



## ***Pechersk School International Kyiv***

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### **Orientation Guide for School Year 2010- 2011**

#### **Pechersk School at a Glance**

Pechersk School International (PSI) is a diverse and friendly school serving the local and internationally mobile community of Kyiv. The learning experience at PSI is shaped by a spirit of community, whereby students, teachers and parents work together to achieve our goals of creating successful and independent learners and global citizens.

We educate over 440 students between the ages of 3 and 18 from more than 45 different countries. Students are quickly made to feel part of the school and to be happy, safe and cared for in a challenging learning environment. We firmly believe in our motto that Pechersk School is "A Place Where We Belong".

PSI was established in 1996 as an IB World School offering the three International Baccalaureate Organization (IB) programmes. We are the only school in Kyiv offering all three IB programmes. Our curriculum combines the best educational practices from Europe and North America to prepare students for university.

We are accredited by the Council of International Schools (CIS) and the New England Association of School and Colleges (NEASC). Pechersk School is also a member of the Central and Eastern European Schools Association (CEESA).



**Projected Enrolment for 2010-11:** 400 students

**Students:** The student body is 20% Ukrainian, 12% USA, 8% UK, 5% French, and 55% from 42 other nationalities.

**Faculty:** There are 4 administrators and 60 full time teachers, representing the following countries: USA, UK, Canada, Ukraine, Australia, New Zealand, Germany, Ireland, India, Colombia and Mexico.

**Class size:** Class sizes range from 14 to 20 students, allowing for significant personal support and guidance. A teacher assistant supports each primary class. The maximum class size is 20 students. The overall student/teacher ratio is 8 to 1.

**Campus:** PSI is located about 20 minutes drive from the central area of Kyiv. Campus facilities include a gymnasium, small playing field and two Science laboratories. There is a well-resourced library, two fully equipped IT rooms and sets of laptops serving both the Primary and Secondary schools. There are facilities for Art, IT, Music, PE, Drama, and Design Technology which are taught by specialists during the school day. An Early Childhood Unit on the campus accommodates 3 and 4 year olds.

**Support Services:** English as an Additional Language (EAL) is available for non-native English speakers up to Grade 10 (age 15-16). The school has no special provision for children with moderate or severe learning disabilities but a learning support specialist is on staff. College and career counseling is available to assist students with university placement.

**Extra-curricular activities:** PSI runs an after-school activity programme for children from ages 5 to 18. A variety of sports and activities, taught mainly by teachers, is offered five days a week. Students can select any number of activities. Students participate in a wide range of regional CEESA and local sporting and academic events with other international schools.

**Transportation:** There is a comprehensive school bus service. Local companies provide school transport for children attending PSI.

**Security:** PSI has a 24 hour security service on campus. All visitors to the site pass through a checkpoint and are issued with a security ID on arrival. The campus is equipped with external security cameras.

**Parent Publications and Groups:** The PSI school newsletter is published every week. There is an active Parent Teacher Association (PTA) that meets monthly and participates in the school by organising a range of community events.

## PSI: Your Next Professional Challenge

We look for a range of qualities in those who flourish as successful educators at PSI. Central to our vision is a commitment to students and the principles of the International Baccalaureate Organization, a passion for learning, energy and a collaborative approach. We seek teachers who also demonstrate the following traits:

- A sense of team spirit
- Flexibility - ability to "go with the flow"
- Sense of humour and humility
- Patience
- Persistence and a sense of adventure
- Positive attitude and compassion
- Independence and integrity
- Honesty and tolerance
- Self-assurance
- A willingness to care for students inside and outside of the classroom
- A belief that you will not find "little USA" or "little Britain" or "little anywhere" in Kyiv
- The understanding that you always work as a guest in another person's country



Our staff is made up of 60 teachers from eleven different countries with the four largest national groupings represented by the USA (25%), Canada (20%), UK (15%) and Ukraine (15%). All hold teaching degrees and many hold a Masters degree. Working at PSI involves our commitment to your ongoing professional learning. PSI runs workshops and a wide range of training events and opportunities throughout the year.

