



2020-2021

Parent Handbook

Contact Information:

Address:	20 Akademik Hristo Hristov Street, Dragalevtzi, Sofia
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Website:	iccf-bg.com
Operating Hours:	8:00am – 6:00pm

ICCC History

ICCC was established in 1997 by a group of motivated parents from the international community in Sofia. At the time there was no other English-language pre-school in Sofia. ICCC opened in January 1997 in the Lozenetz district of Sofia and a few years later it moved to Dragalevtzi. In 2017, ICCC turned 20 years!

From September 2018 the center is relocated to a brand new building, closely situated to Vitosha Park.

Mission

At ICCC our mission is to provide every child with a quality childhood learning experience. We create a safe, nurturing and developmentally appropriate environment that fosters a love of learning, awareness of self and others, and a curious mind about the world around.

We believe in empowering children by offering them opportunities to make decisions, solve problems and develop their critical thinking skills.

At ICCC, we believe that parents play an important role in their child's preschool learning journey. Therefore, we also focus on creating a welcoming parent community and we draw from the unique backgrounds of our international and local families to create a culturally rich learning environment.

International Community

ICCC has a vibrant international community of families from all over the world. We value this diversity of cultures and experiences and maximize opportunities to bring them into the classroom.

An English-speaking Environment

All communication within ICCC is in English and English-language education is the cornerstone of our program. Learning the language is

facilitated greatly by the fact that many children at ICCC are from different nationalities and English is the only common language between them.

Groups

Children attending ICCC are divided into four groups, based primarily on age although we also take into account children's development, language skills and the requirements of their next educational setting.

Little Ladybirds are children aged 20 months -3 years.

Big Busy Bees are children aged 3-4 years.

Cheeky Chickens are children aged 4-5 years.

Clever Kittens are children aged 5-6 years.

The full ICCC program prepares children for Kindergarten (US system) or Key Stage 1 (UK system).

Curriculum

We follow the International Early Years Curriculum (IEYC), developed by Fieldwork Education, UK. The IEYC is supplemented by **literacy toolkits** like Jolly Phonics and Abacus Evolve, and conflict management programs like Kelso's Choice.

The IEYC

The IEYC is an innovative research-based toolkit, recognizing international best practice and the developmental needs of 2-5 year olds and beyond. The IEYC forges a seamless link between early and formal education.

The IEYC believes that children are not passive receptors but are born naturally curious and ready to explore the world, constructing knowledge and developing new skills through experiences and interactions with others. The IEYC has been designed so that the

learning activities offered by teachers can spark children's imagination, enabling interests and enquiry to flourish. This type of enquiry provides greater opportunities for children to learn independently and interdependently, opening up multiple possibilities for personal, social and emotional development.

The IEYC Learning Strands

There are four Learning Strands that underpin all learning and development. Learning is organized into units of contextualized activities. Each IEYC unit lasts approximately 4-6 weeks and has been designed around a central theme (e.g. This Is Me, Weather Wonders, To the Rescue – Superheroes, etc.), linking all four Learning Strands to relevant and engaging activities.

- ***Learning Strand 1: Independence and Interdependence***

This strand focuses on personal, social and emotional development. It links to the eight IEYC Personal Goals (Enquiry, Adaptability, Resilience, Morality, Communication, Thoughtfulness, Cooperation, Respect) and the IEYC International Dimension, enabling children to develop knowledge and understanding of the independence and interdependence of people, countries and cultures.

- ***Learning Strand 2: Communicating***

This strand focuses on developing a broad range of communication skills including language development, early literacy, early mathematics, ICT and computing, expressive arts and creativity.

- ***Learning Strand 3: Enquiring***

This strand focuses on developing the skills of enquiry through exploring people and the world.

• *Learning Strand 4:*
Healthy Living and Physical Well-Being

This strands focuses on developing a positive attitude to health, self-care and physical activity.

In IEYC learning means acquiring knowledge, skills and understanding. Knowledge refers to factual information. Skills refer to things children are able to do. Understanding refers to the development or 'grasping' of conceptual ideas.

Daily routine at ICCC

8.00 am: arrival, play and small group activities

9.20 am: circle time and IEYC group activities

10.00 am: morning snack

10.30 am: IEYC/music/math/Jolly Phonic sessions (Cheeky Chickens and Clever Kittens)

11.30 am: physical education and outdoor play

12.00 am: lunch

1.00 pm: afternoon nap (Little Ladybirds and Busy Bees);
relaxing time, music, dance/karate, art, science classes (Cheeky Chickens, Clever Kittens)

3.00 pm: afternoon snack

3.30 pm: IEYC activities; closing circle; yoga/cooking class/etc.

