

THE SCHOOL

The International School of Bergen (ISB) was founded in 1975 and is a non-profit, co-educational day school, enrolling students in pre-school through grade 10.

The International School of Bergen, when created, was one of many components of Bergen's infrastructure attractive to international investors. The purpose of the school was two-fold: to provide an education for the children of expatriate oil company personnel in Bergen and to attract further corporate investment in the Bergen area. Typical of most international schools, once established in a community, ISB's programmes became known outside of the "corporate circle" and parents (both local and permanent foreign) began to seek admission for their children.

Local children are most often enrolled because their parents have been abroad and the children have begun their education in an English-speaking school, which makes transition to "native language" schools difficult or impossible or, one or the other of the parents is an English-speaking foreigner married to a local citizen and wishes their children to attend an English language school in order to preserve a dual cultural identity. Foreign residents generally choose to send their children to an English language school in order to assure their children alternatives for tertiary education abroad.

Yet another category of parent is emerging in the international schools network and much attention is being given to this group. These are local citizens who envision a future for their children which will demand total bi- or multi-lingual fluency and who believe, quite correctly, that a primary and secondary education in an English-language school, combined with daily life, language and cultural growth in yet another language medium, will achieve this goal.

The inclusion of these more permanent students into a small international school such as ISB is positive in at least three ways. Firstly, the "international" aspect of the school is enhanced. Secondly, a "cultural bridge" between the school and local community is built and, thirdly, the presence of these children helps to stabilise the enrolment of the school and thus assure the continuity of the programme despite fluctuations in the number of multi-national corporate investors in the community.

ACCREDITATION

The International School of Bergen was accredited in 1985, then re-accredited in 1995 by both the European Council of International Schools (UK) and the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (USA). The school was awarded accreditation for a 10-year period, which is the maximum amount granted to schools. This indicates the high esteem the organisations have for our programmes. The school is also accredited by the International Baccalaureate Organisation to deliver the International Baccalaureate Middle Years Programme in Grades 6 through 10 and was last evaluated in 2003.

GOVERNANCE

ISB is governed by a six member, democratically elected Board of Trustees. The voting members of the Board are composed of three Parent Representatives, one Company Representative selected from among the corporations enrolling children in ISB, one Staff Representative elected by the ISB staff, and one member of the local community selected by the other Trustees. The Director is an ex-officio, non-voting member of the Board. The ISB Board of Trustees holds monthly meetings to discuss the on-going operations and issues that may affect the school. The Board holds Open Sessions for parents and provides insight into Board matters through regular communications with the school community. Parents are invited and encouraged to attend the Spring General Assembly Meeting during which budgetary and educational matters are discussed in addition to those issues that may be raised by the assembly.

All legislative matters that pertain to the making of policy for ISB rest with the School Board. The Board is responsible for establishing school policy and making major decisions such as the approval of the annual budget, hiring the school Director, and establishing the school calendar. The day-to-day operation of the school is the responsibility of the school Director who manages the school's programme within the parameters set forth in Board Policy.

ISB BOARD OF TRUSTEES 2004 - 05

Mr. Graham Puntis
Parent Representative

Mr. Emmanuel Therond
Company Representative

Mr. Stephen Williams
Parent Representative

Mrs. Katrine Trovik
Parent Representative

Mr. Matthew Chamberlain
Staff Representative

Mrs. June Murison, Director
Ex-Officio member

To be announced
External Member

LOCATION AND PREMISES

The school, a purpose-built facility, is housed on the Slettebakken Skole campus, located approximately 5km. from the Bergen city centre. In addition to individual classrooms, ISB facilities include a library with an integrated media centre, a gymnasium (nearby swimming and ice-skating facilities are also used), a computer room, art and music rooms and a well-equipped science laboratory. The school has a high speed ADSL Internet connection.

FACULTY

ISB employs 31 full and part-time faculty members. 40% of the ISB teaching staff is British, 30% are American and 30% are from other countries, including India, France and Norway. All members of the ISB faculty are fully qualified and experienced teachers, many of whom hold advanced degrees. The student-teacher ratio is approximately 12:1.

STUDENT BODY

During the 2004-05 school year approximately 200 students are enrolled from more than 30 countries, with the larger representations being from the UK, USA, India and Norway.

The atmosphere at ISB is warm, friendly, and supportive with individual attention given to the unique needs of each of our children. While academic standards are high, the teaching staff works with the students to provide the structure and study skills necessary to achieve success.