Our staff enjoys working in a supportive learning environment with strong, positive connections between administration, staff, students and parents. PSI offers a competitive salary and benefits package. We appreciate professionals who are enthusiastic, model the IB Learner Profile and have a sense of adventure. Working and living in Kyiv is an enjoyable experience and provides the opportunity to explore the interesting and beautiful regions of Ukraine and other countries in Eastern Europe.

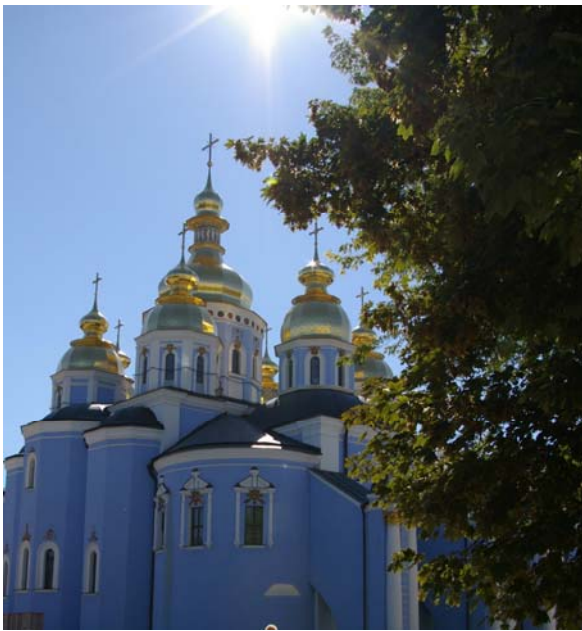


## Living in Kyiv

### Q: What is Kyiv like?

**A:** Kyiv is described in the Lonely Planet guide as “the awe-inspiring, monumental capital” of the Ukraine. Upon arrival the sights and scenes of the city may be a surprise to the visitor. Kyiv is at the centre of the country’s economic growth providing expatriates with a modern lifestyle set in a historic city and beautiful natural location on the leafy banks of the Dnieper River.

Kyiv is a well-kept secret largely overlooked on the tourist map but is a city of many beautiful charms as a place to visit and live.



Kyiv’s true majesty is its golden domed cathedrals of St Sophia, the church of St Andrew, the St Michael monastery and the Pechersk Lavra cave monastery complex, a UNESCO heritage site.

The city’s wealth is best appreciated in the city centre. It is here that you will find the restaurants, monuments, museums, parks, theatres, shops and boutiques that significant numbers of expatriates frequent. The general ambience of the city centre is one of genteel, historic charm and modern development. Turn of the century architecture mixes with Soviet monumentalism amidst modern offices and shopping malls.

Most of the teacher apartments are located within a 10-20 minute walking distance of this area. Further out from central Kyiv are Soviet-style apartment blocks, large older residential districts, and newly developing areas with houses where some expatriate families rent. Some teachers prefer to live nearer the school in Soviet-style apartments in the wooded, residential suburb where PSI is located.

Kyiv’s cityscape and range of activities more than make up for its traffic congestion and housing frustrations. Its churches, hilltop parks, history, architecture, city beaches, summer café life, and clubs will allow teachers to experience a unique life opportunity in a lesser known part of Europe.

**Q: What is the weather like?**

**A:** Ukraine has a varied temperate continental climate with hot, humid summers, warm autumns and cold white winters. Within the seasons the weather can be very changeable from day to day. In Kyiv average temperatures can range from -6°C in January to 24°C in July. That means it is warmer than Moscow but colder than Istanbul, for example. There is light to heavy snowfall periodically during the winter months.

**Q. What can you do in Kyiv?**

**A.** The following lifestyle opportunities are available in the city:

**The Arts:** There is a very lively cultural scene in Kyiv with theatre, ballet, opera and live music. The Opera House and classical music performances should not be missed. Standards are high and tickets are reasonably priced. International performers also visit Kyiv, with the most recent being Christina Aguilera, Muse, Kraftwerk, Nelly Furtado and Deep Purple

**Dining Out and Nightlife:** Being a cosmopolitan city, there are plenty of national and international restaurants with great food and service at a range of prices (see below). There are a wide variety of bars, pubs, cafes, music clubs and casinos catering for a range of tastes and budgets.