4.00 pm: free play indoors or outdoors and pick up time

6.00 pm: school closes

Children should arrive by 9:15 am in time for Circle time.

If children arrive after 9:15 am, we may ask them to wait outside the classroom area to avoid disturbing the other children and disrupting circle time.

Children on half day schedule should be picked up by 12:40 pm if they eat lunch at ICCC. Children staying the full day must be picked up by 6:00 pm.

Dates to Remember

2 September – First School Day

29 September – Welcome Barbeque*

8 October – Parent Orientation and Annual General Meeting*

10 December – Christmas Party*

3-9 February – Ski School 1 (optional, only children 4 years +)

15-19 February – parent teacher conferences

19-23 March – Ski School 2 (optional, only children 4 years +)

11 June – Learning Celebration Day*

June – Green School – five days, dates to be announced in May (optional, only children 4 years+)

18 June – last day of school year

Summer Program 2021:

21 June – 16 July

2 – 27 August

Important: Parent social events will be held **only if allowed under COVID-19 measures*

School Closures & Public holidays

The dates are subject to change depending on Bulgarian government decisions or at the discretion of the ICCC Board.

7 September – school closed, Unification Day

23 September – school closed, Independence Day

22 December – Professional Development Day (tbc)

23 December – 4 January – school closed, Winter Holiday

3 March – school closed, Liberation Day

30 April – 3 May – school closed, Orthodox Easter Holiday

6 May – school closed, Bulgarian Army./ St. George Day

24 May – school closed, Cyrillic Alphabet & Slavic Culture Day

18 – 30 July – school closed for summer break

Admission to ICCC

ICCC accepts children aged 20 months – 6 years old. Children in the Little Ladybird and Big Busy Bee groups may attend on a half-day or full day basis. Children in the Cheeky Chicken and Clever Kitten groups attend on a full day basis.

ICCC has the following admission policies:

- Minimum age: children between 20 and 24 may begin based on the family needs and assessment by staff.
- Children are accepted on a first come, first served basis, although priority is given to children who already have siblings attending ICCC and to children who speak English (not applicable for the Little Ladybirds) or come from international families. When spaces are not available children can join a wait list for the group.

- If space permits we may admit a child for a short period of up to three months. In such cases the joining fee will be 100 BGN.

ICCC Membership Fee Information

Membership at ICCC is annual and is based on full or half-day attendance of children.

- There is a compulsory School Year membership fee and an optional Summer membership fee which can be for the whole summer or a shorter period in the Summer Program.

	Full days		Half days (LLB&BBB Only)	
Schedule	School year membership	Summer Fee	School year membership	Summer Fee
Joining fee	500 BGN (paid when registration is confirmed)			
Full days	10,500 BGN* (3 instalments x 3500 BGN)	1900 BGN	6,990 BGN* (3 instalments x 2330 BGN)	1350 BGN
Summer short term (one week)		260 BGN		185 BGN

** Under exceptional circumstances the ICCC Parent Board can review school fees in the course of the school year.*

- There is a non-refundable one-off joining fee upon booking a place. It is waved for the second or third child in a family.
- We offer 8% discount for second or third child in the family attending at the same time.
- The School Year membership fee can be paid once at the beginning of the year or in 3 instalments throughout the year. **There is no discount for absences for holidays or other reasons.** The Summer membership is

optional and is paid in one installment after confirmation of attendance.

- If a child will be leaving ICCC before the end of the school year due to unforeseen circumstances, such as family departing from the country or child health status, we require at least one month's notice. In this case, we can refund the balance of membership fee. Notice given after 31 March will not be accepted.
- The catered lunch at ICCC costs 5,50 BGN per day. Payment for lunch is added to the membership fee. For planned absences parents should **notify the office by email** by 2pm the day before. In such cases the office can reimburse lunch fees for the period of the planned absence. We cannot reimburse lunch fees for unannounced or last-minute absences.
- Membership fee requests will be issued in advance of each period, unless otherwise agreed. Below is a detailed timetable.

Payment period	Request Date	Due Date
Period 1, 14 weeks (2 Sep. - 4 Dec. 2020)	12 August	21 August
Period 2, 14 weeks (7 Dec. 2020 - 12 March 2021)	19 November	1 December
Period 3, 14 weeks (15 March - 18 June 2021)	1 March	10 March
Summer Program	10 June	20 June

Communication with parents

Good communication with mutual respect and trust between parents and the staff is vital to the functioning of ICCC and to the well-being of our children.

