the school.

COMMUNICATION BETWEEN SCHOOL AND HOME

The principal produces a newsletter every term-time Wednesday, or on the last day of term where this is not a Wednesday. This newsletter is the school's main communication link with parents and contains information from staff in all parts of the school and is sent out by e-mail. Other more specific letters and memos are sent on an occasional basis as appropriate.

The student's reading record or homework diary, as appropriate, also offers ways for both school and parent to communicate with each other.

In general, the school encourages dialogue between parents and itself, and believes that being pre-emptive in solving problems is more beneficial to the student than waiting for the problem to disappear or become inflated.

CORPORAL PUNISHMENT

The school does not permit any of its staff to apply corporal punishment to any student under any circumstance.

COUNSELLING

The school has a part-time counsellor on its staff. The school's counselling service is designed to complement the strengths of the pastoral system by offering additional personal support to students who may benefit from the opportunity to work with a professional counsellor.

The counselling service provides a confidential service to students with social, emotional or behavioural concerns to help them move towards greater well-being and to enable them to make the most of the opportunities offered for their social and academic development in school.

The school counsellor belongs to a professional counselling body and holds counselling qualifications.

Individual appointments

Upper school students may make an appointment directly with the counsellor, but all other students are sent by referral from a teacher. All such meetings are confidential, although the counsellor submits a weekly list only of clients to the principal. The counsellor contacts parents if she is to see (or, in some cases, has seen) a student. There remains, however, the understanding that what transpires between student and counsellor remains confidential unless otherwise agreed between student, counsellor and parents. Only where the counsellor considers a student's well being to be at risk, will she refer details of the meeting/s to other parties.

Group work

Part of the school counselling service is also to provide help to groups of children to explore and set goals about treating each other well. The aim is to build trust and assist all students to communicate positively and effectively. These sessions usually take place among Middle and Upper school students, when time permits.

CURRICULUM

BISAK follows the requirements of the UK (England) National Curriculum so far as is practicable and relevant. In real terms this means that we are a National Curriculum school. Ongoing curriculum development is overseen by the head of curriculum.

Students in the pre-school and reception (the "foundation stage") follow an integrated, continuous programme which focuses on 6 different learning areas.

All students from year 1 up follow programmes of study in the following subjects: art and design, design and technology (DT), English, French (from year 5), geography, history, information and communication technology (ICT), mathematics, Middle East studies, music, physical education (PE) and science.

More information can be obtained from the class teacher or form tutor.

Apart from the obvious academic curriculum, students are exposed to the so-called "hidden curriculum", learning *en route* about citizenship, concern for others, acceptable social behaviour etc. They also visit the library on a regular basis, and receive specialist teaching in areas such as information and communication technology, design and technology, physical education, performing arts etc, according to their year-groups.

DAILY SCHEDULES

The following schedule applies each day:

0720	Students arrive by this time (but not before 0710)
0725	Classes start
0945	First break starts
1005	First break finishes
1150	Second break starts
1205	Second break finishes

1315	Classes finish
1315	Clubs start
1330	Arabic classes start
1415	Clubs finish
1500	Arabic classes finish

DEPARTURE FROM SCHOOL EACH DAY

School finishes at 1315 unless a student is attending Arabic classes or an after-school club.

Only boys and girls from pre-school and reception classes are collected from their rooms by their designated drivers, bus monitors etc. All other students leave via exits which depend on the mode of transport being used.

All students leaving by bus line up under the middle school shading and wait for their bus drivers or monitors to collect them. The buses are parked safely on the playground, but at a distance from the students.

Pre-school and reception students going home by car with their drivers leave via the red gate.

All other students going home by car with a private driver leave via the blue gate which is an exit-point for students only and is not an entry point.

Parents for all children from year 1 up do not come into the buildings, for this adds to congestion at 1315.

Students living on Al Bustan, Al Zahra and some other nearby compounds may walk or bicycle from the school with some provisos about their being accompanied in the case of main road usage (see under "Bicycles").

Under no circumstances do students leave the campus unaccompanied by a bus monitor, approved driver or parent (see "Transport").

If a student is going to a friend's compound or house after school, the school must receive a written, dated note from both sets of parents involved in advance. Such students must then proceed directly home after the visit, and not return to the campus.

DRESS AND FASHION CODE (see also "Uniform")

Students in BISAK from reception and up wear a simple school uniform (see under "Uniform"). Our students have a reputation for appearing tidy and decent. As such, extravagant hairstyles and colours, ie those which fall outside the normal spectrum, are not permitted. Hair dyeing is not permitted and in the upper school, long hair must be tied back.

Boys and girls may wear their shirts or blouses untucked, provided the shirt or blouse is of waist-length, ie not hanging down to the knees!

Hats are not worn indoors, nor back-to-front.

