



Jiri Kominek busy at work at the English International School of Prague.

Striving to be THE BEST

Jiri Kominek, School Business Manager at the English International School of Prague, discusses his role in the Czech Republic.

The English International School of Prague (EISP), which belongs to a family of 28 outstanding Nord Anglia Education schools, has been providing a truly international education for 2–18 year olds for more than 18 years. Our strong and exciting school community and small class sizes help us to achieve some of the best academic results in the city, which are complemented by the excellent care and guidance that families expect from a school of our quality.

I was hired as the Finance Manager five years ago but the position has developed into a School Business Manager (SBM) role, which I have held for three years now. But that doesn't mean that the finance role has disappeared from my duties.

The majority of my daily routine is around Finance activities where the finance tasks I undertake are fairly repetitive, such as approving purchase orders for any kind of expenditure in the school, approving payments, and preparation of month-end closing with our accountants.

The more interesting tasks are certainly within the SBM role. For example, the week that I wrote this article I organised a tender for our school bus service and trip transportation for the coming academic year, collecting the price bids, calculating the best option for us and making a final recommendation for the Principal's decision.

I also finalised a business contract for the catering company that provides our school meals, incorporating recommendations and comments around food hygiene, delivery times and payment details discussed with the catering company and our solicitors. More minor tasks include things like a review of insurance agreements with our internal legal team in Hong Kong as a result of changing the insurance broker for the whole Nord Anglia Education Group, finalising and signing the amendment of a contract with a private clinic that provides school nurses for us, and organising the installation of a card payment terminal in our Finance Office, ➤



Jiri's role includes working with colleagues to ensure best value for parents, pupils and the school.

DID YOU KNOW... ?

- Unlike British schools, the average class size is 12 students, meaning every student gets the support they need to achieve highly.
- Nord Anglia Education provides a premium education to more than 18,000 students in 12 different countries.

so that parents can use their credit or debit cards for all types of payments.

Routine business management tasks include periodical reviews of contracts with our Facility Manager or ICT Leader to ensure best value is provided, or checking the quality of hot lunches or the school bus service on a weekly basis.

My work always includes finding the best solution to procurement problems and balancing the available resources and capabilities to provide best quality, tasks that I imagine all SBMs have to do. However, being an international school, I have to think completely differently and avoid favouring local business solutions that would mainly suit local students. Every day I have to remind myself that any business decision has to be good for all the nationalities in our school and not to make a decision that suits British or Czech nationals only. For example, it is easy to find a catering company on the local market that will provide hot lunches for Czech or English students, but the food has to appeal to 40 different nationalities in the school as well, such as Korean and Russian.

Another good example is communication with the parents. Local conventions are not so important – you have to understand the behaviour of the nationality first, then negotiate individually with each community in the school. ■

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The EISP comes highly commended by parents and pupils alike. One parent, Morena, says, “It is hard for a parent to choose the right school, especially if you are new in a country, loving your previous school. But from our first visit, we felt great at EISP, we felt ‘at home.’” And Istvan concurs, saying, “Both my children came to Prague without any English language skills. Over three years and one term they have learned English really well and have made fantastic friendships with both English and international students.”

Martina Pařízková, ex-pupil and current medical student at Charles University in Prague, explains what it meant for her to attend the school. “I was very grateful for having an opportunity to study as a scholarship student at EISP. It was here where I found my deep interest in the sciences, which later led me to choose medicine as my future career. It wouldn't have happened without the combination of great teachers and a well-designed curriculum. It was the friendliness of the school and the great teachers that really stood out for me at EISP.”