Parents are invited to communicate directly with teachers and the director to discuss any ideas, concerns or problems. If the issue is not resolved satisfactorily they can address a Board member.

Parents can schedule one-to-one meeting with a teacher to discuss important issues. Ask your class teacher about a convenient time.

ICCC uses Tapestry Journal for activity updates and feedback to parents. Information and announcements about special events are sent by email. In addition, there are mailboxes for all children to the left of the entrance. Parents should check these boxes regularly for official documents, children`s projects and development reports.

Parent meetings are held twice a year: a Parent Orientation Day, combined with Annual General Meeting in early October; one-to-one parent-teacher meetings in February. These events provide an excellent opportunity to learn more about ICCC, to meet the teachers, to discuss school policies and the progress of children. We highly encourage all parents to attend. The meetings will be held virtually if COVID-19 restrictions apply.

There are 3 special social events for parents in the year (depending on the COVID-19 situation):

- Welcome BBQ (September)
- Winter Holiday Party (December)
- Learning Celebration Day (June)

These events are an opportunity to meet and socialize with other parents and staff, and to see first-hand how much our children have learned. The children perform at the Winter Holiday and Learning Celebration Day events.

Finally, parents are highly encouraged to participate in their child's learning activities at school. Whether it is to read a story, or introduce the group to a national holiday from the child's home country, or do a

workshop with children, parental involvement is welcome (depending on the COVID-19 restrictions). If a parent is interested in visiting a class, please contact the class teachers or the Director.

Daily Life at ICCC

Drop Off And Pick Up Routines

- Parents are asked to spend **no more than ten minutes** at school for drop off and pick up*. You can establish a quick goodbye routine with your child in the morning and follow it. This will help your child settle in and allow the class teacher to step in if necessary. Ten minutes will allow sufficient time for exchanging feedback with the class teacher. If you need to discuss issues in more depth you can organize a separate meeting.

*Special COVID-19 regulations apply at the start of the school year.

Nap Time

- Children in LLB and BBB nap after lunch. Nap time is typically around ninety minutes, between 1pm and 2.30pm.

We believe that at this age a nap provides a necessary daytime recharge and helps avoid overtiredness in the afternoon and evenings. Quality nap time is necessary for early physical and mental development. It also supports early memory development for young children. Nap time is mandatory in Bulgarian legislation and **ICCC cannot provide alternatives to napping for children in LLB and BBB** who stay full days.

Attire/Clothing

- Each child should have a small bag containing a complete set of clothing including underpants and socks.

All clothing should be **labelled** with the child`s name. Napping children should bring clean pajamas each Monday.

- Indoor shoes are required for all children; these could be slippers or some other form of comfortable footwear.
- Parents should provide comfortable clothes and shoes for outside play and activities – especially running, jumping and climbing (no flip flops or slippery shoes).
- All extra clothes and indoor shoes are stored in each child's wardrobe and shoe box in the foyer.
- For children still in diapers parents should provide a sufficient supply of diapers each week (in case of sensitive skin, wipes should also be provided).
- During colder months, children should have appropriate outdoor clothing, including warm and waterproof shoes/boots, jackets and pants. Hats and mittens/gloves are essential during winter.

ALL clothes should be labelled with the child`s name.

Snacks / Lunch

Each day, ICCC provides a healthy mid-morning and afternoon snack. If your child has or develops any food allergies please inform the staff immediately.

ICCC arranges a catered lunch from a local restaurant for all interested children (please see the Membership Fee Information section for details on the cost). If a child has special dietary requirements parents can send hot or cold lunch each day. Meals from home can be heated by staff if needed.

Absences

Parents should inform ICCC of any planned absence in advance. For unplanned absences or illness, please inform the office by telephone or email as early as you can.

Health Policy

Please read this section carefully. ICCC takes the health of all our children very seriously and we strictly enforce these policies and procedures.

School year 2020-21 starts with special COVID-19 policy and procedures. Families are asked to read and follow all measures strictly.

Before starting school **all children** should present the following medical records:

- “Zdravno Profilaktichna Karta” from a GP/pediatrician; Includes a list of immunizations, measurements, general health check; Copy of vaccination records.
- Note from a GP/pediatrician that the child has not been in contact with contagious patients.