Students who are too young to tie their own shoelaces should be provided with Velcro fasteners.

The wearing of jewelry is not permitted and earrings are not worn to school, although single studs worn by girls are permitted, but not encouraged (see “Physical education”).

EMERGENCY CONTACT LIST

In the event that the school had to close unexpectedly, a team of staff would telephone parents, each of whom may be asked to contact a further small set of parents. These telephone lists are updated termly or more frequently according to need. (See also under “Medical/health and safety”).

ENTRANCE ASSESSMENT

All potential BISAK students take part in an entrance assessment procedure to ensure the student’s proper class placement. To do this, the student is asked in for a morning or part thereof, to join an age-appropriate class, where s/he is closely observed by the class teacher from both a social and academic point of view. In virtually every case, the student joins the age-appropriate class (see under) and class placement is not negotiable. Students who do not meet the school’s year-group English requirements may be placed in the English as an additional language (EAL) section. Such students join the mainstream as soon as considered advisable by the appropriate staff, but then continue with some extra language support. Other new students may immediately join the mainstream, but be given some English language support classes.

The school is guided by the following age-appropriate criteria:

Pre-school	3 years old by 31 August of entry-year
Reception	4 ditto
Year 1	5 ditto
Year 2	6 ditto
Year 3	7 ditto
Year 4	8 ditto
Year 5	9 ditto
Year 6	10 ditto
Year 7	11 ditto
Year 8	12 ditto
Year 9	13 ditto

EXAMINATIONS

Written examinations are held twice-yearly in the Upper school, with reports issued at the mid- and full-year points. These examinations generally take place during December and June. In some cases the dates of statutory holidays cause the mid-year examinations to be held during the following January.

National Curriculum Tests (England) are set informally at the end of each key stage in English (all key stages) and mathematics and science (key stages 2 and 3). (see “Assessment of Students” and “Key Stages”). These tests are marked internally and results are made known by the end of the school year in terms of National Curriculum levels of achievement. Such tests take the place of internal upper school examinations in English, mathematics and science at the full-year point (see also “Reports”).

The school acts as an examination centre for overseas entrance examinations upon request. The deputy principal should be contacted in such cases.

FEES, payment of

The Board of Governors determines annual tuition fees for Arabic and mainstream provision for the following year in advance during term 2 of the current year, and parents are informed before the commencement of term 3.

Tuition fees for Arabic and mainstream classes are payable termly in advance and a schedule of payment dates is issued from the bursar’s office. A student could be asked to stay away from school in the event that fees are not paid by due date. No pro-rated fees are possible.

Except in exceptional circumstances, fees are paid through the bank; the school does not deal with cash in this context. The school’s bursarial staff deals with all banking, and other, questions relating to fees.

Written notification of the withdrawal of a student must be received at least 10 working days before the start of term 1, and by the last working day prior to the start of terms 2 and 3.

FIRE DRILL/EVACUATION DRILL

Whole-school drills are practised at the start of each term. The school is equipped with audible smoke detectors and a full fire alarm warning panel is situated in the principal’s secretary’s office.

In the event of the fire alarm sounding, everybody in the school at the time walks to designated areas of the playground or to the Al Zahra or Al Rushaid-2 compounds, where they are checked off by school staff. This includes visitors who may be in the school (see “Visiting Procedures”).

Fire extinguishers are checked annually by a specialist company.

FORM TUTOR

In the upper school, each form has its form tutor. The form tutor, like the class teachers in the lower and middle schools, has the closest daily contact with the students in the form, and takes on a more pastoral role. S/he meets the students each morning before school starts, takes the roll call, and determines any special needs. On each Saturday during period 1, s/he meets the form to discuss their news, talk about school policy etc. S/he is responsible (as part of a team) for organising the personal, social and health education programme for the year,

and ensures the timely completion and collation of the twice-yearly written reports to parents.

The form tutor should be contacted in the first instance where parents need advice or help about their child's education.

GRADING SYSTEMS

The twice-yearly reports for the foundation stage students use a special system of recording attainment, whilst those for key stage 1 and the middle and upper schools show grades for effort and achievement as follows:

Effort Grades (Years 1 to 9):

- 1 Good
- 2 Moderate
- 3 Insufficient

Achievement Grades (Years 3 to 9):

- "Demonstrates excellence" – the student is capable of working at the next higher National Curriculum in a sustained way
- "Demonstrates accomplishment" – the student is able to cope with some areas of work from the next higher National Curriculum level.
- "Demonstrates competence" - the student is working at the appropriate stage within the age-appropriate National Curriculum level
- "Requires additional reinforcement" – the student is working towards achieving at the age-appropriate National Curriculum level
- "Experiences difficulty" - the student is not yet achieving at the age-appropriate National Curriculum level.

