

NEWSLETTER / BULLETIN D'INFORMATION

N° 1 - SEPT / OCT 2014

1^{ère} trimestre / 1st term : 2014 - 2015

The first half of this term will be ending soon and we would like to give you some information on the progress made in various aspects of the school life and on some of its main projects. These are quite numerous and you will find below a newsletter in three parts: one for general information for the whole school; and one for Primary and one for Secondary. This newsletter is published as well on our website (<http://www.bordeaux-school.com/en/newsletter-2>) which can be accessed at any time.

BIS ENT : this is a "digital or virtual" school, which offers a superb complement to courses and activities to students, teachers and parents of Secondary (in the first place), where they can access and share information on curriculum, courses, grades, marks, resources, class related outings (i.e. Awaydays). For the younger ones, an adapted version for Primary is being developed and will be opened to them gradually later in the year. For all, the home page presents information for the whole school (i.e. PTA; meetings & dates, etc).

Learning how to succeed and succeed to learn : at the beginning of September, all BIS students from Orange (8 year old) benefitted from two half day training workshops with Frederic Rava-Reny, specialist in Learning Skills (<http://www.gestionmentale.org/accueil/Bienvenue>) in order to help them to "explore and develop their intelligence". Teachers also attended sessions in August and we are now able to offer parents a conference on Tuesday, 25th November (17.30-19.30), in order to discover this well recognized method to help your child study better when doing his homework.

Parking in front of school / sharing of space and road : this has become very acute and for safety reasons, we would ask you to respect the following rules: not to park in front of the school doors or the space dedicated to collecting children; not to park on a double lane on the road because it hinders the traffic for cars and buses and may cause a serious accident. This will also remove the risk of local police distributing fines, which is imminent...

Extension of the buildings : in order to provide better learning facilities for all, we have formed a project to extend the school building and facilities by building another floor on top of the first building. This is technically possible, but for the finance, we will need contributions from the local authorities, which are not easy to obtain due to budgetary restrictions. However, the Regional Council has just decided to contribute, which may influence positively the other authorities.

Brevet : the French students in the IGCSE 1 class can prepare for the Brevet for examination in the Summer of 2015, at the same time as continuing their IGCSE course. The courses for the Brevet in Maths and French are prepared in normal classes, but preparation for programmes in History, Geography, 'Education Civique' and Science will involve extra lessons. If there is the demand we are planning to offer three extra lessons after 16.30 dedicated to these subjects and starting in November (see fees list).

PTA : Parents and Teachers Association : during the first meeting, parents representatives were decided for each class – list to be issued soon by the PTA. The next meeting on **Tuesday 4th November** (8.30-10.00 at BIS) will decide on the new board for this school year (President, Treasurer and Secretaries). You are all invited to participate in the friendly and important moment of the school community life. You will receive a list of your reps soon with the minutes of the last PTA meeting.

PRIMARY & EARLY LEARNING

The beginning of this new school year has been a great success, and the primary department is very happy to welcome so many new pupils! We have an ideal balance of 50% French pupils, and 50% from other foreign countries.

All of the new pupils have made an admirable effort to adapt to their new environment, and the routines are beginning to be integrated well.

In response to certain questions posed to the teaching team, here are some precisions:

- **The weight of school bags:** The Green and Orange groups are invited each evening (for those who wish) to show their bags to the teachers, so that we may check what is necessary, and what is not. We will continue to offer this support to the pupils throughout the 1st term, until we feel the pupils are able to be autonomous in this respect. We do note, however, that some pupils still prefer to take everything home each night.
- **Bottled water:** These are authorised, but please encourage the children to close them well so that they do not leak over their books.
A new tap will be fitted this school year in the courtyard, so that the pupils have easy access to water when they are thirsty.
- **Music:** Due to the success and high demand for individual music lessons, we are thinking of solutions that will allow more pupils to participate.

We do hope that all new families to Bordeaux have managed to install themselves without too many difficulties.

Please don't forget the **international tasting day on 16th October**. All parents and children will be invited to prepare a dish from their region, country, or continent to be shared between the BIS community (more details later).

Finally, **the school holidays begin on the evening of Thursday 16th October**, as the teaching team has a professional development day on the Friday.

SECONDARY

After six weeks, the school is well into the programme for the year, and although the timetable this year is more complex and, with increased student numbers, all classrooms are fully occupied, both students and teachers have created an excellent working environment in the school.

