

# **ISAMILO INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL, MWANZA**

## **Information for Prospective Teachers**

### **The School**

Isamilo is an international school for children aged from 3 to 18. It follows the British curriculum to Cambridge Board Advanced Level.

Isamilo was established in 1956 as a primary school to serve the expatriate community. It was then taken over, first by the newly independent government in 1961 and then by the Anglican Diocese in 1965 to provide an English medium education for the local as well as expatriate communities.

In the 1990s the school adopted the British National Curriculum, modified to address the needs of an international school in Tanzania. In 1998 it started extending, by one year at a time into secondary education. The first cohort took their IGCSE exams in 2003, at which point Isamilo split into primary and secondary schools for administrative purposes. In 2008 the school split again into 3 departments, Early Years, Junior and Secondary and is looking forward to a fourth department in August 2009 with the start of 'A' levels.

Isamilo is registered as an international school with the Tanzanian Ministry of Education and Culture, with the DCSF in UK and with AISA (The Association of International Schools in Africa). There is no comparable school for over two hundred miles in any direction.

### **The Children**

There are currently 400 children on role, of which 150 are in the Secondary Department, 135 in the Junior Department and 115 in Early Years, reflecting many different nationalities and religions.

Most of the children come from the business community. Our fees are between a quarter and a third of the level of other international schools in East Africa but still they are beyond the reach of most Tanzanians and many parents struggle to find the money to pay the fees. The school offers bursaries and scholarships to those having difficulty paying. In addition a number of people connected with the school have offered sponsorship to enable some less privileged children to attend.

The school is fortunate to have polite and well motivated pupils, supportive parents and enthusiastic staff.

### **English**

The children and their families mostly speak English as a second language. There is a wide range of ability in language. Generally the children's level depends on how long they have been in the school. Some of our newest pupils have very poor English, but by immersion in the language they usually improve quickly, first orally, then in reading and lastly in their written work.

The school is not selective academically in the younger years. However, parental support for a child's education is a factor in deciding whether or not to accept a candidate. Some language support is provided within both the Early Years and Primary Departments and all Early Years classes have classroom assistants who are able to speak both English and Swahili and often other languages. As pupils get older their ability to speak English and to cope with the curriculum become increasingly important in the selection process.

### **External Exams**

Since the school follows the UK curriculum all teachers must be trained in the British or equivalent system and most are expatriates. The children take external exams at the end of Key Stage 2, 3 and 4. It is the school's aim that all pupils should fulfill their potential. In 2008 86% of our students gained five or more passes at grade C or above at IGCSE; an outstanding 38% of all results were grade A or A\*. This is a tribute to the excellent foundation laid in the primary school as well as to the quality of our secondary teachers.

### **The Early Years Department**

The Early Years Department is on 2 sites. Bishop Wiggins House contains the Pre-school, Reception and Year 1 classes, while Year 2 are placed at the Main School site. Bishop Wiggins House is 5 minutes walk away from the Main School and has the advantages of being a small unit, with a friendly, family type atmosphere. The Early Years Department come together for assemblies, productions, sports events and of course parties!

### **The Junior Department**

Each year group in the Junior Department has 2 classes which range between 15 and 20 in size. Teachers in each year group plan and work together. The Years 3 and 4 classes have classroom assistants shared across the year group. The Junior and Early Years Departments work closely together as a whole Primary unit ensuring there is continuity across the school.

### **The Secondary School**

The Secondary School is entering an exciting stage of expansion and, in addition to two form entry from Year 7 to Year 11, our first Year 12 cohort will be starting their A-levels in September 2009.

Currently there are 180 pupils in the Secondary School, but this is set to expand as A-Levels are introduced. Class sizes are a maximum of 20, although some exam classes are much smaller.

Key Stage 3 pupils follow the British National Curriculum, adapted to the needs of pupils living in Tanzania.