Achievement grades relate directly to what the student has personally achieved in the subject-area reported, and not how the student has fared relative to others in the class.

A separate sheet is included with upper school reports indicating examination scores, as this is a legal requirement for the nationals of some countries.

HATS

All students must wear school hats when outside during second break. The hats, in house colours, are available from the shop on Saturdays, Mondays and Wednesdays (see "Shop") and are worn as a protection against the sun. If a student fails to wear her/his cap outside whilst in the sun, s/he will be asked to stand in the shade, and may lose break-time privileges.

Upper school students who elect to sit under the trees in their play area are exempted from the hat rule. Those who choose to play on the hard area must, however, wear their hats.

As a privilege, upper school students may wear hats of their choice, provided they are considered reasonable by the staff on duty.

HOMEWORK

Homework is an integral part of the school day. It is designed to be reinforcing, motivating and supportive, rather than a chore. A summary of the school's current homework policy so far as it relates to suggested duration is included below. The policy is appraised annually. If a student seems to take far too long to complete an assignment, the parent is asked to note this in their child's homework diary, or send a note to the class teacher or form tutor.

Recommended approximate duration of homework assignments:

Reception:	10-15 minutes' reading daily Activities with phonic blends as appropriate In term 3, a weekly handwriting revision book
Year 1:	15 minutes' daily reading 5 days a week 10 minutes' letter formation once weekly 8 spellings once weekly One other assignment as appropriate
Year 2:	15 minutes' daily reading 5 days a week 10 minutes' handwriting once weekly 10 spellings once weekly Practice in number bonds weekly One other assignment as appropriate
Year 3:	30-40 minutes' daily homework including reading and a Range of other activities 5 days a week 15 spellings once weekly
Year 4:	45 minutes' daily homework including reading and a range of other activities 5 days a week 15 spellings once weekly
Year 5:	50 minutes' daily homework including reading and a range of other activities 4 days a week 60-70 minutes' homework at the weekend Spellings once weekly
Year 6:	60 minutes' daily homework including reading and a range of other activities 4 days a week 90 minutes' homework at the weekend
Year 7:	2 subjects per night 4 days a week plus 4 at the weekend. Each subject maximum 45 minutes
Year 8:	as for year 7

Year 9: 2 subjects per night 4 days a week plus 4 at the weekend. Each subject maximum 60 minutes

Note: Upper school music will be set from time to time as appropriate on the day with the least loading.

Arabic homework is set for those students who have elected the subject. No more than 10-15 minutes' work is set daily.

HOUSE SYSTEM

Each student is placed in a "house" when s/he arrives at BISAK. The houses comprise groups of students organised vertically through the full age-range and thus allow for some mixing of the year groups. Siblings are not necessarily placed in the same house. The names and colours of the houses are:

Jupiter	Green
Mars	Red
Neptune	Blue
Saturn	Yellow

The house provides a focus for healthy competition in the school. Students can earn house points for special effort or attainment, whilst sports and swimming events are also point-earners. House membership does, therefore, provide the student with extra motivation to try his/her hardest, and also gives the student a sense of belonging to a group larger than his/her own class or form.

Early in term 1, the students elect their leaders for the year. Aspiring house captains (drawn from Years 6 and 8 - deputy and leader respectively) have the opportunity to drum up support at the annual elections, which take place during September.

The registrar, in liaison with the PE coordinator allocates houses, keeping an overall balance.

Students can also earn house points for special achievement and/or effort in class. The names of class house point winners are published on a weekly, retrospective basis in the principal's newsletter, and such achievement is celebrated at the start of the weekly assemblies.

House points are cumulative, and certificates are awarded at certain milestones as follows:

10 points	bronze
25 points	silver
50 points	gold
100 points	platinum
200 points	diamond

All staff members with the exception of the principal, deputy principal, head teachers, performing arts coordinator, physical education teachers and counsellor are allocated houses.

INSURANCE

The school carries full personal and accident liability insurance cover, which is administered by the business and finance manager. This covers everyone on the campus at any given time. Claims are subject to deductible charges. These can vary but at the time of writing there is a deductible charge of SR1000.00 per claim.

JEWELLERY

Items of jewellery should not be worn to school. In the event of girls having their ears pierced, studs are permitted but they must be removed for all PE activities. Watches are not to be worn to PE lessons.

Visible body piercing and body art are not acceptable at BISAK.

KEY STAGES

The curriculum follows the British structure, whereby different age-band groupings are referred to as “key stages”. Each key stage represents a curriculum package, but the “packages” form a continuous educational process through the school. In BISAK we provide the first three key stages, viz

Foundation stage	pre-school and reception)	(the lower school)
Key stage 1	years 1 and 2	
Key stage 2	years 3 to 6	(the middle school)
Key stage 3	years 7 to 9	(the upper school)

Each key stage is managed by the appropriate head teacher, who is a member of the school’s senior management team. The foundation stage is managed by the head of lower school.