**Sightseeing:** Within Kyiv there are many ancient monasteries, churches and museums to visit. A wealth of parks means there are wonderful walks for all seasons around the city. Boat trips in the city and along the Dnieper are available in the summer months.

**Sports:** Virtually all popular participation sports (golf is an exception) are catered for in the city. In general there are good enough sports facilities for any standard of competition. Coaching is widely available and reasonably priced. Kyiv is also home of the world famous Dynamo Kyiv football club who play regularly in Champions League competition. Ukraine will co-host the 2012 Euro Championship football tournament. Ice skating is popular in winter.

**Clubs and organizations:** A number of expatriate social activities exist in Kyiv revolving around pub nights at the Canadian and British embassies, Hash House Harriers and the International Women's Club of Kyiv (IWCK), British Council, *Institut Francais* and Goethe Institute.

**Travel:** During the holidays it is possible to explore interesting parts of the Ukraine, including the Carpathian Mountains (hiking, skiing), the Crimea (beaches, hiking and historical interest) and sightseeing in Lviv, Odesa and other historical cities.

**For Children:** There are many adventures in wait.....

- There are numerous city parks with playgrounds and woodlands to explore.
- There is a famous circus, puppet theatre and children's theatres, a funfair and beaches on Hydropark
- Train journeys as day trips or longer overnight expeditions to the cities and regions beyond Kyiv.

- Ice skating, swimming, horse riding, cycling, skiing, tennis
- Music lessons

**Q: Should I worry about crime, political unrest or environmental pollution?**

**A:** Kyiv is a city that has emerged from seventy years of Soviet rule and as such still has a well-developed police apparatus and is relatively safe as compared to many European and American cities. There is very low security risk walking around the town for men or women in the day or at night. There are reports of after-hour muggings and a number of racially-motivated assaults against minorities, but in general it is a very safe city.

The events of September 11 have changed security perceptions at schools all around the world. The Ukraine is an Orthodox Christian country and is slowly looking towards the West, being dependent on European markets and other overseas links for its services and industry.

PSI has its own school security personnel and is constantly improving its procedures and security measures. All visitors to the site pass through a checkpoint and are issued a security badge after registration. An exterior wall runs around the school, which is protected by CCTV. The general consensus of the embassies and the companies operating in Ukraine is that the risk of a terrorist incident is extremely low.

Environmental pollution in the city is low to moderate. As in most cities there is a fair amount of traffic congestion, and the fumes from diesel fuel and leaded gas can be unhealthy. Fortunately, the many parks and open spaces in the city acting as 'green lungs' seem to keep the air clear. The River Dnieper is not highly polluted, with swimming possible in summer (winter for the very hardy!) at the city river beaches and even boating opportunities are possible.

Kyiv often conjures up memories of Chernobyl, the site of the world's worst nuclear disaster in 1986. Despite being only 100km from Kyiv, the city was never affected by the radiation leak from the nuclear plant. There is no risk from this disaster living in Kyiv. Whilst a clean up of the site is in progress Chernobyl is undergoing a transformation as the country's newest (and morbid) tourist attraction.

**Q: Is English widely spoken?**

**A:** Whilst Soviet rule imposed the Cyrillic alphabet and Russian is commonly spoken in Kyiv, Ukrainian is the official language.

With increasing trade and tourist links with the West, there is a growing interest in learning English and more shop and restaurant staff are now able to converse in simple English. However, outside of Kyiv few people speak English, except in the best hotels in well-developed tourist areas.

There are several thousand expatriates living in Kyiv, including a large number of North Americans, Western and Eastern European nationalities.