For new children only:

- Lab test results for starting nursery/preschool; Includes blood, urine, feces and intestinal parasites sample. If a child stops attending for over 60 days the lab tests are repeated.

We are obliged to request all vaccinations required by the Bulgarian Pediatric Association and to follow strictly the local regulations for nurseries and pre-schools.

ICCC has a full time qualified medical nurse on site. If a child appears to be unwell or sick when dropped off, the nurse or a member of staff can request that the child is seen by a doctor before attending school for the day.

Please check our special COVID-19 policy for more details about when a child will not be admitted to school.

If a child develops any symptoms of illness while already at school, the ICCC staff will phone a parent or designated care giver to collect the child immediately.

Parents are requested to notify the school between 8:30am and 9:30am if a child is unwell and/or will be staying away from school, especially if an infectious disease is suspected.

The health of all children is of prime importance to us. Please safeguard your child and others by keeping him/her home if they exhibit signs of illness. Children **MUST** be kept home under the following conditions:

- A fever within the last 24 hours. Please keep children home for 24h following a return to normal temperature.
- Vomiting the night before or in the morning before coming to ICCC.
- A rash of unknown origin.
- Flu symptoms, extreme runny nose, coughing with a temperature, sore throat.
- Diarrhea.
- Extreme tiredness or irritability of an unexplained nature.

Children with a strep infection should be kept home and return with the doctor's permission.

Children having communicable diseases, including chicken pox, may not return to ICCC until their doctor gives them permission.

Children having head lice should be kept away from school until they have been treated to eradicate the problem. If a teacher finds head lice, ICCC will send the child home. We will also check all other children and inform parents via email.

Accidents

Although staff members are constantly monitoring children and doing their best to prevent accidents, injuries can happen. We have a protocol in place which involves documenting injuries and notifying parents.

In the event of illness or injury at ICCC, staff will:

- Contact the parent(s) who will collect the child as quickly as possible.
- Decide whether to summon medical assistance (staff have been trained in CPR and we have emergency numbers for local hospitals).

Medication

ICCC staff are **prohibited by law to give medication to children**. If a child needs to be given medication during the day he or she should stay at home.

Emergency procedures

There is an emergency policy document covering our response in the event of a major crisis like fire, earthquake, intruder on premises, or a serious medical accident. The document can be found on the website.

Caregivers and others

We understand children may have caregivers other than their parents. If your child will be picked up by another caregiver, please introduce this person to the staff and add their name to your child's file.

If your child is being picked up by another parent please inform in writing the office or the class teachers.

Toys from home

We ask parents not to bring toys and similar belongings to school. They are often the cause of small conflicts and may get lost or broken. If children do bring a toy to school it will be kept out of the classroom.

The last Friday of each month is toy sharing day and children are welcome to bring a toy to share.

Birthdays

We are happy to celebrate each child's birthday at ICCC. Parents are welcome to bring cupcakes or birthday cake to share with their child's group at snack time (please ask the shop to provide the certificate, required by the health authorities). The birthday child can donate a book to the school library to mark their birthday if they wish, with a suitable inscription inside.

We request that parents do not provide additional candy/sweets or gift bags on the occasion of their child's birthday to avoid eating unhealthy food at school. We do not allow outside entertainment (clowns, puppets, etc.) for birthdays. We organize a birthday celebration during class time when we sing songs, dance, and play games.

Outings

ICCC organizes outings and field trips depending on the season. Parents may be asked to volunteer as additional supervisors on such trips. Prior to any outings, we will ask you to complete and sign a permission slip.

Sample outings include:

- Zoo, Horse or Animal Farm
- Parks, Vitosha Mountain
- Fire Brigade, Dentist Clinic, Bakery, etc.
- Theatre, Museum

During the winter months ICCC organizes one or two ski week programs on Vitosha for children older than 4 years. In the summer, we organize a week-long Green School and additional sport activities. These events are optional and the cost must be covered by parents.

ICCC's Board of Directors & Staff

The ICCC Board of Directors consists of usually five elected members, who are parents of children currently attending ICCC. The Board includes a Chairperson, a Treasurer and representatives for each group of children.

Board members are ultimately responsible for the decision-making and management of ICCC and they supervise the budgeting and expenditure of all funds. They also establish the policies that are enforced by staff members. Parents are encouraged to communicate with board members, especially the representative for their child's group.

New board members are selected each year at the Annual General Meeting (AGM). Parents who are interested in joining the board should express their intentions and qualifications to the Board Chairperson or Director. In the case of more candidates than available seats on the board, the board will hold an election process and parents will vote for the new member(s) at the AGM.