LATENESS TO SCHOOL

All school gates are locked at 0740, so that should a student arrive after this time, s/he must report to the security guard at the front gate accompanied by his/her guardian. Upon admittance to the campus, the student should report to the registrar to register his/her arrival. The younger students will need the assistance of their driver or guardian, of course.

If it is known that a student will be arriving late on a particular day – after a doctor’s appointment, for example - it would be helpful to the class teacher or form tutor to receive advance notice.

LEARNING ASSISTANTS

Each class from pre-school to year 2 has a designated learning assistant, whilst there are 4 allocated to the middle school, and one in the upper school who serves an administrative function. There are also specialist assistants attached to the art and design department, to the science/design and technology, and ICT laboratories. Learning assistants play an active role in the day-to-day affairs of the three schools, and are a valuable resource to the students of BISAK.

LANGUAGE SUPPORT

The school provides language support to those students who have significant gaps in their language development. Generally, a student will be referred to a language support teacher by the class teacher or form tutor in the event of need, and a personal educational improvement plan will be drawn up. At the same time, the parents will be written to, informing them of the proposed changes.

Students who do not meet initial English language entry requirements may join the EAL section until they are ready for the mainstream.

Language support is regarded as a short-term measure designed to bring the student to acceptable levels of attainment. Intervention may be within, or outside, the student's classroom. As soon as the student has reached acceptable standards, s/he will be returned to the normal class timetable.

Language support is considered a positive support process, and students who attend these special classes are not considered in any way inferior to their peers.

LEAVING SCHOOL PERMANENTLY

If a term's notice is given to the school in writing, in the event of a student leaving for good, any fees paid in advance for that term will be refunded. The school will provide a leaving certificate and a leaver's report. Any extra documentation required by the next school will be provided upon request.

BISAK arranges a meeting with year 9 parents and students in term 1 each year to present the various possibilities of continuing education for the outgoing year 9 students. Further, visits to schools in Bahrain, and local schools as appropriate, also take place during term 1 to introduce students and parents to those continuing schools (see "New (Continuing) Schools").

Parents should not hesitate to contact any of the Upper school personnel in this context. The principal or deputy principal will also be able to put parents in touch with schools in the United Kingdom or elsewhere.

LIBRARY

There are two, linked libraries. All classes have the benefit of timetabled library sessions, with every student having, as a minimum, weekly access. In most cases the class teacher is also present. The number of books that may be borrowed varies from one to four, depending on the student's year-group, as does the length of time a book may be kept.

The staff comprises a full-time librarian and a library assistant. There are currently about 18 000 items on the catalogue and the operating system is fully computerised.

In the annex to the main library there are 2 computers available for research purposes each with cdROM drives and internet access.

Any lost or damaged items must be paid for, or a replacement provided following liaison with the librarian. Parents are reminded of overdue books by means of correspondence from the library staff.

A book club order is usually arranged at least once each year and all students have the opportunity to place an order from the catalogue provided. There is also an annual book fair to which parents are invited.

LOCKERS

All Upper school students are allocated individual lockers to accommodate their books and equipment. They are also given one key, which they should immediately copy. In the event of both keys going astray, a charge will be made for replacement.

LOST AND FOUND

We urge parents to ensure that all items of clothing, PE kit, pencil cases, lunch boxes etc are clearly labelled with the child's name. Large plastic bins situated near the music room on the upper floor, and in the PE department, act as collection points for lost property. Members of the APF give notice from time-to-time of the selling off of unclaimed, usable items.

In the event that a student loses an item, s/he should report the loss immediately to the class teacher, form tutor, or other responsible person. In most cases the item re-surfaces after a day or two.

The school is not able to accept responsibility for lost items, other than to ensure that a thorough search is carried out.

LUNCH BOXES (see also SNACKS)

Students bring their snack to school in lunch boxes. Parents should please ensure that these boxes are adequately labelled. Wheeled bags are not encouraged; they are difficult to store on shelves and in lockers.

No canned or bottled drinks are permitted other than fruit juices, and the school does not encourage the inclusion of sticky or sweet foods such as chocolates, cream cakes etc.

MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE

The school's chief executive officer is the principal. The senior management team comprises the principal, deputy principal (also head of primary), the head of secondary, the head of curriculum and the business and finance manager.

Separate subject managers monitor curriculum subjects, under the direction of the curriculum manager.

MEDICAL/HEALTH AND SAFETY

The school has on its staff a full-time nurse, who works from a fully equipped medical room located on the ground floor in the foyer. She is responsible for the overall provision and maintenance of a healthy and safe environment, and co-authors the school's health and safety policy document.

