



British International School of Timisoara

We Provide the Foundation on Which Our Children Can Flourish

School Policies

Equal Opportunities Policy

Approved by:	Head of School	Date: February 2019
Last reviewed by:	School Leadership Team	Date: June 2024
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General

British International School of Timisoara is a coeducational private international school offering a British-style education and accepting children aged between 4 and 18.

British International School of Timisoara offers its students a truly international experience through a British-style curriculum and adheres to the guidelines of the Council of British International Schools, Cambridge Assessment International Education and the International Baccalaureate Organisation. Our qualified, internationally-experienced and dynamic educators teach all subjects in English, with the exception of the lessons of Romanian, which are being taught by qualified and engaging local teachers.

Vision, Mission and Values

Our Vision

We Provide the Foundation on Which our Children can Flourish
Inspiring our Students to Learn and Live with Purpose

Our Mission

Building a community of learners where students are given meaningful opportunities to learn, experience, grow, succeed and excel in all areas of their academic and personal development

Our core values

We Think, We Explore and We Learn
We Listen, We Respect and We Care
We Speak Up, We Participate and We Strive

At BIST we want to ensure that all members of our community understand and adhere to our school ethos and values. Rules and regulations will be in place to protect all members of the community and to give everyone equal opportunities for development and progress.

Introduction

At BIST we are committed to providing equal opportunities to all children and staff at our school, irrespective of their age, gender, nationality, ethnic background or academic ability. We recognise our responsibility to ensure positive attitudes towards diversity and difference, not only so that every child is included and not disadvantaged, but also so that they learn from the earliest age to value diversity in others and grow up making a positive contribution to society.

We understand the importance of providing a challenging and enjoyable programme of learning and development. We also understand that we play a pivotal role in ensuring reasonable adjustments are made to enable all students participate in our programme of learning, where all are valued and supported.

BIST is committed to child protection and safeguarding and promoting the wellbeing of all students. We expect staff, parents, volunteers, visitors and the students to share this commitment.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that protocols and procedures are in place to provide equal opportunities to all staff and pupils irrespective of their age, gender, nationality, ethnic background or academic ability.

At BIST we are committed to avoiding all forms of discrimination. This applies to all pupils, parents, and staff members and includes inappropriate discrimination on the grounds of: gender, age, religion or belief, physical ability or disability, learning ability, other special educational needs or academic or sporting ability, race (including colour, nationality, ethnicity, family, cultural or linguistic background), marital status and civil partnership, sexual orientation, trade union membership, part-time and fixed-term working terms, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity. These factors are considered in the care of our community members so that care is sensitive to different needs.

We seek to ensure that the individual needs of all our pupils are met and pupils are included, valued, and supported, and that reasonable adjustments are made for them.

We undertake to work with the school community, parents, and other relevant agencies as required to ensure that any form of discriminatory behaviour is treated seriously, and action is taken to prevent any repetition.

This policy statement should be read in conjunction with school's policies on Behaviour and Discipline, Anti-bullying, Admissions, and the PSHEE schemes of work designed in accordance with the new National Curriculum Framework. Staff are also covered by the BIST's Equal Opportunities Procedures, found later in this document

Aims and Objectives

- The school will not unlawfully discriminate against anyone, whether pupil, parent, staff or visitor, on the grounds of, or related to, any of the protected characteristics;
- The school promotes the principles of fairness and justice for all through the education that it provides in the school;
- The school seeks to ensure that, wherever possible, all pupils have equal access to the full range of educational opportunities provided by the schools;
- The school strives to constantly identify and remove any forms of indirect discrimination that may form barriers to learning for some groups by regularly assessing the impact of its policies and practices;
- The school ensures that recruitment, employment, promotion and development opportunities are open to all;
- The school challenges personal prejudice and stereotypical views whenever they occur. The school is aware that prejudice and stereotyping can be caused by misconception and by ignorance. Through positive educational experiences, and support for everyone's point of view, the school aims to promote positive social attitudes and respect for all;
- The school values each pupil's worth, celebrating both people's individuality and the diversity of the school and shows the utmost respect for everyone;

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Procedure for Pupils

BIST seeks to implement this policy statement effectively through the following actions:

- Provision of our policy statement for equal opportunities to all pupils, staff and parents, including those of prospective pupils;
- Working with outside agencies such as educational psychologists, occupational therapists, and family/pupil medical practitioners to support the endeavour of the school in serving the needs of all pupils, parents, and staff;
- Discussing, where appropriate, equal opportunities and the special needs of individuals at staff meetings;
- Delivering the message of equal opportunities within PSHEE, the wider curriculum and through the extra-curricular programme;
- Dedicating whole school and class assemblies, and form time and 'circle time' to the importance of kindness, care and unconditional respect for members of the school and the wider community, and on promoting and valuing diversity and differences;
- Meeting the individual needs of pupils, as detailed by parents and by the pupil's previous setting, through teachers, teaching assistants, and outside agencies working together with the pupil and the pupil's parents;
- Monitoring the needs of all pupils as they progress through the school, through discussion at meetings, and written information circulated confidentially, relating to specific support for learning or emotional, social, mental, physical or other difficulties;
- Discussing, reviewing, monitoring and evaluating at staff meetings, pastoral care meetings and leadership meetings, the effectiveness of inclusive practices which enable all pupils, parents and staff to access and enjoy school life;
- Ensuring school documents demonstrate a commitment to Equal Opportunities and avoid inappropriate discrimination of all forms;
- Making appropriate provision or exemption, where feasible and desirable, for pupils with special dietary, dress or religious observance requirements or needs because of religious or cultural backgrounds.

Student Admissions policy

The school admits pupils no matter their gender, race, religion, academic potential, special educational needs, provided that there are good and practical prospects of meeting their needs without unduly prejudicing the education and welfare of other pupils. Where there is evidence of drug or alcohol use, and a history of serious behavioural issues that would lead to suspension or exclusion in accordance with the BIST Behavioural Policy, the school reserves the right not to admit the student in question.

Equal Opportunities in the Curriculum

- Every pupil has an equal entitlement to the school curriculum and, subject to entry requirements, to all other areas of the curriculum, regardless of language, gender, race, disability, sexual orientation, religion or belief, age, pregnancy or maternity, or gender dysphoria;

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- Pupils should have equal access to the curriculum regardless of academic ability;
- Staff will actively encourage the breaking down of any traditional gender stereotyping regarding subject choices. This is particularly important when counselling for Key Stage 4 and Key Stage 5 courses;
- The school will monitor any careers advice or work experience placements provided by outside agencies to aim to ensure equal opportunities;
- All forms of individual and subject support, guidance, amenities and facilities, including extra-curricular activities, will be equally available to all pupils, with attention given to equality of opportunity across the protected characteristics;
- Behavioural expectations and possible sanctions will be free of any bias in relation to the protected characteristics; monitoring arrangements will be established to determine this position;
- Teachers will assess all materials and resources used for teaching and take appropriate action whenever possible to ensure that they reflect concepts, themes and information which seeks to address stereotypes in relation to the protected characteristics and remove discrimination. Teachers will try to ensure that all pupils feel that their language and culture is both acknowledged and valued;
- The school actively encourages an ethos in which all pupils feel secure and valued.

Equal Opportunities in Recruitment

- The schools will ensure that no job applicant or employee is discriminated against on the grounds of the protected characteristics and will proactively monitor and review this over time, and make changes where required to address any imbalance;
- Recruitment and selection procedures and practices are regularly reviewed to ensure that no individual is put at a disadvantage either directly or indirectly, paying particular attention to the protected characteristics;
- In accordance with the spirit of this policy statement, employees are given an equal opportunity to progress within the organisation, and this will be monitored and reviewed on an ongoing basis by the schools, with changes made where necessary to address any imbalance.

Race

The term 'race' refers to a person's ethnicity, race, nationality or national origin. The schools will:

- strive to eliminate all forms of racism and racial discrimination;
- promote equality of opportunity;
- promote good relations between people of different racial groups.

The school will not tolerate any form of racism or racist behaviour. Should a racist incident occur, it will be dealt with in accordance with school procedures.

