

BORDEAUX INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL

NEWSLETTER / BULLETIN D'INFORMATION - N° 3 - JAN 2009

2nd Term 2008 – 2009

NEW YEAR – SPRING TERM

On behalf of all the staff at Bordeaux International School, I have great pleasure in wishing you all a happy New Year 2009.

We are very pleased to see new students starting this term, in all sections. We hope that they and their family will settle into their new life in Bordeaux very smoothly.

PARENTS AND TEACHERS ASSOCIATION - PTA

We encourage all parents to participate in the PTA social activities. A meeting will be held fairly soon to which all are invited. This year fund raising activities are dedicated mainly to creating a new games area in the playground for the very young.

HOLIDAY DATES

For all sections - Winter holidays from Friday 13/02/09 to Monday 02/03/09.

(All dates are also published in the school hall and in the detailed calendar of our web site).

ACCREDITATION / INSPECTION

We have still not received a final decision from the Council of International School (CIS) as to whether BIS should begin its “10th year re-accreditation process” this year. However we received a very positive preliminary report from our “inspector” Mr Andy Hill in which he praises the high quality of the teaching, the dedication of the staff and the very positive atmosphere prevailing in the school. He also recommends that the school finalises the writing of its very original bilingual curriculum in Primary and Middle School and its articulation with Secondary.

SCHOOL MEALS

The day at BIS is long, particularly for students in Secondary staying with host families who leave ‘home’ before 08.00 and often do not arrive back until 19.00 in the evening. It is for this reason that we insist on students staying to lunch and having a cooked meal at midday. We are very aware that some students – mainly in the Secondary section - do not derive maximum benefit from this meal and eat very little. It is obviously important that parents also encourage their child to partake in the school meal, and this therefore implies that they are satisfied with the quality and quantity of food available. Since 2006, we have set up regular and various forms of consultation and exchanges between students, parents and the caterers, which has been fairly successful.

On 11/12/08, we set up a “cantine” committee meeting with representatives of all parties concerned. The meeting was very well attended and provided plenty of opportunities to exchange views and information. Some very positive contributions and proposals were made and menus for January were chosen by parents and student representatives. There will be another meeting at the end of January.

All contributions are welcome and will be best “treated” through the channel of representatives. Please contact your PTA rep (list below) for attendance to meetings, meals tasting or for any proposals.

EARLY LEARNING AND PRIMARY

Last term:

The interdisciplinary work on our school project / theme of “Bridges” has been a huge success. The children were able to participate in visits outside of school and a great deal of active construction work in school. All the children have progressed well and the meetings with parents have been positive and fruitful. The section functioned coherently, the children settled well into their colour groups and produced some high quality work together. Autonomy is also being achieved.

On the Thursday before the end of Term we took the afternoon for all the children to discuss their achievements and for each child to find a target, where they think their work can be improved. This was a very positive afternoon.

Everyone enjoyed an excellent Christmas Concert and a super party afterwards. Thank you to everyone who participated.

Term 2: The New Year 2009

Our topic of "Bridges" continues on a wider aspect: bridges between countries (with particular emphasis on Europe) and continents.

Patrick has a music project which links with the topic: some of the children will have violin lessons and some will do dance in Spanish with Parlys' participation. A performance will be presented to parents in April.

School Council:

This takes place every day from 13.00 to 13.15 and all the children participate. Discussions include: living in a community, helping one another, and the environment.

Open Day on Tuesday, 3rd February

This special day will offer the possibility for parents and friends to participate in classes and activities in French and English, Maths, Science and Music.

Dates for this term:

- Open Day – for BIS parents : Tuesday, 3rd February
- Carnaval: Friday, 13th March
- Open Day – for prospective parents : Thursday, 19th March
- Meeting for Blue Group Parents (Morning) : Monday, 23rd March at 9.00
- Parents review of individual books and exhibitions of work with their own child (Full Day children) Thursday, 26th March at 14.00.
- Reports given on Friday, 27th March
- Parents meeting (Full Day) : Tuesday, 31 March at 16.00

SECONDARY

Curriculum review

Each year we examine and evaluate the curriculum we offer. Do we offer a correct range of subjects? Is there too much bias towards one element? Does each subject have an appropriate allocation of time? We are receiving more and more students who, while having a good working knowledge of English, do not have English as a maternal language, and this may obviously be a factor in their exam performance, particularly for essay writing subjects. What special provision should we be making for them ? Perhaps studying for nine subjects is too much. All these questions are constantly under discussion and one way of providing flexibility in the curriculum is through the concept of 'modules' started this year and due to be expanded next year. Modules are sessions lasting six or seven weeks, where teachers and students together choose what subject is best for each student to spend more time on. It may be support work, French, Maths or English, or it may be to take an extended course in a particular subject either for early exam entry or to take the higher level exam. Or it may be to take a non-academic course in music, art or drama. All of these questions are being discussed, in keeping with the philosophy and objectives of the school of working towards academic success, competence in at least two languages and promoting international understanding.

Professional Development Day

In order to finalise our reflections on curriculum, all Secondary and Middle School teachers will need to be made available for one full day. This will take place on **Friday 20th March**, when the **school will be closed to students** (Secondary and Middle School), as one of our annual professional development days.

Mock examinations

'Mock' or Practice' examinations for both IGCSE and A level exams will take place in the week 19 – 23rd January. For those involved in exams during this week there will be a special timetable. While students in their IGCSE2 year will take exams in all subjects, some students in the IGCSE1 class will be taking one or two subjects to assess their potential for taking a subject a year early. During the week following the exams, papers will be marked and teachers will discuss with students their most appropriate level of entry. A reminder that in some IGCSE subjects there is a 'core' level of exam which is easier, but only gives a maximum of a grade C, while those intending to obtain an A or B grade have to take the higher level. Once exam entries have been agreed students will bring home a proposal form for parents to sign their agreement. There will be an opportunity for parents to come to the school if they wish to discuss any aspect of the exam entries.

Exam entry fees

As you will be aware, Bordeaux International School is an official examination centre for the University of Cambridge Examination Syndicate. Five years ago Cambridge introduced an annual registration fee of £1000, but this has gradually increased over the years until its current fee of nearly 3000€. We have no option other than to pay this fee if we want to be able to enter students for IGCSE and Advanced level examinations at the school. That fee is therefore divided between the students taking the exams on a pro-rata basis according to the number of exam entries for each student, and added to the normal exam entry fee per student per subject. The same will now have to apply to the postage costs incurred as we are obliged to send exam papers by courier service (details to follow).

List of parents' représentants 2008 / 2009

Early Learning

Mornings : Fanny Bensimon : cbfan@bigfoot.com

Full day : Michele Blackie : michelle.bicknell@artisanda.com

Primary

Rainbow : Cora Rosenbaum (Floris): coradejong_1@hotmail.com

Yellow : Laura De Souza (Leo): Fabio.desouza@ceva.com

Green Orange : Ana Micoud: micoudjohan@aol.com

Secondary

Middle School - Raquel Soares : rkfortes@yahoo.ca

Secondary (12-14 ans)) : Saloua Guilloux : saloua@guilloux.ws

GCSE: Angi Long angilong@wanadoo.fr

AL: Sam Isaacs (student) : heyholetsgo46@hotmail.fr

Christine Cussac
Director