



Memorial International School, Tirana

Initial Information for International Teacher Applicants

General Information

Memorial International School of Tirana (MIST) was founded in September 2001. It is a private, co-educational school registered with the Albanian Ministry of Education and Science.

Serving both the local and expatriate communities in Tirana, MIST offers a rewarding and fulfilling international educational program to students from nursery to year 13. It is one of the longest operating international schools in Tirana and enjoys a strong reputation throughout the city.

MIST is accredited as a Cambridge school and Cambridge international examination centre, offering Cambridge Checkpoint and Cambridge International IGCSE and AS/ A Levels.

Albania

Albania is located in the western Balkans in [South Eastern Europe](#). It is bordered by [Montenegro](#) to the northwest, [Kosovo](#) to the northeast, the [Republic of Macedonia](#) to the east and [Greece](#) to the south and southeast. It has a coast on the [Adriatic Sea](#) to the west, on the [Ionian Sea](#) to the southwest. It is less than 72 km (45 mi) from Italy, across the [Strait of Otranto](#) which links the [Adriatic Sea](#) to the [Ionian Sea](#) and Croatia is just a few hours drive away.

Albania is a member of the [United Nations](#) and [NATO](#). Albania formally applied for [EU membership](#) on 28 April 2009.

Albania benefits from a Mediterranean climate with mild winters and hot summers. It boasts beautiful countryside and plenty of opportunities for outdoor activities such as hiking and mountain biking as well as water sports including kayaking and rafting. Its location makes Albania an ideal base from which to explore the surrounding countries and many of our staff enjoy the opportunity to go skiing in the neighbouring countries of Montenegro, Macedonia or Kosovo in the winter months (all around a 4 hr drive from Tirana).

Albania has over 475 km coastline, including the rugged cliffs and secluded coves of the Albanian Riviera in the south of the country. The nearest beaches to Tirana are about 45 minutes away, while the Riviera is about a 2,5 hour drive away.

The Albanian [capital](#), [Tirana](#), is home to approximately 900,000 of the country's 2.9 million people, and is also the financial capital of the country.



Tirana is a small but lively and vibrant city with a bustling café culture and plenty of restaurants serving a variety of traditional local, Mediterranean and international cuisine.

In Tirana, fast internet connection is available almost everywhere and most cafes and restaurants provide a wifi connection. Most Albanians have foregone the use of a landline phone and rely only on mobile phones. Internet service provider variety and quality has improved greatly during recent years. The five largest ISPs in Tirana have ADSL packages ranging from 1-4 megabits per second. There is also wireless internet available at school.

Generally you will find that most young people in Tirana speak fluent English (often as well as Italian, German, French, Turkish or Greek!) and communication is never a problem. However it is always a good idea to learn at least a few words of the local language and you will find that Albanians are generally very impressed when a foreigner shows an interest in and makes the effort to try and communicate in their language.

The Albanian language is a very old language belonging to the Indo-European group. It is on a language branch of its own with no surviving related languages. It uses a latin script. There are several language schools in Tirana where you can study Albanian. The school may also provide help to organise such a course if there are enough interested teachers.

For more information about Albania, you may be interested in reading these articles:

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/travel/destinations/europe/albania/articles/amazing-facts-about-albania/>

Albanian Coast:

<https://www.lonelyplanet.com/albania/the-albanian-riviera/travel-tips-and-articles/the-best-beaches-of-the-albanian-riviera/40625c8c-8a11-5710-a052-1479d2760d58>

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/travel/destinations/europe/albania/articles/albania-europe-next-new-beach-destination/>

Albanian Alps:

<https://www.lonelyplanet.com/albania/travel-tips-and-articles/hiking-in-albanias-accursed-mountains/40625c8c-8a11-5710-a052-1479d27619f0>

<https://www.theguardian.com/travel/2017/sep/24/trekking-in-the-balkans-mountains-albania-kosovo-montenegro>

Tirana:

<http://albania.al/destination/8/tirana/>

<https://wikitravel.org/en/Tirana>

<https://www.lonelyplanet.com/albania/tirana>

<http://www.independent.co.uk/travel/europe/best-restaurants-tirana-albania-slow-food-dining-rick-stein-a7168126.html>



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Cost of Living

The cost of living in Albania is very low. Albania is one of the cheapest countries in Europe – as a guide our expatriate teachers generally spend around 550-600 Euros in total per month (single teachers).

