Keystone Academy

It is with a deep sense of excitement and pride that we welcome your interest in Keystone Academy, a school from foundation year to grade 12 with magnificent, purpose-built facilities. We do so on behalf of a team of outstanding educators drawn from around the world. With your involvement and assistance, our new school will quickly become a beautiful blossom in the Beijing educational garden. Here’s why.

First, our name says a great deal about who we are and what we are doing. We know that a keystone is the central piece of an archway. It brings the two sides of the arch together, bears their weight, and makes the entire structure stable and durable. Our major “keystone” fuses the best of Chinese pedagogy and practice with the best of the American boarding school tradition. We have added to this a curricular base drawn from the international education movement and its insights. The result is a powerful combination, academically excellent and educationally innovative.

Second, we have other distinctive “keystones.” Our classes will be small, 18 in the elementary years and around 14 from grade 6 upwards. Although all our younger students in the primary division will be day students, most students in the middle and high schools will be full boarders. Here they will learn to live together and to develop true character in a residential setting notable for its care and compassion. Their teachers will live on campus with them, and teach and guide them around the clock. Keystone Academy will be a partner with significant boarding schools around the world, most particularly the East Coast of the United States, where a number of our senior administrators have served in leadership positions over many years. We shall create a world-class boarding school right here in Beijing.

Full immersion in bilingual education, Chinese and English, is a “keystone” for the younger grades, yielding more to English as the students mature. Our school will prepare Chinese students for fine colleges and universities in America and other English-speaking countries. When they leave Keystone Academy, they will be fluent in at least two languages, and they will be proud ambassadors for their country. Running through all years of the curriculum is The Chinese Thread that focuses on Chinese history, culture, and identity. We shall also attract a small, but significant group of international students who wish to gain an understanding, through their schooling, of the glorious language, rich legacy and proud future of China.

Experience is like an arch. It opens up new worlds, and draws us onward to the new visions and views that it frames. Keystone Academy will do that for you, and for all of us who study and live there.

Keystone Academy is a new model of education in China. It blends distinctive traditions in eastern, western, and international education, creating a new world school with a liberal arts program that is academically outstanding. All our endeavors are framed by five shared Confucian values: compassion, honesty, justice, respect, and wisdom.

At Keystone, we embrace a world that is dynamic and ever-changing. We learn from and we learn for this enterprising, global, and diverse community.

Our keystones are:

• bilingual immersion in Chinese and English

• building character and community throughout our residential setting;

• promoting Chinese culture and identity in a world context.

Our ambition is to share successes generously and to learn from failures bravely, to open our doors to many, and to engage fully with the world of education, and the world at large, beyond our gates.

Our students are hungry for opportunity, bold in their thinking, and creative in their instincts. They are encouraged to become expansive in their dreaming, determined in their actions, collaborative in their teamwork, and humble in their achievement. They learn to be stewards of the environment and to be at ease with otherness.

Our teachers are passionate about learning, rigorous in their standards, and inspirational in their methods. They are respectful listeners, attentive caregivers, interrogative thinkers, compassionate mentors, and world-minded citizens.

Our graduates will possess the intellectual, cultural, and ecological fluency to navigate gracefully the colleges, careers, and communities of their choice. They will know how to apply their emotional intelligence, character, and zest for learning to help develop and improve the communities in which they live.

Each member of the Keystone Academy community — parents, students, teachers and support staff — is expected to act in ways that show respect, compassion and consideration for others, and to provide a safe and healthy learning environment for all. Membership in our community offers unique privileges and also implies shared responsibility. In an atmosphere where safety, trust and belonging are our goals, we create a strong community partnership through a collective sense of values and traditions. All community members affirm our Five Traditional Virtues, and these core principles provide the foundation for our behavior and interactions.

Ren 仁 Compassion

We are social beings who derive identity from our interactions with each other. We recognize the interdependence of communities and cultures. We act with kindness, understanding and empathy in our relationships with others. We value the quality of our connections, and care for the emotional, physical and spiritual health of self and those around us. We act with a generous spirit and make a positive difference in the communities in which we live and learn.

