

Sept 8, 2023

Dear Parents and Students,

It is our pleasure to welcome you all to the new school year at IICS. We are happy to see the familiar faces of our returning families and students and delighted to greet and integrate our newcomers into our diverse and caring community. We wish you all a successful start to the new academic year of 2023/24.

We would like to take this opportunity to introduce our Secondary Counselling Department to you:

Ms Milena Stamenkovic – Middle School Counselor (supporting students in Grades 6, 7 & 8) and teaching SEL (Social Emotional Learning) Classes to grades 6, 7 and 10.

We are excited to have Ms Stamenkovic as part of our counselling team this year. She is originally from Serbia where she worked with children and adults for many years as a mental health professional. Since 2017 she has been working as a school counsellor in mainland China (Shanghai and Shenzhen), as well as in Taiwan. She has an MA of Psychology, and is a certified Cognitive Behavior Psychotherapist.

Ms Brenda St. George - High School Counsellor (supporting students in Grades 9, 10, 11 & 12) and teaching SEL Classes to grades 8 and 9.

Ms St. George has been at IICS for the past 12 years. This is her 34th year of teaching and/or counselling internationally. She previously worked in Tanzania, Kuwait, Hong Kong and Japan. She has a MEd in Special Education and is trained as a RAP (Resourceful Adolescent Program) Facilitator as well as an '8 to Great' Coach. She has also had Crisis Response Team training through NOVA (National Organization for Victim Assistance) and is certified in Youth Mental Health First Aid.

Ms Michelle Mi - College Counsellor (supporting students in Grades 11 & 12) and teaching SEL Classes to grades 11 & 12.

Michelle joined IICS in August 2021 as a College Counsellor. She is from a small city (with 16 million population) called Suzhou in China. Before she and her family (husband and son) moved to Turkey, she worked at international schools in Zambia, Bangladesh, and China.

The IICS School Counselling program is in alliance with our vision and mission statement and it includes a variety of services for ALL students and is designed to assist with interests and issues related to the stages of student growth in the areas of academic, career, personal, emotional, and social development.

Students often attend counselling sessions to address topics impacting their personal & social life such as: confidence & self-esteem, friendship & relationship problems, academics & executive functioning skills, etc. Referrals to meet with the counsellors can be made by parents, teachers, or students themselves. Please don't hesitate to contact us should you have any concerns.

Confidentiality is always respected unless there is a safety concern involved, where we have to use safeguarding procedures to ensure the best interests of our students.

Throughout the year we will be providing the following services:

- Individual meetings to support students' transitions and/or help with personal issues, on an as needed basis.
- Classroom Social Emotional Learning (SEL) lessons, bi-weekly, with emphasis on personal/social skills, bullying prevention, child safeguarding, academic development (study skills), and career awareness.
- Small group counselling sessions for students, focusing on specific needs as they arise: divorce, grief, study skills, friendship/social skills, emotional regulation, etc. If you feel that your child would benefit from assistance in any of these areas, please do let us know.
- Parent Presentations & Parenting Resources (via the Friday Flash)
- Referral assistance to programs and services within the community.

If you ever have any questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to contact us. Students and parents can reach out for support via email and can schedule an appointment in person or via Zoom/Google Meets.

Contact information:

Ms Brenda St. George: bstgeorge@iics.k12.tr

Ms Michelle Mi: mimi@iics.k12.tr

Ms Milena Stamenkovic: mstamenkovic@iics.k12.tr

We look forward to seeing many of you at the upcoming Back to School Day, on Tuesday, September 19th.

Best Regards,
IICS Secondary Counselling Department