Part of the registration procedure requires that parents complete a medical form, which includes the types and dates of all vaccinations that their children have received. BCG, DPT and MMR vaccinations (or in the case of no BCG vaccination, a negative skin test) are all required. Each time your child receives a vaccination, please send a copy of the certificate to the school nurse.

The school also needs to know of any special medical condition or allergy to which the child is prone, with information about medications.

If a student is referred to the nurse and treatment is required, she completes a report-slip, informs the principal, and communicates with the parent.

The nurse carries out termly head checks for head lice. However, as the span of a head louse is just three weeks, and checking dry hair is not always effective, parents are urged to check their children's hair on a regular basis. This is best done when the hair is wet.

Prior to the swimming seasons, the nurse also checks feet for verrucae and athlete's foot.

The nurse is not permitted to administer special medicaments sent in by the parents unless she has written permission from them, together with dosage details and a supporting letter from the medical practitioner. Prescription medications need to be clearly labeled by the issuing pharmacy with the date, child's name and dosage details all indicated.

The school reserves the right, under the advice of the nurse, to send a student home if s/he is not considered well enough to be at school, or if her/his condition is contagious or infectious. In this case, the parent will be telephoned to collect the child.

Parents are urged not to send their students to school if they have a high temperature, a streaming cold, an undiagnosed skin rash or any other obvious ailment. A child should be 24 hours free of a fever (without medication) before returning to school. The nurse's function is to deal with medical problems which arise during school hours, and not those imported and fully fledged. The nurse also needs to be informed if a student has been diagnosed with a potentially serious contagious disease.

The school conducts regular fire drill evacuation procedures and emergency evacuation procedures. The principal has overall authority in these matters.

In the event that the school had to close at short notice during school hours, the students would be assembled in the Al Zahra compound, and parents would be asked, by a telephone network system, to collect their children from the Al Zahra compound gate.

The school does not permit the taking of prams to the upper hall. They can be safely left under the stairs in the ground floor foyer area.

All school gates are locked once the start-up bell for the day has rung. Thereafter, access can only be effected through the front gate after checking with the security guard. Visitors then report to the registrar, who will provide a visitor's badge, and sign in.

MOBILE TELEPHONES

Students may bring mobile 'phones to school, but they are only to be used in cases of emergency, and not as a social tool.

MUSIC TUITION

Some instrument tuition is available in school. This can vary depending on the personnel available. These may take place during class time, and the student has to make up any lost timetabled work. A rotating schedule ensures that the student does not miss the same subject repeatedly.

Tutorials given by outside musicians are charged for. For more details parents should contact the music coordinator.

NEW PARENTS' MEETING

New parents are invited to an orientation meeting on the second evening of the new school year, when they hear from a representative of the Board of Governors, and from the principal. They then have the opportunity to meet their child's class teacher or form tutor.

The principal also endeavours to meet all other newly arrived families when they first arrive at BISAK.

NEW (CONTINUING) SCHOOLS

Continuing education is important to the student, and the school does all it can to prepare the way, most commonly by providing information about possible schools elsewhere, and preparing special reports as necessary. The school will also act as an examination centre for further schools (see "Examinations").

The school prepares the way for the departure of year 9 students by way of special meetings and visits (see "Leaving School Permanently").

NEWSLETTER

A newsletter compiled by the principal is produced every Wednesday and sent to each home via e-mail. The newsletter is the school's major communication device and generally contains items of key interest and importance, eg dates for forthcoming meetings, productions etc. If you do not, for some reason, receive the week's newsletter, please contact the principal's secretary.

OPEN-DOOR POLICY

The school has an open-door policy to the extent that it welcomes parents and anyone with an interest in our school to visit us. We do ask, however, that you telephone for an appointment if you wish to meet a member of staff. In so doing, please let the registrar know the nature of your visit so that she can set up the best possible schedule. It is generally not possible to hold impromptu meetings, owing to timetabling constraints.

Day-to-day issues concerning classroom activities, student progress etc are best dealt with initially by the class teacher or subject teacher.

PARENT-TEACHER MEETINGS

Apart from the written reports received twice a year by parents, you also have the opportunity to meet the teachers formally twice a year (but see "Open-door Policy").

The first of two parent-teacher consultations usually falls during the first week of November, when parents from the lower and middle schools are issued with timetabled meetings. Parents from the upper school are able to meet any or all of the subject teachers according to need on a separate date. During these meetings parents will be updated on their child's progress to date, and will be able to see specimens of his/her work. These meetings do not normally extend beyond 10 minutes. If more time is required, it usually means that a separate meeting will be needed to discuss specific problems

A second parent-teacher schedule is set for the period immediately after the issue of the mid-year reports – usually during February.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION (PSHE)

All students in the upper school receive one lesson weekly in personal, social and health education, which is an integral part of their curriculum. A major objective of these lessons, which are conducted either by the form tutor, or by another specialist or senior school member, is to set the students thinking about key social issues which they will face as young adults, and to encourage them to devise strategies to deal with these issues. Such issues as self-esteem, bullying, conflict resolution, study skills, substance abuse, and personal relationships are covered during these courses.

