

## NEWSLETTER / BULLETIN D'INFORMATION

N° 5 - APR 2015

2<sup>ème</sup> trimestre / 2<sup>nd</sup> term : 2014 - 2015

### **RENEWAL /RENEWING BIS' ACCREDITATION WITH THE COUNCIL OF INTERNATIONAL SCHOOLS (CIS : [www.cois.org](http://www.cois.org))**

The school obtained its first Accreditation in 2000 and renewed it in 2010. CIS inspects 670 international schools and from those 428 are fully accredited – like BIS. In March 2015, we submitted to CIS our “Five Year Report” presenting the improvements made since 2010 together with the plans designed to carry on helping our students in the best possible way over the years to come. On May 11<sup>th</sup>, 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup>, Nicholas Bowley, the Director of the Accreditation services of CIS, will come and meet the school community and will carry out an audit based on our ‘Five year report’. During the whole Accreditation process, the school is asked to review the past, reflect on the present, and look to the future in its self-analysis. We hope that all at BIS will give him a warm welcome.

### **PHILOSOPHY AND OBJECTIVES QUESTIONNAIRE**

In the March newsletter, we reminded you that the Philosophy and Objectives of BIS, our mission, were available on our web site (<http://www.bordeaux-school.com/en/mission-and-aims>). We sent you a questionnaire last week on that matter. We should be grateful if you could fill it in and let us have it back, as your answers will help us to decide upon important orientations for the school. Thank you in advance for your co-operation.

### **PTA ACTIVITIES**

Our PTA continues to do a marvelous job thanks to a very dynamic team who dedicate their time and creativity for the good of the whole community. The numerous bake sales and activities organised for the children around the Easter theme, and lately the stand held during the bric-à-brac sale in the Rue Judaique have created a wonderful and most appreciated animation (<http://www.bordeaux-school.com/fr/blog>). It also contributes significantly to the upgrading of the school equipment. The artificial lawn, that the PTA has almost finished paying for, allows for more outside activities for all ages, for sports, for breaks and even for... learning how to mount a tent (see blog). Funds raised also contribute towards costs of transportation for end of year trips of Primary and Early Learning. It is intended that the PTA will contribute to acquiring more equipment for the science laboratory next year. A big thank you to the PTA team!

As you probably know, the PTA now has a folder on the ENT, which keeps the list of class Reps and the minutes of meetings, available to all. On the home page of PTA, there now is a “PTA Board” for all parents to share messages and announcements for your Rep. Remember to contact your Rep to contribute.

### **NEXT TERM**

- This period will be very busy with many events, and we should be grateful if you could regularly check the detailed calendar on our web site (<http://www.bordeaux-school.com/en/events>).
- The IGCSE and A Level official exams will start on Tuesday 5th May and will carry on until 10<sup>th</sup> June. The end of year internal examinations for all other students will take place 26-29 May.
- Canada : older students will be able to visit some prestigious universities, such as McGill.

## **SCHOOL YEAR 2015/2016**

- Positive discipline: BIS is planning to develop “positive discipline” next year in a more intensive way – a method already in use with the younger students. This approach is used in many countries and schools looking for teaching methods to reinforce self-discipline, autonomy, responsibility and respect. Teachers will receive training in August. As was the case for “Learning to Learn” we will organize our annual conference in October 2015 on this theme to share with parents.
- Students: we are still receiving registrations and requests for next year. We should have an equivalent number of students as this year, and with the same diversity of nationalities.
- Trips abroad: Secondary will go to an English speaking country in Europe. We expect as well to host our Canadian exchange students during the summer term. For Primary, after Spain in 2013, Puy du Fou in France in 2014 and Jersey in 2015, 2016 will take them to a French place of interest, and 2017 to Spain.
- School calendar: the French official holiday dates are being modified for 2015/2016. BIS will then change them as well, for February and Easter (details to follow).