Current board members are:

- Anna Bozarova (Chair person)
- Alexandra French
- David Nolic
- Marsha Foster
- Radena Tsvetanova

ICCC Staff Members

Director

Snezhana Daneva joined ICCC in 2010 after a diverse career at the British Council in Sofia and in London. Snezha has MA in English and American Studies from Sofia University and a Management Diploma from Open University, UK. Since her children were born she has taken a keen interest in early childhood education and development and prior to joining ICCC she worked as a volunteer with NGOs in this area. She believes that children should be treated with love and respect to become healthy, happy and confident individuals.

Little Ladybirds (to be confirmed)

Miss Emiliya Doychinova has a Bachelor degree in Pre-school Education with twenty years of experience at international pre-schools in Sofia as a teacher and head teacher. She loves working with toddlers and most of her career has been dedicated to the younger children. It is interesting that Emy's first teaching position was with ICCC. She rejoins our team in September 2020. She loves the sea and swimming.

Miss Milena Getova (Nurse): Milena is a medical nurse, and has a degree in health management. She is on our staff since 2018, and has experience working in kindergartens. Milena enjoys tourism and driving. She is married and has a little son.

Big Busy Bees

Miss Daniela Tomova: Dani joined ICCC in 2006. Before that she worked for several years as a teacher of children aged 3 to 9 years. She graduated in 1997 from Sofia University as a Master in Pre-school Education. She has attended courses in UK in teaching English to very

young learners and using Content and Language Integrated Learning methodology with young children. Dani is married with two children.

Miss Denitsa Angelova: Denitsa is a young teacher coming to ICCC after two years experience in London as room leader and nursery teacher. She has a Bulgarian degree in Music Pedagogy and UK Qualified Teacher status. She will join our team in November. Loves music and singing and is excited to explore, teach and learn through playing with the children.

Miss Priti Parikh-Clark: Priti Clark joined the ICCC in 2017. Priti was born in Mumbai and lives in Sofia with her husband and daughter. She has a degree in Business Management and is now an experienced member of our team.

Cheeky Chickens

Miss Krassimira Popova: Krassi graduated in 2001 with a Master Degree in Psychology from Sofia University. She joined our team in October 2006 after working in Bulgaria and Denmark.

Miss Maya Georgieva: Maya has a degree in General Pedagogy and has worked with young children for a number of years, first as baby-sitter and later as a teacher in a private English language pre-school. She joined our team in September 2017.

Miss Svetoslava Ivanova: Svetoslava has a degree in Pedagogy, Media and Artistic Communication from Sofia University. She enjoys working with young children and has experience in a Montessori setting prior to joining ICCC.

Clever Kittens

Miss Stella Antonova: Stella is a member of our team since 2007. She has a Degree in Pre-school Education from Sofia University. Stella

was born in Pleven and she is married with a son and a daughter. She is a fabulous baker.

Miss Gergana Popova: Geri is an artist and graphic designer. She has taken pedagogy courses and has taught art classes to young children. She joined ICCC in 2014.

Music Teacher

Nadejda Miteva: Nadya comes to ICCC three times a week for music lessons with each group. She graduated from the National Musical School and studied Music at Sofia University. She performs at festivals and concerts.

Karate Teacher

Vesselin Panayotov: Vesko is our karate teacher. He is a Shotokan karate instructor from the Bushido Club Sofia. He has karate and PE classes with the Clever Kittens and the Cheeky Chickens twice a week in the afternoon.

Dance Teacher

Lilly Peychevska: Lilly studied classical ballet in a choreography school, and did Ballet Pedagogy at university. She has experience as a modern ballet dancer including in major Bulgarian companies. In later years she is mostly a teacher and mom.

Gardener/Facilities

Atanas Todorov: Nasko takes care of our building, garden and outdoor facilities.

Cleaning and Kitchen Assistant

Ana Varbanova makes sure the school is kept clean and tidy.

Please sign this page, tear off and return it to the office.

Parent Agreement

I have read and I understand the information in the 2020/2021 ICCC Parent Handbook which I have received in electronic and in hard copy. I agree to abide by the school policies as laid out in the 2020/2021 ICCC Parent Handbook.

I am informed about the financial terms and conditions, the cost of membership and the methods of payment and I accept these terms.

I understand that ICCC will not be responsible for any injury to my child caused beyond the control of staff.

Parent Name:

Parent Signature:

Date:

ICCC Contact Details

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