Parents wanting to learn more about this programme can contact the Upper school head teacher.

PHOTOGRAPHS

Individual student photographs are taken early in September each year by request. The school photographer will also take family portrait pictures after school by prior arrangement.

Group shots of each class are taken during the second term. These pictures appear in the annual yearbook.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

All students take part in the school's physical education programme.

Each element of PE requires the proper school PE kit, which comprises house T-shirts (available from the school shop) and white shorts (available in town), as well as swimming trunks (mid-thigh length and not Bermuda shorts/baggy shorts which impede the swimmers) or costumes. White socks with plain black or white gym shoes or trainers are the required footwear. A labelled towel is also required.

Fashion trainers and plimsolls are unsuitable for PE activities and are not allowed. Properly designed athletics/running shoes ie cross-training shoes are required. Please feel free to contact the PE coordinator for advice if required.

All students come to school wearing their PE kit. Attention is paid to due decorum, especially in the case of our older students, who should be appropriately covered when they travel to school. All students wear their normal school uniform home on PE days.

Baseball and legionnaires' hats in house colours are available from the shop.

The school's cold-weather kit comprises the house T-shirt (for PE), the school's red (or navy for the upper school) sweatshirt and navy tracksuit bottoms worn over white shorts. The school will inform parents when these become necessary, and these items are also available from school.

The school does not permit the wearing of earrings, although studs worn by girls are permitted, but not encouraged. Girls should remove these studs, if worn, for PE classes, otherwise they will be checked by the school nurse for safety reasons. The PE teachers are not permitted to remove studs themselves. Ear studs cannot be taped over for swimming, but must be removed either by the student or her parents before arrival at school. We strongly prefer that all jewellery be left at home.

PLAYGROUND

The school campus includes several different play areas – one for each of the three schools. Each area has shaded portions to it.

The use of leather or hard rubber soccer or basketballs during break times is not permitted on the main (lower/middle schools) play area for safety reasons.

Break-times are held at the same time for each key stage, and the students are kept to their own play areas. Lower and middle school students are overseen by 2 duty staff members each, whilst the upper school has one member of staff on duty in their playground.

PREFECTS

A head boy and head girl are selected by a group of upper school teachers near the start of each school year, drawn from year 9.

Similarly, one or more school prefects are also selected from year 9 by staff. They provide a supportive role to the head boy and girl, and the positions are seen to help promote personal and social development, as well as provide leadership

House leaders are elected annually by the student-body, and have been described under "House System".

PRODUCTIONS

The school traditionally mounts lower school shows at the end of term 1 and early in term 2, to which parents are invited. A major production, usually a play or a musical, is usually also put on at the end of term 2 or 3. This show attracts students with a more specific interest or talent in the performing arts, but does not exclude the willing beginner. Again, parents and friends are welcome, although the school does make an entry charge to help defray production costs.

Help from parents with skills in costume-making, scenery etc is always welcome.

REGISTRATION PERIOD

Each morning before classes start the class teacher or form tutor will record in the official register the student's presence, lateness or absence. Absences are recorded on the student's twice yearly written report.

Parents are asked to inform the school as soon as possible if their child/ren will be late or absent. In the case of absence, a note is required, addressed to the class teacher or form tutor.

Registration for upper school students commences at 0720.

REPORTS

Written reports to parents are provided twice a year, usually during February and June, depending on the dates of the school year. These reports contain information about the student's achievement in each subject area, as well as comments about his/her social development. The mid-year report is in short-form, while the end-of-year version is a full written report (see also "Grading System").

SECURITY

The school does all that it can to provide a safe and secure environment for its students, staff and visitors. The outside perimeter of the school is periodically

inspected by both the local security forces, and by the neighbouring Al Bustan security. The morning entry gates are locked at 0740, and the only entry to the school is then via the front, black gate, which is controlled by the school's security guard (see also "Visiting Procedures" and "Arrival at School each Day").

No student is allowed out of school unaccompanied. Likewise, no student who has departed at 1315 is allowed back into school later in the day unsupervised. The blue, black and red gates are carefully monitored by school staff at 1315 to ensure that each student is passed to the right hands. No student can exit the school via the front, black gate.

For safe arrivals and departures, it is essential that school and parents work closely and consistently together, and the school appreciates the support it receives in this context.