**Q: Is there a wide variety of food and beverage products available? Anything hard to find?**

**A:** The city is changing rapidly with the influx of foreign companies. There are now many Western style supermarkets and hypermarkets with a good choice of products such as Metro, MegaMarket and Furchet. Fresh fruits and vegetables can be bought from street vendors, small corner shops or in the open markets and are of high quality. Meat, dairy products, fish, luxury imported foods are abundant and there is also a wide selection of high quality dried fruits and nuts. Ukrainian beer and vodka are highly regarded and low in price. A wide range of Ukrainian, Moldovan and Georgian wines are available at reasonable prices. Imported beers and European and New World wines are also available at higher, but very affordable prices. Asian spices, lentils and favourite condiments from home seem to be the hardest foodstuffs to find.

**Q: Are there many places to eat out?**

**A:** Kyiv boasts a terrific variety of restaurants (i.e. Ukrainian, French, Italian, Fusion, Thai, Mexican, Indian, Chinese, Japanese, Georgian), bars, cafes, increasing in number, and with a range of prices. A meal out with wine or beer may cost between \$30 and \$100 per person, depending on the restaurant. More and more restaurants have English language menus and English speaking waiters and waitresses. There are several McDonalds in town, national fast food joints and a lot of simple snack bars and pubs. Vegetarian foodstuffs are widely available. There are several expatriate bars in the city centre with live televised sports.

**Q: How about movie theatres?**

**A:** There are occasional English language films organized by the American Chamber of Commerce (AMCHAM) during the year, so almost everyone watches DVD's at home. DVD's are current, reasonably priced, and widely available. DVD players, TV's, and screens are all easily available. Pubs show all major sports events. There are also occasional foreign film festivals, including British, featuring non-mainstream cinema.

**Q: What are the working hours?**

**A:** The working day for educational staff is 8:00am to 4:00pm, but teachers with no afternoon activity or meeting may leave at 3:30pm on Fridays. In addition, teachers may be required to attend parent evenings or school functions held during the evenings or weekends.

**Q: Are there any opportunities or expectations for professional development?**

**A:** PSI is an IB World School and expects that all new hire teachers become acquainted with the programme they work in as quickly as possible and will normally expect teachers to attend a summer training course before beginning employment. Course fees, accommodation, marginal transport expenses

and per diems will be provided for attendance at a relevant IB regional workshop during the summer before commencing employment. In subsequent years, the expectation is that all teachers attend a workshop either in summer or during term approximately once every two years.

**Q: What are the school holidays?**

**A:** Winter break – three weeks; February Break – one week; Easter break – two weeks in April; October half term – one week; Summer break – third week June to third week in August

**Home Leave**

Teachers are provided an annual Summer Travel Allowance for employees and eligible dependant. Kyiv is about three hours from the connecting hubs of London, Paris or Frankfurt. An increasing number of budget airlines are entering the aviation market with connections to Kyiv from other parts of Europe. There are opportunities for cheap air tickets to all parts of Europe and good flight connections to North America, Asia and Southern Hemisphere countries.

**Q: Are there many job opportunities for non-employed spouses?**

**A:** There are few employment opportunities in Kyiv for non-employed spouses who are not school personnel or community EAL teachers.

**Q: Are the school tuition and fees covered for my child(ren)?**

**A:** Children of overseas hired expatriate teachers at PSI may attend the school and receive an exemption from tuition and capital fees.

**Q: How should I ship personal and professional items?**

**A:** You are solely responsible for the shipping of personal effects to Kyiv. Choose the forwarder and arrange your shipment to be delivered to the address of your apartment. The school will reimburse \$2,000 upon arrival. We will send you an information package regarding shipping regulations. All apartments are well furnished. Almost all household goods are available in Kyiv. It is absolutely not necessary to ship large quantities of personal effects.

**Q: What type of clothes should I bring and is there a dress code for teachers?**

**A:** Clothes are plentiful in the shops, with the latest fashions imported from Europe. Western brand names shops (such as Mexx, Next, Benetton, Hugo Boss, Espirt, etc) are now open throughout the city. Prices range from reasonably priced to high. Many expatriates do their clothes shopping when travelling out of Ukraine or during their home visits. But, there are also several English speaking seamstresses and a

wealth of quality fabric that makes having clothes (especially formal outfits) made locally at reasonable prices an option as well.