## **SECONDARY**

When BIS was created, the Secondary section was 90% British and all subjects were taught in English. Now, we have students from 20 different nationalities. This range of nationalities and cultures is a source of enrichment for the school and for the students, and is fostered by developing schemes of work open to all. Students in the Secondary section are therefore taught in both English and French, continuing patterns developed in Primary. An obvious repercussion of that is that French speaking students should also be able to achieve French qualifications, and as a result, those students intending to continue in the French system can take the “brevet” (in parallel with the first year of IGCSE), and then transfer to a Lycée.

## **DEVELOPMENT OF THE SIXTH FORM**

For some time we have contemplated the introduction of an IB programme to either replace the Advanced Level programme or run in parallel with it. We have now decided that for a variety of reasons, including the flexibility of A Levels, that for the foreseeable future, we will continue with the International Advanced Programme with Cambridge, extending the range of subjects we offer. Full details are available on our website (<http://www.bordeaux-school.com/en/high-school/high-school-2/advanced-level>), including the planned timetable for next year and the future, unique to BIS. A Levels are taught and examined in English, consequently students need a high level of English, but for many this is not their first language, and as an international school we obviously welcome students from many countries and nationalities. For the future, we intend that our Sixth Form course will have three elements, so that students do not just attend an “English school” in France, but obtain the maximum from actually living in France:

- 1- Academic study – obviously the most important, with students studying generally four subjects at Advanced level giving them qualifications to enter universities anywhere in the world.
- 2- A capability, confidence and qualification in French. No matter what actual subjects are studied, it obviously makes sense for students living in France to take advantage of the opportunity to learn the language. Students can obtain either a qualification with Cambridge (IGCSE or A Level) or a DELF at the Alliance Française.
- 3- The Gironde region has been declared one of the most naturally beautiful regions in the world, and the environs of Bordeaux have a host of activities and experiences to offer from flying to sailing to photography. Our planned timetable would allow students one day each week away from academic study (particularly in the first year) to become involved in an activity of their choice. (full details on our website : ([International Advanced Level brochure](#)))

## **HOST FAMILY ARRANGEMENTS**

Each year, the student body at BIS changes – this is typical of all international schools where students follow their parents sometimes on contracts in Bordeaux for just 2 or 3 years. We also have several students whose parents either do not live in France, or live at too great a distance from Bordeaux to commute daily.

For these in the past we have offered the option of ‘host families’. French families living close to the school who welcome students either during the week, so that they can return to their home for weekends, or full time throughout the term. The obvious advantage of this arrangement is that students actually live with a French family, sharing activities and meal times, practicing and developing their language skills in a relaxed, natural environment. But we also accept that for some students, not used to being away from home, this can seem a rather challenging situation. For next year we are also opening a small “family boarding unit”, a house close to school, where several students will live together with meals provided and either individual or shared room.

## **INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL**

BIS is a truly international school with a very high ratio of nationalities to students. We accept students based on interview and previous school reports ( from next year, with a letter of recommendation from the Head teacher of the previous school) in order to assess if the school is able to provide a positive learning experience to maximize a student’s potential and capacity. The result speak for themselves with students consistently achieving grades in excess of national averages. This policy means that we accept students who may need additional special support, whether it be language support or learning support. One focus of recent teacher’s in-service training has been working with specialist psychologists and educationalists to provide this special support, whether it be second language, learning difficulties of dyslexia, dyspraxia or providing challenging work for highly gifted children. We are intending to extend this provision next year with the appointment of a “special educational consultant” who will work closely with parents to ensure BIS provides their child with the best possible learning environment.

## **TEACHING TEAM**

In Secondary, our colleague Katia Menglet who has been absent on maternity leave will be returning to her post in Middle School in September. This will allow Alexandra Desmond to concentrate on the examination classes.

## **BIS SECRETARIAT**

A presence will be ensured by the secretarial staff throughout the two week holiday period.

Wishing you all a very good holiday,

Christine Cussac  
Directrice

16.04.15