SHOP

The school shop is located in the ground floor middle school corridor, and has available nearly all items of school wear, as well as other miscellaneous school pieces from time to time. Opening hours are 0715 – 0800 on Saturdays, Mondays and Wednesdays, and 1300 – 1330 additionally on Saturdays.

SICKNESS

If a student has to stay away from school for reason of sickness, a brief written note about the illness must be addressed to the class teacher or form tutor. It is important that students are not sent to school if they are in any way suffering from contagious or infectious illness. The school will send home any student who appears to be too ill to work, or is considered to be in a contagious or infectious condition (see "Medical").

New parents are asked to fill-in as appropriate on the medical form, the name and contact number of the family doctor. If this information is not forthcoming, the school may elect to send a sick student to an alternative medical facility in times of emergency if a parent is not contactable.

It is most important for the well being of the student, that any documented medical condition is made known to the school.

SKATEBOARDS AND ROLLER-SKATES

In the interests of safety, students are not permitted to bring skateboards or roller-skates to school, or use them to travel to and from school.

SMOKING

There is a total ban on smoking within the BISAQ campus, and students are not allowed to bring smoking materials (including lighters or matches) to school. This includes travelling to and from school.

SNACKS

The school encourages the provision of healthy and nourishing snacks each day. Chocolates, sweets and fizzy drinks are not looked for, whilst the inclusion of fruit

and/or vegetables is welcome. Sandwiches provide the carbohydrate needed to sustain the student through the long morning.

In light of food allergies and sensitivities, we ask that:

- no nut or nut products are brought to school (check labels for 'hidden' nut content such as nut oils);
- children do not trade food at school;
- the school be informed if a child develops any allergic reaction.

Snack time varies from year-group to year-group. Lower school students enjoy taking their snacks with their teachers or learning assistants, whilst those in years 5 and 6 make use of the shaded picnic tables outside their building. Upper school students are able to eat their snacks at their designated picnic site near their playground. In general, snacks are taken during, or close to, the first break, which runs from 0945 to 1005.

SPECIALIST TEACHERS

This term refers to teachers who teach a specific subject such as information and communication technology or French. As the student progresses through the school, s/he will encounter more specialist physical education and art and design.

SPECIFIC LEARNING DIFFICULTIES

The school is not able to cater for the needs associated with most specific learning difficulties. As such, students who are diagnosed with specific learning difficulties beyond the competency of the school will not be admitted to BISA. These will be determined during the entrance assessment procedure.

STATIONERY

The school provides much of what is needed:

Lower and Middle schools: everything provided, but student charged SR5.00 for second, and each subsequent, plastic wallet

Upper school: nothing provided except exercise books

All texts are provided free of charge, but remain the property of the school. Lost books will be charged for if a replacement is not possible.

SWIMMING

Swimming is an integral part of the school's physical education programme, and takes place during the first half of term 1 and again during term 3. Students should bring their swimming trunks or costumes as well as a towel, cover-up and flip flops, all adequately labelled, to these classes.

Students suffering from verrucas are allowed to swim provided they wear a verruca sock, obtainable from the nurse at a small charge.

The school is always interested to hear from parents who may wish to help at the pool. The PE staff do, from time to time, organise in-service training for swimming assistants.

TERMS

There are three terms to the school year at BISA, which follow typical overseas British-style schedules:

Term 1 generally runs between early September and mid-December.

Term 2 usually starts early in January and finishes at or around the end of March.

Term 3 starts around mid-April and runs to the end of June or early July.

Dates vary annually and depend on several factors, including the dates of major festivals and the dates proposed by other nearby schools.

Dates for the school year are issued to parents during term 1 of the previous year.

TOYS

In general, we do not recommend that children bring their toys to school, and this includes Walkmans.

TRANSPORT

The transporting of students to and from school can present school and parents alike with some potential difficulties. It is important, therefore that the following guidelines are adhered to.

Students generally reach school by one of three means, viz by car, by compound bus or by foot/bicycle. Provided there are no changes to the student's daily transport routine, there are no problems. Difficulties can arise when a student is, for whatever reason, re-routed at the end of the day without the school's knowledge.

It is, therefore, essential that the school be kept up-to-date with each student's transport arrangements by the means of a written, dated letter. In particular, we require a letter from each set of parents in the event that one student is to visit another student's house or compound after school, or one set of parents takes home another student on behalf of that student's parents. A verbal

No student is permitted to make his/her own way home without prior permission from his/her parents or guardians or, in their absence, a staff member. This is usually the principal, and would only take place in the exceptional circumstance of a complete communication breakdown with home.

It is also most important that the student be collected promptly. This is especially so after clubs or Arabic classes.

In the event that a parent realises there is no adequate monitoring on a compound bus, s/he should inform the principal immediately. He will do what he can to intervene on behalf of the students.

