



## International School Moshi

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To whom It may concern:

### **Open Reference for Suzanne Russell**

Sue Russell first came to ISM in July 1998. She was hired to write our whole school PYP/MYP/IB DP PE curriculum, ensuring it was rigorous and met appropriate standards. She was our Head of PE, Outdoor Education, and Lifeskills (Health) and ran our Stables. I was her direct line manager, and I am the school's deputy head.

Sue is highly organized, dedicated, able to differentiate, motivated, exciting, and enthusiastic. She has a knack for keeping in touch with her students, sensitively dealing with students who are off task and equally demanding of those who are gifted. She has moved across the curriculum with ease. In Seoul, she had a predominantly American focus. At the same time, here in Tanzania, we teach a British curriculum (a combination of IB and IGCSE), finishing with either a combination of IB certificates or the full IB diploma. She can take a list of contents and make them work using clever and well-thought-out methodology.

At ISM we have approximately 270 students from JK-IB2. These students come from a range of backgrounds and nationalities. In one class of twenty students, you might have eighteen different nationalities. In real terms, this represents eighteen different cultural, ideological, religious, and political mindsets. Sensitivity and caution are always necessary but impossible if you don't understand what you are dealing with. Because Sue has had to teach very sensitive issues such as sex, drugs, and religion, she has had to stay in constant touch with the school community, especially parents. As eighty students are boarding, with parents living as far away as China and Canada, communication can be very difficult! Especially when the electricity is often off! It can be frustrating to persist with communication. But Sue persists and is a great problem solver.

Sue's relationship with her students forms the backbone along which they are provided an opportunity to grow and extend. With many parents living overseas, the students need and value staff who make life easier. Many a night, Sue has sat with a boy, afraid to tell his peers he misses his family, or a girl highly uncertain of her future as she wrestles with her family's desire to marry her to an appropriate partner rather than attend university. The students understand Sue cares about them and genuinely wants the best for them. Having had experience of being a Boarding Parent in a Boys' Boarding House, she has become very sensitive to students in need. Basically, she acted as our school's unofficial counsellor, unofficial because the school doesn't employ anybody in that position.

To conclude, Sue sets exceptionally high standards and works hard to meet them. She is an outstanding classroom teacher and a fair and potentially excellent administrator. She cares passionately about her job and the power of education. I extensively learned from Sue, and I highly recommend her.

Sincerely

Keiron White  
Deputy Head ISM