



PARENT HANDBOOK
2011 - 2012

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The information contained in this handbook was correct at the time of printing but may have to be amended as changes occur.

Bosphorus International Preschool

1) Our Approach

Since our foundation in 1996, we have created a warm, supportive school environment for our children and their families. A home away from home, we nurture as well as educate the children, encouraging them to develop self-confidence and independence skills.

Our programme is carefully designed for the child's developmental level. Age appropriate learning materials are readily available enhancing a diverse curriculum. An integral part of our programme focuses on the child's physical growth. Creativity, exploration, curiosity and skills mastery are promoted at every stage.

We believe that a child's development would not be complete without gaining a strong sense of community. Therefore, we emphasize values; sharing, empathy, cooperation, respect and tolerance. Teachers use a positive approach when working with the children, reinforcing pro-social behaviours and children are encouraged to take responsibility for their actions. In this multi-cultural environment the children learn to appreciate each other's differences and to work together to care for their families and school.

Vision

Our vision for the school is for it to be the place where learning is truly enjoyable as well as challenging. We strongly believe that ***"When Learning Is Enjoyed, Success Is Sure To Follow."***

Mission Statement

We provide education for children aged 2-6, living in Istanbul, Turkey. We offer a broad and enriching curriculum in a multi – cultural environment to expatriate and Turkish children. We provide stimulating learning opportunities in a happy, caring and supportive environment with emphasis given to the individual needs of each child. We seek to understand and value the cultures of all our children and create a harmonious community based on fairness and respect for others.

2) Our Philosophy

We are an independent institution and serve the educational needs of the international and the bilingual communities of Istanbul.

We believe:

- That every child has a unique potential for learning and personal growth which must be supported and nurtured by the school
- That the school should provide a child-focused and challenging learning environment in order to foster that growth
- That the school should offer a balanced programme to support children's social/emotional, cognitive, creative and physical developments
- That the school environment should provide safe opportunities for creative exploration of the world around us
- That the school supports the family and community needs of the international and bilingual child and recognizes the learning partnership between home and school
- That the school programmes should develop children's individuality and promote a joy for learning
- That the school recognizes and actively promotes the practice of those shared living global values such as cooperation, respect and honesty which nourish the growth of social responsibility and global awareness
- That every child has the right to equality of opportunity without discrimination on any grounds such as gender, race, colour, language, religion, ability/disability, social background or appearance

3) Preschool Teaching Staff

Founded in 1996, the Bosphorus International Preschool is run by a team of educators dedicated to excellence in education and has built its reputation on attending to the individual needs of both children and families.

Founder	Nilgün Çağlar
Director	Colette Laffan-Perşembe
Counsellor	Sarah Oskay

Age 2 Programmes

Little Lions Classroom Teacher Assistant	Trine Elmelund Bahar Barut
Tiny Turtles Classroom Teacher Assistant	Gozden Serdal Nillufer Cakar
Group Assistant	Fatma Birgol

Age 3 Programmes Full-day/Half-day

Cool Cats Classroom Teacher Assistant	Irem Yukler Leyla Yarim
Busy Bees Classroom Teacher Assistant	Kayte O'Donovan Chris de la Cruz

Age 4 Programme (Full-day)

Terrific Tigers Classroom Teacher Assistant	Mette Franci Renebie Bactol
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Age 5 Programme - Prep/Kindergarten (Full-day)

Shining Stars Classroom Teacher Assistant	Verity Hayes Zeynep Kaya
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4) Teacher / Child Ratios

A high teacher/child ratio with the younger classes ensures that the children will be carefully supervised and be given more individual attention. Younger children require closer assistance particularly in the areas of personal hygiene needs and self-help skills development.

The teacher/child ratio for the older children reflects the fact that they gradually become more independent and socially more group oriented. The maximum number of children in a class is between 12-16. The class numbers vary according to age, teacher child ratio and the provided classroom space.

AGE	RATIO
2 year old classes	1 to 5
3 year old classes	1 to 6/8
4 year old classes	1 to 7/8
Prep/Kindergarten class	1 to 8

5) Child Profile and Portfolio Assessment

The Bosphorus International Preschool aims to develop the child's capacity for self-discovery and reflection and to document and share his/her many different learning experiences.

An individual Portfolio of the child's work, projects their progress and achievements and serves to share an overall picture of your child as a developing learner. The child's progress will be recorded throughout the school-year.

Teachers maintain a regular system of observation and feedback which is shared with parents formally, twice a year as "The Child Profile". This will be shared with the parent/s at the individual Parent/Teacher conferences. By viewing the child profile parents will gain a comprehensive view of their child's developing potential.