The school endeavours to be welcoming to all minority groups. The celebration and understanding of cultural diversity are promoted through the topics studied by the pupils and is reflected in displays, resources and events.

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Cultural diversity and respect for others are celebrated and reflected across the whole curriculum. The curriculum will enhance pupils' understanding of different nationalities, cultures and world society and history, including the contributions of minority ethnic groups.

The schools will give pupils the understanding they need to recognise prejudice and reject racial discrimination.

Gender/Sex

The school will constantly examine its curriculum, procedures and materials for gender bias or inequality.

The school will encourage pupils to be aware of the rigid sexual stereotypes presented by, for example, the media, and will try to ensure that resources include non-sexist books which value the achievements of both women and men.

The school is committed to providing a curriculum which avoids unnecessary historical gender divisions. The school will endeavour to provide all pupils with experience in subjects traditionally considered to be suitable for a single sex e.g. rugby, football, netball, cooking, woodwork, etc.

The school tries to ensure:

- that teachers allocate their time fairly between the sexes;
- that teachers consider the difference in preferred 'learning styles' often displayed between boys and girls, and design lessons that provide opportunity to appeal to both genders;
- that all pupils have opportunities for working with pupils of both sexes;
- that the traditional sexual stereotypes are broken down (for example by not asking boys to move furniture whilst girls tidy up);
- that pupils have opportunities for examining their own pre-conceived ideas of gender roles;
- that pupils are encouraged to pursue less conventional subjects and interests, for example girls to read more non-fiction and boys more fiction; girls to develop mechanical interests and boys creative skills.

Special Educational Needs (SEN)

BIST is committed to support all children regardless of their passions, skills, and academic level. Where specific educational needs are identified, the school SEN coordinator will put together an Individual Educational Plan (IEP) together with the parents and the class teacher. This will contain all of the necessary information about the child, objectives and strategies to be used by the teachers in the classroom to support the child and ensure learning is supported. The IEP will be regularly reviewed and adjusted as needed.

In some exceptional cases the school may ask parents to provide outside support in order to better address the needs of the child.

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In cases where the school does not have in place resources or programmes to support students with serious disabilities, we reserve the right not to admit that child due to the fact the school will not be able to meet the needs of the respective student.

Religion and Belief

The school respects the religious beliefs and practices of all staff, pupils, parents and visitors and will comply with all reasonable requests relating to the accommodation of a recognised religion or belief's observance and practice. This includes respect for lack of religion or belief, as in humanism and atheism.

Sexual Orientation

The school will make no assumption about the sexual orientation of any of the members of its community, including its pupils, teaching staff or those who use the school facilities.

In the curriculum, sexuality is taught within the context of loving relationships. Whilst heterosexual relationships are the most common in our society, we acknowledge that some pupils may develop a homosexual or bisexual orientation and that during development many will be still questioning their sexual orientation. Pupils' questions will be answered as they arise, honestly, factually and non-judgementally.

Derogatory name-calling (of any sort) is unacceptable under any circumstances. Matters arising in relation to name calling which relates to a pupil's sexuality or perceived sexuality will be taken seriously and action taken where necessary to remove this behaviour from the school environment.

Pregnancy and Maternity

The school will be supportive of pupils who become pregnant and will make reasonable and appropriate arrangements to assist them to continue with their education.

As well as normal practice arrangements in terms of maternity leave and employment protection, staff who become pregnant will be supported through pregnancy and maternity leave, with reasonable adjustments made where appropriate and necessary.

Staff who have a pregnancy that ends will be supported through that process, for instance, by being offered compassionate leave.

Staff who have a baby born prematurely or with health issues will be supported through that process.

Marriage and Civil Partnership

The schools will ensure that equality of opportunity is provided for people applying for positions at the schools, regardless of their marital or civil partnership status.

Respect and dignity towards children whose parents who are in a civil partnership will be upheld by pupils, teachers and other school staff.

Parents of pupils who are in a civil partnership will be treated with dignity and respect.

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Gender Reassignment

The schools will be supportive of any young person undergoing gender reassignment and will support them to continue effectively with their education during that process.

The schools will ensure that learners undergoing gender reassignment are protected from bullying or harassment relating to this and will work with the young person and their parents/guardians to manage this, including how, what and when to inform other learners and the approach taken.