Yi 义 Justice

We act rationally and fulfill our responsibilities courageously and with determination, steadfast in our integrity and sense of balance. We resolutely uphold justice for all. We are compassionate stewards of our community, of humankind, and of our world ecology.

Li 礼 Respect

We value the norms and expectations for social behavior in our community and beyond. We base our interactions and relationships on respect, reverence, equality and a desire to serve and better understand each other. We possess a sense of duty and compassion towards family, community and our ever-changing world

Zhi 智 Wisdom

We accept the wisdom of others while diligently pursuing personal enrichment and knowledge. Wisdom guides us to make the right decisions in life. We use intuition, intelligence and reflection to seek higher meaning and we employ our introspective abilities to understand the human heart and condition. We carry forth our knowledge to lead and serve in ways that benefit the common good.

Xin 信 Honesty

Honesty and trust are the building blocks of every community. We rely on good intentions, the honoring of commitments and authenticity in each and every interaction. Our community members tell the truth, act with integrity and live up to the highest of expectations. We will be self-governing, accept responsibility for our actions and lead by example.

Keystone Academy is a Chinese school with an international program and a global flavor. We are honored to be located in Beijing, our capital city, a place of vibrant political, cultural, and historical significance. Our mission as a school is to bring together the best of three rich, deep educational traditions: the Chinese, the American, and the international. What we do inside and outside the classroom is like a brilliant cloth of three colors: however, it is the Chinese that is the main thread in this weave. We want all our students, Chinese and international, to be knowledgeable and proud of the powerful past and promising future of China. To achieve this, our Chinese Thread brings out the pattern, in every grade of the school, of the language, history, culture, and identity of China. Our focus on China and its contribution to the world allows our teachers and students to achieve a deep understanding of their own identity, of their world, and of the connections between the two. It imparts to students the critical thinking skills that will make them leaders in the world of global finance, politics, and culture. It inspires in them a love for learning, a respect for their own traditions and cultural differences, and a passion for high-level scholarship.

Contemporary instructional philosophy, reinforced by some recent research in neuroscience, indicates that integrated and interdisciplinary curriculum provides a powerful way to achieve deep, global learning. We have designed just this for the Keystone curriculum, consistently linking elements of Chinese language and cultural history through all the divisions and all the disciplines. We do this through coherent, methodical curriculum planning, through innovative teaching pedagogies, and through experiential learning opportunities for students in and outside the classroom, in the residential halls, and on the fields. The mere fact that all our students study the Chinese and English languages to a high level indicates our commitment to the significance of China in the world.

Keystone Academy Primary School uses the International Primary Curriculum as a structure to deliver integrated studies from Foundation Year through Grade Five, in a bilingual immersion context. The IPC curriculum approaches learning thematically: this facilitates the integration of Chinese cultural history and the Chinese National Curriculum objectives and standards in all domains. For each unit, there is the opportunity to compare China with other cultures in authentic and engaging ways. There are also clear links between the integrated units and the Keystone Five Shared Values that guide our school.The Chinese Thread is developed in subject specific courses, as well. In Primary School arts courses, students study ceramics, painting, and calligraphy in the context of Chinese artistic skills and traditions, and classes in music and dance reference Chinese performance arts.A robust program in wushu, and Chinese conceptions of health and wellbeing, serve as the cornerstone for Physical Education and Wellness courses.

The approach to the Chinese Thread is more focused in different disciplines in the Middle Years Programme. The Chinese National Curriculum is central to the Chinese Language and Literature course: students study the classics in literature and poetry, and become skilled in the reading and writing of Chinese. In the Middle Years Programme, the Chinese Thread is a curriculum specially designed to link World Civilization and Chinese Civilization in a Humanities-oriented program called China and the World. Students enroll in either the traditional Chinese Performing Arts or Chinese Visual Arts. By Grade Ten, students are prepared to engage in the Keystone Capstone Project. This involves independent research in a topic of Chinese cultural history that students identify as their own particular interest. They conduct research, produce a creative project, write an analytical essay, and present their product to a school audience. This kind of focused study and project-based learning at the conclusion of the Middle Years Programme gives students the opportunity to delve into Chinese culture while simultaneously preparing for the rigors of independent work required in Diploma.