6) Calendar

The school year is divided into three terms, with winter and spring holidays and short half term breaks. All educational institutions are obliged to follow the host country national and religious days/Bayrams. A school year is 180 days. Please note the calendar at the back of the handbook.

In case of an officially declared snow-day announced by the Mayor of Istanbul, the preschool will be closed until a further notice. In the event of a snow day, you will receive an SMS message informing you of the closure (**you may also check our website**).

7) In School Information

Arrival and Departures

Age 2 Classes

Three Morning Programme (Monday, Wednesday and Fridays): 8.30 - 12.30
5 morning (half-day) Programme: 8.30 - 12.30

Age 3 Classes

Half-day Programme: 8.30 – 12:30
Full-day Programme: 8.30 - 3.30

Ages 4-6 Classes: /Pre-K and Prep/Kindergarten Classes

Full-day Programme 8.30 - 3.30

For the older classes, please ensure that your child arrives on time. The first hour of the morning programme is crucial for the child to adjust comfortably and to prepare for the day. Missing this settling in time may negatively affect your child's day. In addition, this first hour includes a work period and your child would miss out on an important part of their curriculum.

Safety

For your child's safety please ensure that you or your authorised agent personally hands over your child into the care of a member of staff in the mornings. Always notify the school/teacher by a written note of any change in pick-up arrangements, as children will not be released to any unauthorised person. For service bus children, the school office must be notified of any changes at least an hour before the school-day ends.

School Service Bus

A school service bus may be available for the area in which you live. The service bus company runs individually and is contracted by the school. Please contact the school office as early as possible if you require the bus service for your child. The cost of the school service is not included in the fees.

Bus Service Security:

All buses have child adjusted seatbelts

A bus monitor is on board to supervise the children.

For the safety of the children, food/sweets etc are not allowed on the service buses.

Please ensure that:

Your child is at the pick-up point at the given time and that there is an adult at home or at the arranged drop off place that your child will be released to. The bus cannot keep the other children waiting.

Keep in mind weather and Istanbul traffic conditions and give the driver up to 5-10 minutes of delay. If this time exceeds 10 minutes please inform us. In principal, the bus driver will inform you in advance of any delays over 10 minutes or other schedule changes.

Daily routine

To give you an idea of what your child's day is like, please look at the "Sample Daily Schedule" (#8). The daily schedule is always flexible to allow for spontaneous activities.

"Music & Movement" is an additional activity provided for all age-groups. 3 plus classes have a Sports class once a week. Additionally classes are grouped together to share an assembly once a month

Food in school

Nutritious lunches and two snacks are served daily, the price of which is included in the tuition fee. All food is prepared on the premises under carefully monitored hygienic conditions. Food is served in the classrooms, while the younger students are helped by the teaching staff, the older students are encouraged to serve themselves and assist the teacher during snack and lunch times.

A monthly menu will be posted on our web site so that if you wish to avoid giving your child a similar meal at home on the same day, you can refer to the menu.

Attendance

If your child will not be in school for any period of time, make sure to inform the school office by telephone or send a message to your child's class teacher prior to your departure.

Birthdays and special days

We regret that birthday parties cannot be held during school time for reasons of fairness and equality. We ask that you respect this policy and also ensure, due to potential allergic reactions, that no food is sent in from home. School will provide a small cake or cookies to celebrate your child's birthday at snack time and parents are welcome to join at these times. Please note that teachers are happy to put invitations for out of school parties into the children's folders but cannot be held responsible if the invitations get lost or mislaid.

Educational visits

We believe that in order to enrich topic work, the children benefit from visits to local places of interest. We encourage all children attending Age 3 and above classes, to come on these trips. Parents are always welcome to participate. Notices regarding field-trip details will be sent out in advance of the outing. On some occasions it may be necessary for parental assistance in order to be able to run trips.

Please complete and return the "Outing Permission Form" which will be sent to you with your registration forms.

Individual child needs

The school supports the individual needs of every child and if necessary, specialist support is provided for teachers in the classroom, helping them to develop individual programs as needed. The school counselor will be working regularly with individual children or small groups in consultation with the school and families.

Parent Orientation Evening

At the beginning of each school year we hold a Parent Orientation Evening. This event provides a wonderful opportunity for parents to get to know their child's class teacher, to familiarise themselves with the upcoming year's program and to meet their fellow class parents. We strongly encourage all of our parents to join us for this very important, informative and enjoyable evening.

