



... a *caring*, multicultural *community* where the development of the intellect is complemented by the pursuit of *personal* and *interpersonal* growth.

## *Our Mission*

**The British International School, Budapest is a caring, multicultural community where the development of the intellect is complemented by the pursuit of personal and interpersonal growth.**

- 👑 **We aspire to excellence.** We pursue deep learning in all that we do, through disciplined inquiry, reflection and perseverance.
- 👑 **We act with integrity.** We are true to ourselves, our values and our community.
- 👑 **We embrace diversity.** We believe that each child's individuality is defined through our differences and that together we can achieve more than we can alone.
- 👑 **We cultivate responsibility.** We foster personal responsibility and global citizenship for a sustainable, peaceful future.

**We nurture each student's ambitions,** through the development of the skills, resources and dispositions to thrive, in school, through university and throughout life.

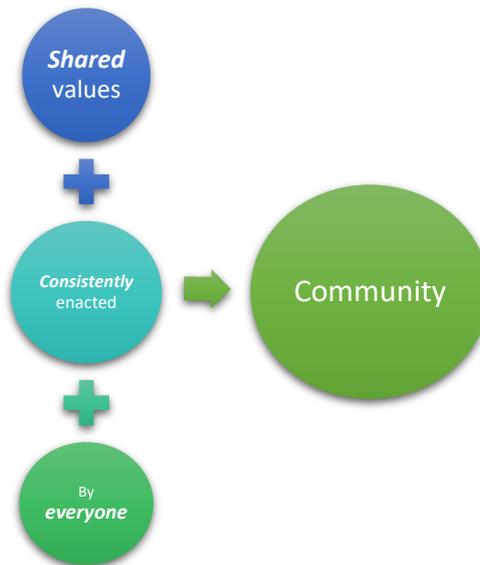
## Community - the short version

“Community” can be a little nebulous.

We can't maintain “community” with just a “sense” of what it is.

**What is “community,” how do we get it and what is it for?**

**Our formula:**



**This rests on three foundations which give stability, structure and direction:**



**These provide a psychological “safety net” of care and consistency which helps create:**

... a *caring*, multicultural *community* where the development of the intellect is complemented by the pursuit of *personal* and *interpersonal growth*.

**In such an environment, we can all take risks. Risk taking is at the heart of:**

**Learning!**

## Community - the longer version

### **BISB is a community**

One of the most often talked about characteristics of our school is that we see ourselves as a community. That's why the word appears at the very start of our Mission Statement, where we refer to ourselves as "... a caring, multicultural community." It's quite remarkable that a small school of some 300 young students has grown rapidly to the size we are today and retained that sense of community. Many have worked hard at nurturing that community spirit in some way or another, with considerable success.

But what makes a community out of such a diverse group of people, what does it look like and what is the purpose? It's easier to throw the word "community" into a mission statement than it is to tie it down and define it. If we use that difficulty as an excuse not to interrogate the meaning, then we risk losing, through neglect, the benefits of community life. We can't continue to nurture, build and develop something that we only have a sense of. It might slip through our hands.

### **What is a community?**

It is hard to distil a community to its elements. Communities are diverse and occur in so many different contexts. For us, however, there are three key elements. There may be more, but these three are *necessary* for us to call ourselves a community.

- The first is a set of **shared values**. All communities need to have a set of basic minimum values that are non-negotiable, and that everyone signs up to. For us, these are enshrined in the five words on which our Mission Statement are built: **excellence, integrity, diversity, responsibility, ambition**.
- The second is that these values form the basis for **consistent action**. The action can be a response to an event or an action or a context, or the action can be proactive: unprompted action which promotes our values. The values form a guide to action and to behaviour. Consistent action is supported by our mission as it expands into five imperatives: **aspire** to excellence; **act** with integrity; **embrace** diversity; **cultivate** responsibility; **nurture** ambition.
- The third element of community is that the values translate into action **by everyone**. One person, acting out of alignment with the values, isn't behaving as part of the community. If several people in the group frequently act out of alignment, the group probably isn't a community. Community means everyone. Our Conduct & Behaviour Policies set out ways of acting within our community. Our restorative approaches supplement this with particular forms of action that are designed to reinforce the value of members of the community and restore relationships within the community.

So, a group of people sharing and aligned with a set of values, and all acting consistently with those values, form a community. **Shared values, consistently enacted by everyone.**

This now gives us some concrete ways of ensuring that we retain not just the sense of but also the reality of our school community. We already have a solid foundation built from three things: our Mission; Conduct & Behaviour Policies; and our restorative approaches. These provide pragmatic structure and direction for acting and responding and, as long as everyone is aligned, they provide ways of building our community as we continue to grow.

### **So what?**

This leaves a key question: *so what?* Why bother? What are the benefits of having shared values consistently enacted by everyone? Simply put, we cannot thrive and learn without consistency of positive response and care around us. None of us. And particularly children. Consistency in how people around us act and respond, built on shared positive values, form a psychological safety net to allow risk taking. Babies crawl and toddlers toddle away from their parents to explore. As they do this, they look back from time to time to check that a parent is still there. As they become more confident that someone will be there when they turn, each time, every time, consistently, they continue to explore and to learn. Wandering off into the unknown is unsettling, it's a risk. Risk-taking is at the very heart of all learning. If an experience is not slightly risky, it's not new. If it's not new, it's not learning.

### **A community provides the conditions for successful learning.**

In particular, "... a caring, multicultural community where the development of the intellect is complemented by the pursuit of personal and interpersonal growth."