Age

The school will put procedures in place to ensure that no-one is denied a job, an equal chance of training or promotion or suffers from harassment or victimisation because of their age.

Bullying (to be read in conjunction with school's Anti-Bullying Policy)

The school is committed to identifying and tackling all forms of bullying, which can have a significantly negative impact upon a pupil's well-being and academic achievement.

The school will take 'identity based' bullying relating to the protected characteristics particularly seriously, where a pupil's identity or perceived identity is being used as the basis for the bullying.

The school will address and take seriously cases of 'cyberbullying', whereby bullying occurs through the use of information and communication technology, in particular, through the use of social media, such as Facebook, Twitter or other social networking websites or text messaging. Where content is considered to be illegal, the Police will be informed.

Staff, pupils and parents will be encouraged and supported to report all incidents of bullying and cyberbullying.

Roles and responsibilities

The School Board

The School Board has responsibility for the duties which arise in relation to the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 and the local legislation related to equal opportunities.

In this policy statement the School Board has set out its commitment to equal opportunities and will continue to do all it can to ensure that all members of the school community are treated both fairly and equally.

The School Board will ensure that no-one is unlawfully discriminated against whilst in the school on account of the protected characteristics.

The role of the Head of School

The Head of School will:

- ensure that the school's policy on equal opportunities is implemented and supported by the School Board;

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- set aside their own prejudices and ensure that all pupils, fellow colleagues and those using the school's facilities are treated fairly and with dignity and respect;
- ensure that all staff are aware of the school's policy on equal opportunities and that teachers apply these guidelines fairly in all situations;
- ensure that all appointments panels give due regard to this policy so that no-one suffers discrimination;
- promote the principles of equal opportunity when developing the curriculum and in providing opportunities for training;
- promote respect for other people in all aspects of school life; in assemblies, for example, respect for other people will be a regular theme as it will also be in displays around the school;
- view all incidents of unfair treatment with due concern.

The role of teachers and TAs

The teachers and TAs will:

- set aside their own prejudices and ensure that all pupils, colleagues and those using the school's facilities are treated fairly and with dignity and respect;
- address both direct and indirect discrimination against any child/young person, parent or visitor and will actively seek to identify and remove it. Ignorance of what constitutes discrimination is not lawful protection against an allegation and will therefore not be considered a defence;
- when selecting class resources, will strive to provide resources which give positive images and which challenge stereotypical images in relation to the protected characteristics;
- when designing schemes of work, teachers will pay cognisance to this policy, both in the choice of topics to study and in how to approach sensitive issues. For example, history topics should include examples of the significant contribution made by women; in geography, attempts should be made to counter stereotypical images of Africa and Asia for example and to show the true diversity of development in different parts of the world;
- challenge any incidents of discrimination and draw them to the attention of the headteacher;

The role of pupils

Pupils will be made aware of this policy and will be encouraged and supported to draw any incidents of discrimination to the attention of the class teacher and/or headteacher.

The role of parents

Parents will be made aware of this policy through the school prospectus and home-school agreement and will be encouraged and supported to draw any incidents of discrimination to the attention of the class teacher or headteacher.

Dealing with allegations made

The school will take all allegations of discrimination very seriously and will commit to investigating them properly and fairly. The outcome of any investigation will be determined

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under the school's disciplinary procedures. The school will also foster a 'safe environment' where pupils or parents can feel confident to raise these issues and be fully supported and protected throughout the procedures which may follow.

The school will take 'false allegations' of discrimination seriously, and this will be dealt with in the appropriate manner by the school under its disciplinary procedures. It is hoped that this will be rare and will normally only be determined following a fair and thorough investigation.

The role of visitors / contractors

All visitors and contractors are required to adhere to the school's policy.

Monitoring / Review

This policy, though not required by Romanian law to abide by the UK Equality Act (2010), being a British School located in Romania and operating in accordance with Romanian law and legislation, does take the principles of this act into consideration.

The Head of School, supported by the members of the School Leadership Team, is responsible for monitoring the effectiveness and the implementation of this policy and will review it on yearly basis.