Key Stage 4 pupils prepare for International GCSEs (Cambridge International Examinations). Current IGCSEs offered:

English First Language  
English Second Language  
English Literature  
Maths  
Biology  
Chemistry  
Physics  
Dual Award Science

French  
History  
Geography  
ICT  
Art  
Economics  
  
And O Level Swahil

Sixth Form AS and A2 courses will be offered in Maths, Physics, Chemistry, History, Geography, ICT, Economics and Business. Students will embark on 4 of these A level courses at AS and will have the option of dropping one as they proceed into A2. Thinking skills, creative studies, PE and community action will be compulsory additions to the educational portfolio offered.

### **Facilities**

The Secondary School has an Art room and two Science laboratories. A Music room and 2 computer suites are shared by the two schools. The computer suites are networked with access to the internet and thirty two computers. The school library is well stocked and is equipped with computers for internet research. Bishop Wiggins House has it's own library with age relevant books and each classroom has at least 1 computer.

The three departments also share sports facilities (which teachers can use after school hours) including a 25m swimming pool, a small field, tennis courts, a netball court and a hall equipped for basketball and badminton.

### **Extra-curricular Activities**

The school sets out to develop the whole child. As such there are a number of extra-curricular clubs, including sports, music (including choir, guitar lessons and the stomp band) and creative activities from jewellery making and photography to writing for the school newspaper. Each year all children from Year Five upwards have an opportunity to take part in residential visits. Venues have included the Kenya and Rwanda as well as other towns in the region. Also every year all the children get the opportunity to perform in concerts. The standard of drama is very high with children from Pre-school to Year 11 take part in at least one performance every year. We are very fortunate to have staff are been willing and able to support these activities. In a school of our size this shows some commitment.

## **MWANZA**

### **Communications & Power**

Mwanza is not an international city, but it is the third largest town of Tanzania, and it is developing. The town has a railway terminus with links to Kigoma and Dar es Salaam, a lake port with links to Bukoba and Uganda and an airport. Recently, the E.U. aid has financed improvements to the road system. There are now good road links to the Serengeti (two hours) and to Kenya (four hours). Roads to other centres in Tanzania are

currently being upgraded. Where roads do not have a tarmac surface they can be quite rough, especially in the rainy season.

Telephones, water supplies and electricity can be erratic, especially after heavy rain. One does need to be blessed with patience as power cuts can last five minutes, one or two days, or occasionally more. The school has invested in generators that provide power for lights and TVs in the evenings.

### **Shops & Cafes etc**

Teachers have found the social life quite good, if a little different to what they have been used to. There are many different bars and restaurants, some catering more for expatriates, although the choices of food can be quite limited. There are of course many small shops, in which almost anything can be bought, although the quality of many goods is often below a standard you may be used to and the selection not so wide. There are a couple of western type mini-supermarkets. Food produced locally is quite cheap, however imported food can be expensive.

### **Climate**

1,100 metres of altitude give Mwanza relief from the humid heat of tropical Africa. The climate is pleasant in the shade. It is like a continuous European summer, interrupted by two rainy seasons.

### **Accommodation**

School accommodation is basic but comfortable. The school provides the main furniture including fridge/freezer, gas/electric stove and TV. Electricity, water and gas (where appropriate) are provided by the school. Accommodation for single teachers is usually shared.

### **Health**

Teachers should be in good health. We recommend that teachers seek medical advice about the inoculations and prophylactics required for living in East Africa.

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Isamilo endeavours to provide high quality education for children in Mwanza at considerably less cost than other international schools. We are only able to do this if we can find teachers who are prepared to work in a third world country for rather less money than they would earn in the U.K. **We are looking for teachers who want to contribute towards the development of Tanzania – who want to be able to feel that their presence in Mwanza has made a difference.**

Details of salary are given separately. When considered with the other benefits the total package allows staff to live relatively comfortably and to travel in the neighbouring countries. Many of our teachers have chosen to extend their contracts for a third year or much longer.