PTA and Parents Representatives. It was pleasant to see so many parents at our initial meeting of the year when members of staff explained different aspects of the curriculum, and then for more informal discussion with a glass of wine afterwards. We really appreciate a close relationship with our parents and remind you that each class has two Parent Representatives (also PTA – Parent /Teacher Association) members. We hold regular meeting between the staff of the school and these Parents Representatives and we regard these essential meetings as a direct interaction between parents and the school, to gather feedback from parents, to know what we do well, what we could improve on, and listen to ideas for the future. The first one this year will be on **Tuesday 4th November at 16.30**.

ENT: Our new improved version of the E.N.T. (Espace Numérique de Travail) is now fully installed and operational. In future, as staff, parents and students become more familiar with it, all homeworks, all marks, weekly emails and reports will be available on-line both to parents and students using their password. If any parents would like help or an explanation on how to access and use the system, please feel free to contact us. There is already a further 'parent training' session planned for next Wednesday 8th October at 12.00.

Half-term reports : all students in the Secondary section will have a summary report at the end of this first half term, with each teacher commenting on how well the student has settled into the school and the progress they are making. As a follow up to this, we are inviting parents of students who have joined the school in the IGCSE2 class to meet with Senior teachers on the afternoon of **Thursday 16th October**. Individual letters will be sent to parents concerned.

Awaydays : With teaching in two languages, and a full curriculum, there is obviously a concentration on academic programmes in the school to enable students to fulfil their potential and eventually achieve exam success. One aspect of BIS in providing an extra to academic study is the concept of 'Awaydays': One day each month when students take part in some activity - sporting, discovery, leisure, either in Bordeaux or in the Gironde region. The cost of transportation and admission fees obviously make these expensive, averaging between 600 and 1000 € for each excursion. Therefore, as last year we ask parents to contribute partly towards this cost. We are asking parents for a contribution of 150 € for the year (25 € per Awayday), to be taken out of the caution fund at the end of each school year. Next Awaydays : orienteering at la Fraysse (Artigues) on Thursday, 9th October for LMS Tuesday, 14th October for UMS (see details on ENT).

School trips: Every year we plan two 'long term' excursions, one for Primary with the Lower Middle School 1 class and another for the students in LMS 2, Upper Middle school and the IGCSE1 class. (After the IGCSE1 year, the emphasis has to be on preparation for external examinations). This year the excursion for the older students has been confirmed, with over 20 students planning to spend two weeks in Canada next spring. The trip will encompass the second week of the Easter holiday and the first week of the subsequent term. For those students not taking part, a special programme will be put in place for that week.

Duke of Edinburgh International Award (for students over 14).

Lucinda Bergey and Anni Blackmore have spent most of last week on a five day training course in Chamonix as required by the new regulations of the International Award Association. All award centres must send two teachers for a compulsory training within the 1st year. They will be trained as Bronze, Silver and Gold Awards Supervisors/ Assessors and Award leaders.

Maternity leave : for the second half of this term and for part of next term the school will be without Mme Katia Menglet, who will be taking maternity leave. Her teaching will be covered by a teacher already at the school - Mme Stephanie Winterford and Jonathan Oberst.

Changes of break time: with the increase in student numbers in the school, two problems have become apparent **(i)** the longer time needed for students to be served and to eat their lunch and **(ii)** the congestion in the playground at times. To eliminate both these problems we have made slight changes to the timing of afternoon school, allowing five minutes extra time for lunch and adjusting lesson times.

The new times are:

Lunch 12.30 - 13.20

Period 6 13.20 - 14.00

Period 7 14.00 - 14.40

Afternoon break 14.40 - 14.55

Period 8 14.55 - 15.35

Period 9 15.35 - 16.15

Sport : as mentioned earlier, one important aspect of BIS is the liaison between parents and the school, and last year there was an overriding request from parents for the school to offer more sport. With an already crowded timetable the only possibility was after school, and we have therefore extended the 80 minute sports session at the end of the day for a further hour after school - Tuesday for LMS, and Friday for older students.

DATES TO NOTE :

- **Thursday 16th October:** International day/ buffet, with parents bringing food from their countries.
- **Thursday 16th October :** parents-teachers meetings for IGCSE students
- **Friday 17th October :** professional development day : no classes
- **Monday 3rd November :** return from holiday (see detailed calendar website : <http://www.bordeaux-school.com/en/events>)
- **Tuesday 4th November** (8.45-10.00) 2nd PTA meeting in BIS cafeteria
- **Tuesday 4th November :** meetings between Parents reps and teachers : at 16.30 for Secondary and at 17.00 for Primary & Early Learning.

Bien cordialement.

Christine Cussac
Directrice

08.10.14