ACADEMIC PROGRAMME

The ISB academic programme has been patterned after the best available UK/US models. The curriculum overviews for the Pre-Kindergarten Programme (3 and 4 year olds), the Kindergarten through 5th grades, and the 6th through 10th grades are included in this package.

Those students who have been successful in the ISB programme have reported that they have been very successful in the schools they have transferred to upon leaving Bergen. Our Norwegian students who have successfully completed the ISB programme and who have taken state examinations have done very well and report that they have been well prepared for study in Norwegian schools. We are particularly pleased by the success of our students who have enrolled in the International Baccalaureate Programme. It should be noted that ISB is the only school in Western Norway currently authorised to offer the International Baccalaureate Middle Years Programme, designed to prepare students for entry into the full Baccalaureate Programme at Bergen Katedralskole or similar.

ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE

Intensive instruction in English is available for those students who have limited or no command of the English language. Instruction in Norwegian language and culture for native speakers and for foreigners is taught by native speaking specialists.

SCHOOL ORGANISATION

The school year is comprised of approximately 180 days, with the school calendar running from the third week of August to mid-June. The academic year is divided into three terms. Major holidays are observed with two weeks being given to Christmas, one week in February/March (Carnival/Winter Week) and one week at Easter. We celebrate all legal holidays of our host country. In addition, there is a one-week break in October.

The instructional day for pre-kindergarten through 7th grade students begins at 9:00a.m. and for 8th through 10th grade at 8:15a.m. All classes are dismissed at 3:00p.m. Early morning and after-school day care supervision for children in pre-school (3 years old) through Kindergarten is available at no additional cost. A similar service is available for students in grades 1 through 4 for an additional fee.

ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY

School attendance is important for the academic progress of the students. We request that parents adhere to the school's vacation schedule for family vacations as much as possible. In the event that a student must be absent from school and it is known in advance, written application must be made to the Director for planned absences of more than three days' duration. Parents are also asked to notify the homeroom teacher if their child will be absent because of dental appointments, etc. and to confirm in writing the reasons for any absences when the child returns to school.

Arriving in good time for the start of the school day ensures that students begin their daily routine without stress or upset. On mornings when we have snow (not an uncommon occurrence), the streets may be slippery and difficult to drive on. Parents are encouraged to keep an eye on the weather and leave home a little earlier on these days so that they can travel safely to school and arrive on time.

SCHOOL CLOSING

School rarely, if ever, is closed because of inclement weather. We do, however, maintain a "telephone tree" which will be used in the event that school is cancelled. The "tree" is initiated by the school Director and parents are called early in the morning.

STUDENT ACTIVITIES

Although there are no organised sports teams at ISB, the vast majority of our students actively participate in neighbourhood team sports that abound in Norway. Football, swimming, volleyball, basketball, horseback riding, skiing and ice hockey are among the favourites. ISB organises monthly after-school activities such as arts and crafts, dances, etc. Traditional events at ISB include United Nations Day, the Lower School Hallowe'en Parade, Christmas Workshop, International Food Festival, May 17th Constitution Day Parade, Spring Play, and Awards Night. Students in Grades Six through Ten participate in residential field trips on an annual basis.

INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS AND SUPPLIES

All textbooks, workbooks and related materials are provided by the school. Instructional texts, with the exception of French and Norwegian language materials, are purchased from either the U.K. or the U.S. Pencils, pens, etc. must be purchased by the students and lists of required supplies will be given to students at the beginning of the school year, or upon enrolment.

HEALTH SERVICES

The school has available the services of a part-time nurse whose office is located in the Slettebakken Skole building on the opposite side of the ISB campus. The nurse conducts and supervises the administration of hearing and vision screening as well as the TB testing and immunisation programme. Local hospital and ambulance services are used for more serious injuries. If a child is sick or injured, the school will administer whatever first aid measures seem essential and will telephone the parents if any further treatment is deemed necessary.

Parents are asked not to send a child to school if s/he has a fever or is obviously not feeling well. In case of communicable diseases, the school should be informed immediately so that other families may be alerted if necessary.

The school has written guidelines for dispensing prescription medicines and for administering emergency medication to students who suffer from severe allergic reactions.

Free dental services are also provided at school dental clinics.

LUNCH

There is no formal lunch programme at the school. Milk, juice and yoghurt are sold by subscription and children will be given the information and an application for subscription when ordering is being done. Parents are asked to support the school's policy on health education by packing healthy lunches and snacks for their child and by not sending "fizzy" drinks such as colas, etc.

