Ms. Sofie Schreiber is the new dance teacher at BISB. So far, she has been teaching the basic principles of dance in a fun and creative way as she aims to make dance an enjoyable experience for all of her students.

Ms. Schreiber has been teaching dance for 8 years now. She started dancing as a little child, influenced by her mom who was a dancer, but proceeded to stop dancing for a few years. She tried many activities after quitting dance, but none of them really stuck. The first time she truly realized she wanted to go back to dance was when she found a leotard (a one-piece garment that covers the torso, which is mainly worn by dancers and gymnasts) in her closet and desperately wanted to be able to wear it as she was completely enchanted with its beauty. When she was ten, her mother signed her up for ballet classes at a local studio and it became one of her biggest passions. Eventually, she went to boarding school at the University of North Carolina School of the Arts to train for her last two years of high school. She got her undergraduate degree (BFA in Dance Performance with a concentration in pedagogy) at Boston Conservatory. She then got her graduate degree (MA in Dance Education) at the New York University/American Ballet Theatre joint program. After graduating, she went on to teach at Boston Ballet School, before arriving at BISB. Her goal for this year is to create a club in which all aspiring dancers in the upper school can perfect their skills, and grow as dancers.

She has primarily taught ballet until this year, working with students as young as 16 months old all the way to intermediate-level dancers. With younger children, she focuses on physical development, creative movement, and building a dance language through which they can express themselves. She’s also taught adult dancers but prefers to work with students.

*“I love teaching young students because there's so much going on with them developmentally, as they're growing and learning, and it's really amazing to be a part of.”*

Ms. Shreiber described her favorite part of teaching dance, *“Personally, my favorite part about teaching dance is seeing students start to click different pieces together. Seeing that lightbulb, that ‘aha moment’ that a student has when they figure something out. That's such a wonderful moment to witness.”*

As she starts to get more accustomed to the students and schedule here at BISB, she also plans to teach an introductory contemporary dance class. As of right now, she only teaches introductory dance lessons to the lower school but wants to expand to the upper school as well. She hopes that by the end of the school year, she’ll either be able to teach dance classes during school hours or start an afterschool dance club.

She plans to follow this philosophy during all of her classes:

*“It's important for me as a teacher, and for students, in a lot of situations, to take your work seriously, but not take yourself too seriously. We need to treat the things that we're doing with care with respect and integrity, but allow ourselves to be human- go through the process, and learn from our mistakes as we go.”*

Ms. Schreiber described how ballet is a very dynamic field, which is evolving, *“Ballet in the 21st century has grown a lot wider. Now, dancers are expected to be versatile in a number of styles; contemporary dance, ballet, modern, etc. The more styles that you have in your wheelhouse the better equipped you are as a dancer and the more artistic expression you have possible to you.”*

Ms. Schreiber believes that when teaching dance, it’s really important to make it accessible to everyone. Instead of saying that there is to do something and enforcing the idea of perfection onto students, it is important to break it down and try to find what the exciting parts of dance are to each child or age group. She says, *“It's important for me as a teacher, and for students, in a lot of situations, to take your work seriously, but not take yourself too seriously. We need to treat the things that we're doing with care with respect and integrity, but allow ourselves to be human- go through the process, and learn from our mistakes as we go.”* It’s important to figure out what each student's strong points are, and what makes them excited about pushing themselves to get better. So, figuring out what's exciting, what's interesting, and, and making it something that feels achievable is really important to making dance fun and exciting for all students. *“If we say, okay, there's only one way to do something and that's it, it can either be very intimidating to somebody, or it can push them to get better. Therefore, I think it's helpful to kind of make a mix of what is a good goal for you.”*