Compound buses deliver their students at the rear, black double gates and collect them on the rear playground. Cars park outside the red and blue gates as described under “Arrivals” and “Departures”.

TRIPS, educational

The school organises field trips both within and without the Kingdom. Parents are asked to sign a permission form at the start of the school year to cover local trips. If the school buses are not adequate for such trips, the school hires buses. All bus seats are equipped with seat belts, which must be worn by all students and staff, and a first-aid kit and extra water are always carried.

The school solicits any useful information from parents concerning possible local venues. A register is kept by the librarian of good local field trips.

If an overseas trip is planned, preliminary meetings take place during term 1.

The school is guided by current UK regulations regarding adult : student ratios.

UNIFORM

BISAK students, with one exception, wear a school uniform as follows:

Pre-School:

No uniform requirement, but students must bring labelled PE kit on the appropriate day (see “Physical Education”).

Reception to Year 9:

Boys: Navy blue shorts (no longer than knee-length) or long, navy or black trousers (not dragging on the ground!) with a white, embossed shirt (regular cotton or Airtex). White shirts with the school’s logo embossed are available from the school shop as well as sew-on badges.

Dark socks and plain black school shoes (not trainers), or plain-coloured, closed-toe sandals (not flip-flops) must be worn for the normal school day.

Girls: Blue and white striped dress, available from the school shop. As alternatives, navy culottes or knee-length skirts with a white blouse or Airtex shirt with the school’s logo embossed may be worn (see above). Girls may also wear navy blue or black trousers (not ground-dragging!), but leggings should not be worn to school. If headgear is worn, it should be white or blue in colour.

White socks and flat, plain black school shoes (not trainers), or strapped sandals (not flip-flops) must be worn for the normal school day.

Boys and girls: red sweatshirts (navy as an option for Upper school students) with the school's logo sewn on are available from the school shop.

Proper PE kit is to be worn for all PE lessons (see "Physical Education").

VISITING PROCEDURES

All visitors to the school must enter through the front, black gate. They will first be checked by the security guard who may telephone the school before allowing entry. A visitor cleared for entry will be asked to exchange his/her ID document for a visitor's badge. Cars cannot be brought into the school's car park unless first cleared with the authorities.. Visitors should report to the registry, where they will be asked to sign in (and out) the visitors' book.

VOLUNTEERS

The school welcomes interest in the form of voluntary work from parents. There is not always scope to take on all potential volunteers, but sending an up-to-date curriculum vitae to the deputy principal is the best way to show your interest.

Official volunteers are asked to sign a simple declaration concerning confidentiality.

WATER

The school has several potable water fountains at different locations in and around the facility. A specialist company checks the condition of the drinking water each month, and the supplier of the mains water flushes the system with chlorine each week according to specific guidelines laid down by the chemical analyst. Students are encouraged to bring their own water bottles to school.

WEATHER

For much of the school year the weather is pleasant. However, in the event of rain, excessive heat or dust storms, students will be kept inside their rooms during break-times. All students must wear their school hats when outside unless otherwise advised by the nurse, eg during periods of cloudy, cooler weather.

YEARBOOK

The school produces a yearbook annually, and one copy is provided free-of-charge to each family present during the school year covered by the book. Thereafter, extra copies are available at cost.

By seeking sponsorship from local companies, BISAk is able to keep costs to a minimum. Any parent who may be interested in advertising in the book, which comes out during September, should contact the principal's secretary.

***Thank you for reading this booklet. Any suggestions for its improvement
at the next review date will be welcome.***

Annex A

A letter to new parents from the Association of Parents and Friends:

Dear New Parents

Welcome to the British International School of Al Khobar. We hope you and your child/ren will be as happy here as we have been, and look forward to meeting you.

We, (Association of Parents and Friends) meet informally during the year to organize activities both in and outside the school.

Being active throughout the school with visits from Santa and the Easter Bunny for the Lower School; Discos for the middle and upper school and an annual Ramadan and Fun Day which involves organizing games and a picnic atmosphere for all the family to enjoy, giving you and other parents a chance to get together.

During these activities we often look for volunteers, it would be nice to join for some of our events and give suggestions for others; we're always looking for ways of re-inventing ourselves and the committee.

It is the ambition of the committee to have a Class Mother system throughout the school; they would coordinate between parents and children of their responsible class. Who knows, perhaps you'd be interested in becoming a class mother yourself. If you are, or if you want to contact the APF in any way, please complete the form below and send it to any of the committee.

Yours sincerely

Association of Parents and Friends

Family name: _____

Eldest child's name and class: _____

Other children's names and classes: _____

Mother's first name: _____

Home/Mobile telephone: _____

E-mail address: _____

Please now send to the Registrar – thank you.