8) Sample Daily Schedule *

Arrival: Self directed activities such as playdough, drawing and fine motor development. Each child is encouraged to make his/her own choice of the toys and activities available.

Garden time: Gross motor development, imaginative outdoor play and social development.

Circle time: A time to sing, learn and discuss feelings/ourselves and our topics.

Snack time: Nutrition, self help development skills and personal hygiene.

Teacher directed activities: Arts and crafts, fine motor development.

Each child will have the opportunity to participate in a small group during the activity. Other groups may have free play and engage in activities of their choice including dramatic play.

Lunchtime: Nutrition, self help development skills and personal hygiene.

Children are encouraged to help prepare and clear the table and to serve themselves/friends.

Circle time: Day's review and storytime. Goodbye song (half day children).

Afternoon Programme - For Full-day Children:

Quiet time/book time

Dramatic play / free choice activities. Computer / video; theme related or math / reading skill development

Free artwork (painting, collage, modelling etc)

Garden time: Gross motor development, imaginative outdoor play and social development.

Snack time: Nutrition, self help development skills and personal hygiene.

Circle time: Day's review and story time. Goodbye song

Audio/Visual/Computer

The software has been carefully selected, taking children's age levels and abilities into consideration. Our DVD's and computer programs cover a wide range of subject areas including beginning maths, pre-reading, language, early science and geography/the world around us. DVD time is limited to one half-hour period per week and all DVD's watched are educational and topic related.

*Teachers will go over their daily class schedule in detail with you at the Parent Orientation Evening or at individually scheduled meetings.

9) Home - School Communication

Parents are encouraged to maintain close contact with the school. To communicate with your child's teacher, please use the "Home School Folder" containing the Communication Book that will be sent to you from school every day. As all letters and correspondence will be stapled into the communication book and to ensure that these reach home, it is crucial that the folder comes to school every day. You may also choose to send a written message in the communication book to your child's class teacher.

The "Home School Folder" will be sent home at the end of every school-day. This will be used to keep you up-to-date on the planned activities for each week, information on school visits or any special occasions happening within your child's class or school. A monthly newsletter will also provide you with information about what is happening within the school community as a whole.

The Home School Folder should be returned to school every morning. Through it you can communicate any relevant information about your child's welfare to the class teacher or send any specific information relating to any changes with your child's family/home-life i.e.; changes in your child's daily routine, family members going away/trips, a new carer/nanny at home or your child being picked up from school by another person.

10) Parent Involvement

There are many ways parents can enrich the school environment. You can become involved with classroom based activities (such as cooking and sharing books with children), support school events and activities, assist with school performances and/or join your child's class field trips.

Parents are always welcome to visit their child's classroom, whether to read a story, carry out an activity or to share something special from their cultural/national background with the children - particularly at celebration and festival times. If you would like to get involved in any way please contact your Class Parents' Coordinator, or the class teacher.

Class Parents' Co-ordinator

Each class will have volunteer parents to represent the class families.

Class Parents' Coordinators will help to maintain regular and productive communication between school and class families, aid in coordinating class events, fund-raisers and educational activities with the class teacher and ensure that all parents are part of the communication chain.

11) Health and Accident Policy

Hygiene

Disposable paper towels are being used throughout the school and the toilets are disinfected at various times during the day. Rubber gloves are worn by the kitchen staff in food preparation and service.

Accident policy

If your child has an accident or becomes ill at school we will get in touch with you immediately. Should we be unable to reach you and there is a medical emergency, we will take whatever action is needed to make sure your child is safe until you are reached. This may include calling Med-line and contacting your child's doctor.

Minor injuries such as grazes and minor cuts will be treated in school and an 'Incident/Accident' report will be sent home to you. Please note that if your child has a head bump we will always attempt to get in touch with you so that you are fully informed should medical attention be needed later. If you are not available by phone, again a message will be sent home in your child's "Home School Folder".

Illness

We ask that you inform the school office immediately if your child comes into contact with any infectious/contagious illness so that we are able to inform all other parents via a "Health Notice"

Young children frequently become ill and in the interest of preventing the spread of infection throughout the class, we ask that you take note of these important points and that you please do not send your child to school if he/she:

- Has a fever of 37.5 Centigrade/101 Fahrenheit.
- Is suffering from conjunctivitis (a highly contagious eye infection)
- Has just started on a course of antibiotics for any bacterial infection.
- Has an infected (i.e. not clear) nasal discharge.