Name brand clothing at reasonable prices, coats, casual and sport wear, jeans, T-shirts, underwear, and good walking shoes should be bought before moving to Kyiv.

At school, neat and attractive attire is the norm. Shirts and trousers are appropriate for men. For women, dresses, skirts, blouses, sweaters, or trousers are all acceptable. Examples of inappropriate attire include worn out jeans, workout clothes, shorts, or mini-skirts.

There are community functions each year that require formal dress and you may find it useful to bring appropriate clothes for such occasions or you may chose to have them made locally.

**Q: What about transportation in and around Kyiv, and how will I get to school and home each day?**

**A:** Travel in the city is easy; taxis and mini-buses are plentiful and cheap. A single taxi fare of the equivalent of \$5.00 will get a taxi cab to any point in the city centre. The underground system is cheap, convenient and well-organized, and widely used by expatriates.

**Q: Should I bring my pet?**

**A:** We generally recommend against bringing accompanying pets as some landlords are often unwilling to let to tenants with domestic animals.

**Q: Are medical checks required before leaving home?**

**A:** Yes, you will be required when you arrive to submit a medical certificate that states that you are fit to work. This should include a chest x-ray. The school will reimburse this cost on production of a receipt.

**Q: Do I need any vaccinations to enter Ukraine?**

**A:** No vaccinations are required for entry into Ukraine from any country.

**Q: What are the medical and dental facilities like in Kyiv?**

**A:** Medical treatment is provided by the American Medical Center, which has an arrangement with the PSI medical scheme to provide care for its employees. The clinic in Kyiv is well equipped and has its own ambulance, intensive care bed and diagnostic laboratory. The clinic is staffed with expatriate and local doctors. Other Western standard clinics are also available in Kyiv.

There are two western quality dental clinics in Kyiv staffed by well qualified English-speaking dentists.

**Q: What about obtaining prescriptions and medications?**

**A:** Prescription drugs are easily available from the main American Medical Center clinic, and local pharmacies. Over the counter type medications may also be purchased, but specific names and brands may not be available. If you have strong preferences, bring a supply with you. Prescription drugs are reimbursable under the Scholars medical insurance scheme.

**Q: Where will I live?**

Good quality accommodation is provided in private, rented apartments in older “European style” apartment blocks in and around the city centre. Apartments are provided free of charge and are fully furnished, including all main kitchen appliances (washing machine, microwave, TV, etc.). All basic crockery, cutlery, sheets, bedding, and towels are also provided.

If you prefer to individualise your apartment to meet your own tastes, it is advisable to bring some soft furnishings such as, throw rugs and/or decorative pillow covers, couch or bed throws, since they are quite expensive to purchase locally and are limited in choice. If you have any allergies and require special pillows, for example, it is advised to bring them with you.

Maintenance for apartments is provided by school personnel and companies assigned by landlords and is generally effective. We will confirm your actual address with you prior to your arrival as we finalise the allocation of available apartments. Domestic help is readily available and is inexpensive, between \$25 and \$35 per day. You should make your own arrangements but landlords may sometimes be able to help with arrangements.

**Recommended Reading**

Lonely Planet (2008) *Ukraine*, Lonely Planet: London

Evans, A. (2007) *Ukraine: The Bradt Travel Guide*, Bradt: Chalfont St Peter

IWCK (2007) *Insiders Guide to Kyiv*, IWCK: Kyiv

**Websites with information about Ukraine**

<http://www.lonelyplanet.com/ukraine>

<http://wikitravel.org/en/Ukraine>

<http://www.whatson-kyiv.com>

<http://www.iwck.org/>

For more information about PSI, visit the school’s website at: [www.psi.kiev.ua](http://www.psi.kiev.ua)

*PSI is a smoke free campus for staff as well as students. PSI is a drug-free workplace.*