In Grades Eleven and Twelve, students are enrolled in the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme.The three core components of the Theory of Knowledge course, Creativity, Action, and Service, and the Extended Essay offer valuable opportunities for multiple expressions of the Chinese Thread.The Keystone TOK course is designed as a bilingual, bicultural class in which teachers and students work in both languages to explore deep philosophical questions, comparing different expressions of culture, language, and worldview.Practical and place-based experiences in service, action, and culture allow for real-life engagement with the Chinese Thread.Experiential learning and independent scholarship are key pedagogical devices for learning at this high level of high school study. Since all Keystone students are engaged in the these studies, the Chinese Thread becomes an important component in forging the identity of our Keystone graduates, helping them to define and appreciate the significance of Chinese culture, and helping them become ambassadors of the home culture as they prepare to move away to colleges, careers, and the world after school.

Our idea of a world school is one that brings the world in various ways to local people and communities. A world school is characterized by students who are curious, who are trained to ask critical questions, who reach judgments after weighing wide-ranging evidence, and who can move when appropriate from one knowledge or epistemological system to another. Diverse, blended pedagogical styles fuel such fluency.

We think a deep sense of public purpose and learning to serve should be systemic in a world school. Students and teachers should learn all the time from the world, but at the same time they should be learning for the world. The goal is to apply all this learning to change our world for the better and to address the great challenges of our time.

Above all, a world school should develop a positive instinct for difference, and a desire to learn from otherness. A world school’s goal should be to produce national and global citizens, comfortable in their local identity but also cosmopolitan and completely at ease with otherness. This is our ambition at Keystone Academy.

The Keystone educational model finds extended expression in high school (Grades 10 to 12), where we cultivate global perspectives, inquiry-based learning, and character and community building in both academic and residential settings.

Grade 10 offers a challenging and innovative curriculum that prepares students for the rigors of the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme, which we deliver in grades 11 and 12. As stated in our mission, we aim to graduate students who “will possess the intellectual, cultural, and ecological fluency to navigate gracefully the colleges, careers, and communities of their choice. They will know how to apply their emotional intelligence, character, and zest for learning to help develop and improve the communities in which they live.”

Keystone’s comprehensive residential life program is part of the experience of every high school student. Teachers serve as dorm parents, supporting the socio-emotional and leadership development of our students. Coupled with our academic and co-curricular program, our school supports the integral development of our students as scholars, as rounded young adults, as sports players, and as productive citizens of the world.

Through all three years of high school, Keystone educational practices help students deepen essential skills in critical reasoning and research capabilities. The camping and experiential learning trips in which all students take part every year provide them with opportunities to connect and expand their learning and personal development.

Keystone’s faculty is widely diverse and richly experienced. Our teachers involve students in engaging activities in the classroom during the school day and provide academic support and extension after regular school hours. Our faculty are all involved in the Keystone Activities Program, developing deeper bonds with students as they explore common interests.

Teachers encourage students to make interdisciplinary connections in order to understand and participate effectively in their natural, social, and cultural environments. Participation in service learning projects on and off campus puts learning into action.

The language program in the high school represents a full transition from the dual-language immersion model. In Keystone’s progressive model of language acquisition, affirmed by research and effective practice, high school students achieve linguistic competency and cultural understanding in both Chinese and English.

While most classes are in English, students continue to develop their Chinese language through Chinese language and literature classes. In grade 10, students also have the opportunity to choose elective courses taught in Chinese. In grades 11 and 12, students take the IBDP Theory of Knowledge course in a dual language format with two teachers, one Chinese speaking one English speaking, supporting learning.

Keystone offers a robust and thoughtful college counseling program which guides and supports students in the process of selecting and applying to colleges and universities. Our college counselors lead parent and student sessions and meet one-on-one with students and families to address the individual needs of each student. Keystone receives visits from many colleges and universities and holds information and admission fairs on site. Visit Keystone’s College Counseling Page to learn more. (Hyperlink)