It takes at least three days of the antibiotic course before your child can be considered as non-contagious (including antibiotic treatment taken for conjunctivitis). Even if s/he has no fever and appears to be fine, s/he should not be sent to school as this only results in the infection being spread to other children within the school, and a risk of your own child being re-infected once his/her anti-biotic course has finished. **This is especially relevant as far as strep - throat infections are concerned.**

The children will be checked as they arrive at school and if there are symptoms of any illness, they will be sent home.

A child who has been vomiting cannot be sent home on the bus – even if the parent requests this – but must be collected from school by a parent or the emergency contact person identified on your child's registration form.

IMPORTANT NOTICE:

It is school policy that all children go outside during "Outdoor Play" - weather permitting. If you think your child is not well enough to go outside please do not send him/her to school that day.

Allergy Policy

- It is the responsibility of the parent to inform the Preschool if the child has allergies or is anaphylactic.
- An allergy form must be filled in and, in the case of severe or life threatening allergies, a doctor's report provided detailing symptoms and treatment.
- If the child could require the administration of an EpiPen (adrenaline auto-injector) then it is the responsibility of the parent to provide a minimum of two pens and to promptly replace any that are close to their expiry date.
- A form giving permission for the pen to be administered by Preschool staff must be signed. It is the responsibility of the parent to demonstrate the use of the pen to the teacher and both parent and teacher should sign the consent form indicating that this has been done.

Creating an environment that reduces the risk to severely allergic or anaphylactic children requires the cooperation of all members of the Preschool, including staff, children and parents. Please take careful note that **NO PRODUCTS CONTAINING ANY KIND OF NUTS, TREE NUTS OR NUT OIL ARE ALLOWED IN THE PRESCHOOL AT ANY TIME**

The Preschool does not purport to be, nor can it be deemed to be free of food items and non food items which may lead to a severe allergic or anaphylactic reaction. The Preschool will make every reasonable effort to reduce the risk to children with severe allergies or anaphylaxis in accordance with this policy.

12) Fire and Earthquake Safety

- The school building has been surveyed by the Technical University, Civil Engineering Department and has been approved for safety in the case of an earthquake.
- There is a fire escape from the upper floor of the building as an emergency exit
- Smoke detectors and fire extinguishers are installed throughout the school
- The building is under 24-hour surveillance by a private security company.
- School-wide fire and earthquake drills are conducted regularly throughout the school year so that children and staff know what to do in an emergency situation.

13) Preparing for School

a) Clothing

Make sure that clothing, including footwear, is easy to take on and off for younger children. Velcro straps on slippers and shoes for the younger children will encourage them to become more independent in their dressing, thus increasing their self-reliance.

Please supply the following items:

- ❖ A bag containing a complete change of seasonally appropriate clothes
- ❖ A pair of slippers or inside shoes (with hard rubber soles for safety)
- ❖ A pair of rubber boots or sturdy shoes for outside play
- ❖ An art overall or an old T-shirt
- ❖ Diapers and wipes if appropriate

Labelling all clothes with your child's name will help us identify belongings. At the end of each term unclaimed items will be sent to a charity organisation for children in need.

b) Visiting your school

During the first week of the academic year, all current and new students are invited to attend an orientation day, one or two days before the official starting date. An invitation will be sent to your child inviting him/her to come and meet his/her teacher. For new students this will be an opportunity to familiarise themselves with their school just before the new school year begins. Additionally, we encourage all new students to visit the school at any time during the year prior to their enrolment.

c) Toys from home only on 'Show & Tell' days

Please discourage your child from bringing their own toys into school as it can be very upsetting if a favourite toy gets broken or lost. Children will be given opportunities throughout the year to bring in toys or other items into school for 'Show & Tell'. Your child's class teacher will inform you via the Home School Folder when it is your child's "Show & Tell" turn.

14) Registration and School Fees Procedure

To register your child with us please bring or send the following into our office along with the deposit fee/first instalment (if paid directly into one of our bank accounts, please bring a copy of the bank deposit slip):

- ❖ A completed Student Registration Form, Emergency Information, Medical Health, Outing Permission and Bus Service Requirement form
- ❖ A photocopy of your child's identity card (for Turkish Nationals) or passport and residence permit (for international children)
- ❖ Four passport size photographs of your child
- ❖ A family photograph (or individual photographs of the family)
- ❖ A health report and a vaccination record for your child from your child's paediatrician

School fees are inclusive of:

- All educational materials and stationary
- Books and art materials
- Sports and Music & Movement classes
- Cooked lunches & snacks
- Local Educational visits