STUDENT DRESS

There is no school uniform at ISB. Students are expected to dress neatly and casual attire is acceptable. No hats are to be worn while inside the building and t-shirts, sweatshirts or other articles of apparel with inappropriate designs and/or language printed upon them are not acceptable. Walkman, discman and other portable music players are not allowed in school. Cellular phones may not be used during the school day.

TRANSPORTATION

The school does not provide transportation, however, for those students who are old enough, city bus services are available. ISB students are entitled to use the city bus system for no charge and information will be provided about this opportunity by the school office.

The vast majority of our parents transport their children to school in private automobiles. Parking outside the school is not allowed between 08:00 and 16:00. Parking in the morning and at dismissal times can be crowded but we suggest that parents use the parking area in the Sletten shopping centre, directly across the street from the school. Parents should not park on or near the pedestrian crosswalk in front of the school. Parking in this area endangers the lives of our children. The danger posed by parking in the crosswalk area is not worth saving a minute or two by parking there. Please ... help us keep your child and the children of others safe.

PARENT PARTICIPATION

Communication with parents regarding school programmes, activities, and student progress is essential. We will strive to communicate with you as often as possible through our weekly newsletter, class-announcements and Board Briefs.

Parent/Teacher conferences are organised in the Fall and Spring and individual conferences are encouraged throughout the year. Parents are urged to contact their child's teacher whenever they have questions or concerns. Don't wait for problems to develop before coming in to talk with someone at school.

In addition, the school encourages parents to become involved in the Parent Teacher Organisation. The PTO has been a great source of support for many of the school's programmes in the past and all parents are welcomed to actively participate.

SCHOOL OFFICE

Among their many other duties, the Administrative Assistants co-ordinate our billing procedures, register student and family data and answer telephone enquiries. Any questions pertaining to tuition payments, bus cards, etc. should be directed here.

SCHOOL ADDRESS / TELEPHONE / FAX/E-MAIL

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We hope that the information included in this package is useful as you consider ISB for your children and as a handy reference guide after your children have enrolled. If you have additional questions regarding the admissions process, the academic programme, or about any other facet of the school's programme, please do not hesitate to contact the office.

ADMISSIONS AND PLACEMENT

Admission is contingent upon the school's ability to offer a programme suitable to the applicant's needs and the student's ability to benefit from the programme. Class assignment is determined by a review of past records and placement, age and a personal interview. Only limited assistance is available for children with special educational needs, particularly those with a physical handicap.

Pre-school and Kindergarten admissions are made in collaboration with the central database maintained by Bergen Kommune. For this reason, parents applying for admission to our Pre-school and Kindergarten programmes are required to complete both the ISB application forms and those issued by Bergen Kommune. Specific instructions regarding this procedure are included in the information package when an interest in this area of the school has been indicated in the initial contact.

ADMISSIONS PROCESS

The Admissions Process involves three steps:

1. Application Process
2. Placement Process
3. Welcome and Transition Process

Step 1. Application Process

The Application Process involves acquiring information about the student and previous schooling and suitability for Admission.

The following must be received before Admission is considered:

- Completed Application for Admission forms
- For Grades 1 through 10, school records for 2 complete years showing evidence of formal schooling, including any Individual Education Plans (see Note)
- For company sponsored students only: Company Sponsored Tuition Schedule signed by a representative of the sponsoring company

Note:

- If there are insufficient records, an Admissions Interview is required.

Step 2. Placement Process

The Placement Process determines which grade a student will enter. Students at ISB arrive from a variety of nations and educational systems, and therefore the placement process can be complex. The aim is to ensure that students are placed in the grade most suitable for their learning, social development and chronological age.

Where possible, a student will visit the school for a day. During the visit, the student will be

assessed formally and informally in English language proficiency and mathematics in order to assist with grade placement. The school may request that the student complete these tests at their current school in those cases where a visit is not possible.

Required for Placement

- Placement assessment results
- Samples of student work and/or portfolio (can be brought on the day of the visit)
- Information about previous placement and length of anticipated stay in Norway
- Standardised test results, if available

It is vitally important to the placement process that the information gathered is as accurate and complete as possible. After the above information for Steps 1 and 2 is received and validated, a formal offer of enrolment may be made.

Step 3: Welcome and Transition

Once assigned to a class, we wish to ensure that the newly-placed student is able to adjust to the new school environment as quickly as possible. This will involve:

- Informing the teacher(s) about the new enrolment.
- Appointing a buddy to help the student through the start of school.
- Provision of a Welcome Package from the school office/class teacher which includes health service information and handbooks

Notes:

- Grade Placement in Preschool and Kindergarten is based on the Date of Birth.
- Students moving from the local school system will not be enrolled directly into Grade 10.