The rent of a fully furnished apartment (1+1 one bedroom and one living room) near to the school (outside the city centre) is around 150 Euros per month. If you wish to live in the city centre, a 1 bedroom apartment would cost about 250-350 Euros. It is possible to find much cheaper accommodation outside the centre.

Pizzas are about 500-650 leke, cinema tickets are 500 leke, an average meal at a decent restaurant costs 1000 leke. (1 Euro is around 125 Leke).

If you wanted to, you could easily get by on less than 1000 leke per day if you were careful with your spending and probably closer to 500 or 600 leke if you were REALLY careful.

Public transport is widely available in the form of buses and is very cheap (a ticket is about 20 pence/25 Euro cents) However, Tirana is a very compact city and it is easy to walk to most places.

The school is located outside the city centre (10 – 15 minutes drive depending on traffic), but a bus for teachers is provided, which stops at 3 central locations on the route. Some staff choose to walk, cycle or drive, but most take the school bus.

For a wider range of product prices (for things such as coffee, beer, and bus rides, please refer to Tirana In Your Pocket at <http://www.inyourpocket.com/albania/tirana>).

School Life

Curriculum

In the core subjects of English, Maths and Science, we follow the Cambridge International Curriculum, which is very closely based on the English national curriculum. In all other subjects, we follow the English national curriculum (adapted where necessary to reflect the international nature and local geographical setting of the school). At secondary level, MIST offers Cambridge international checkpoint exams at the end of Key Stage 3 and IGCSEs and AS/A Levels in high school.

Teaching resources

All classrooms have computers and projectors and most also have smart boards. There is one communal print and copy room available on each floor (Foundation/KS1, Primary, Middle School, High School) to print handouts and copy worksheets. All students have high quality textbooks for their courses (generally from Cambridge university press, Pearson or Oxford University press) and the corresponding teachers' guide and digital material is also available in school.



The school also has a subscription to www.twinkl.co.uk where a large variety of teaching resources are available.

The school has two libraries - a primary library on the ground floor and a secondary library, which also provides a study space for secondary students.

The ICT room can also be booked by teachers when there is not a lesson taking place there.

Language

MIST is an English language school, where all subjects are taught through the medium of English. Exceptions to this are the Albanian classes (either 1st language or 2nd language) taught from year 2 and a choice of modern European language (currently French or German) taught from year 3. The total of these Albanian and European language classes is generally 4-5 lesson hours per week depending on the year group.

Teaching Hours

Exact teaching hours vary somewhat, according to the position and year group taught. In primary, class teachers generally teach English, maths, science, humanities, PSHE and form tutor sessions (PE, Dance, ICT, Art, Music and Albanian are taught by specialist teachers) Primary teachers would generally expect to have 8- 10 planning and preparation periods per week.

One period (or lesson hour) in primary and secondary is currently 45 minutes.

Our foundation (nursery and reception) classes follow a different timetable with teaching and learning periods of different lengths.

The school working day is from 08.00 to 16.00. Registration starts at 08.15 and lessons for primary and lower secondary finish at 14.45.

Staff meetings and planning sessions are usually held between 15.00 and 16.00.

Number of students per class

The maximum class size is 20 students. Our average class size is around 12-16 students per class. In 2018-19 we introduced a new system of flexible grouping, where a lead teacher takes responsibility for up to 28 children, taught jointly with a co-teacher in 2 classrooms.

The two teachers plan together and each teach a group of between 12-15 students, however the make up of these groups is flexible, allowing the teachers to group the students for each lesson according to the learning objectives and the individual needs of the students.

Teaching Assistants

A team of teaching assistants support teaching and learning at our school.

In the foundation stage and KS1 there is a teaching assistant in each class and in Key Stage 2, we have 2 teaching assistants who support all classes in years 3,4,5 and 6.



School Year

The school year is from September to June. Teachers are employed on 12 month contracts starting on 15th August.

There is a 2-3 week induction & planning period before school starts and teachers are expected to be at work from the start of their contract until the end of June.

Dress Code

As in any school, we expect all our teachers to dress professionally. For clarity and to avoid confusion, the school has developed the following dress code:

Male employees: Shirts, tie, and trousers. Smart shoes. Clean-shaven (Facial hair must be kept in a neat fashion).

Casual clothing, jeans and shorts are not allowed.

Female employees: Smart dresses, tops that cover the shoulders, skirts (no shorter than knee length) and trousers. Smart shoes. Make-up should be business-like and subtle.

Casual clothing, jeans, shorts, skirts/dresses shorter than knee length, spaghetti straps, sleeveless tops, and tight or revealing clothing are not allowed.



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