



BCA Newsletter

N° 26 / 6 October 2022



TRUE TO OUR VALUES

The school is at full speed with high quality learning happening in the classroom and beyond, for example with some wonderful outdoor learning and already in some classes exciting trips. Behind all this, and informing our daily actions, are a set of values that form our educational philosophy at BCA, and these are the focus of this edition of the Newsletter.

Bring two people together and you have two perspectives, and behind those perhaps two differing sets of values. Add another person, and another set of values come into play. There may be similarities; there will certainly be differences. Whilst acknowledging and respecting the individual values that each child, staff member and parent brings to BCA, the school, just as any organisation would do, has developed a set of common values to which all of its members should subscribe. These values define the school, should guide its development, and can be used to inform daily interactions and decisions. Gandhi famously placed values at the top of the hierarchy of the human condition:

*“Your beliefs become your thoughts,
Your thoughts become your words,
Your words become your actions,
Your actions become your habits,
Your habits become your values,
Your values become your destiny.”*

The BCA values that underpin our educational philosophy are set out in our [Guiding Statements](#). These statements, especially on something as personal as ‘values’, may be viewed as provisional and intended to promote discussion and debate rather than discourage it. They are far from a *‘fait accompli’*, and will likely evolve over time. Indeed, one of the characteristics of the British educational system itself is that there is near constant debate, not least between the teaching profession and the government, who rarely see eye to eye, especially when it comes to discussions of educational philosophy and values. Those familiar with British education will know that schools in the UK must actively promote what the government calls “the fundamental British values” of:

- democracy
- the rule of law
- individual liberty
- mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs

There is certainly no British monopoly on these values, since they represent values to which most developed societies would also subscribe, or at least aspire. Alongside our BCA Values, we take note of and act on these British values, which come from a more political direction, not least because we see in the world how easily democracy, legality, liberty, respect and tolerance can be lost.

Intrinsic rather than Extrinsic


To align our practices more closely with the Guiding Statements, our Early Years and Primary staff recently met to review the use of Rewards.

Rewards have historically been given in schools for good behaviour and good work. The educational research on rewards is convincingly clear: their effect is short term, and potentially demotivating. Rewards such as 'Dojo points', stickers, and other indicators of adult approval such as a 'smiley face' on the page, or nonspecific and overgenerous praise, may bring short-lived happiness and compliance (much like sweeties do), but all fall under the extrinsic category. Remove the extrinsic reward, and the behaviour or performance returns to the original state. Parents too will be familiar with what has been written by and for them on the use of rewards and praise during childhood.

As John Ruskin, the eminent 19th century English writer and philosopher of the Victorian era, wrote:

"The highest reward for a person's toil is not what they get for it, but what they become by it."

As teachers then, we will be focussing on the intrinsic value of the children's actions. In other words, children will be encouraged to do the right thing because it's the right thing to do. This takes longer than the issue of a classroom reward. Almost certainly a conversation or several conversations will be needed between the children and the adults. Where praise or reprimand is needed and due, this will be specific and learning-focussed. We will continue with popular traditions such as 'Star of the Week', but these will be closely linked to the BCA values, and framed not as a reward, but as a 'celebration' of achievement and learning, and what the child has become, and will become, because of their actions.


Mr Harry Lock
Principal



Fiction Express

The EAL department is considering taking out a subscription for the reading platform [Fiction Express](#) (the website is also available in Spanish and Catalan) which can provide students from Years 6 to 11 access to various books created to encourage reading and to develop students' literacy skills. The subscription will cost around 30 euros per student per year and the platform is for students to use at home. We would like to see how many students would be interested in using this platform, to see if it is worth having a school subscription, as there is a minimum cost. If your child is interested, please contact admin@bcandorra.com as soon as possible, and your message will be passed to our EAL Department.

Parents with adolescents group

We have received an offer from the Youth Department of Escaldes-Engordany, and have been asked to share it with all of our Secondary parents. Please see the letter in the Parent Portal (secondary parents only).

Halloween 2022

As last year, our students and staff will begin to plan some Halloween-related learning activities, with these likely happening on Thursday 27th October. Please note that the following day, Friday 28th October is a half day for staff professional development, and the students will leave at 13:00.

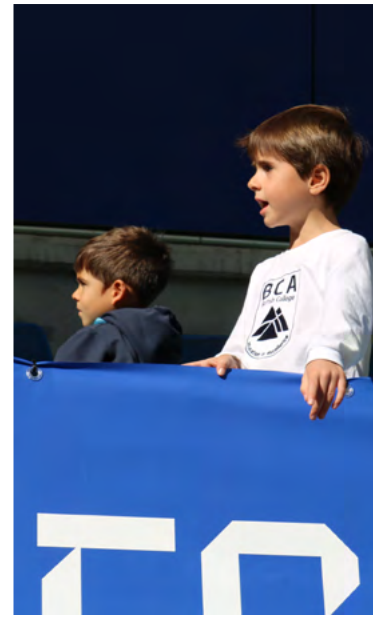
The word 'Halloween' comes from 'All Hallows Eve', which falls on 31st October and refers to the day before All Saints Day (November 1st). For many years in the northern hemisphere, different festivals have been associated with gathering in the harvest, preparing for winter, remembering loved ones who have died, and preparing for the time of longer nights and winter cold. Halloween celebrations are increasingly becoming part of British, European and North American secular culture. Some Christians do not agree with any involvement by adults or children in Halloween celebrations, and we take note of that. At schools where there is a dressing up day, it is intended only as a novel and fun community day. We are not 'celebrating' Halloween, but marking its passage at this time of the year.

Penguins have been focusing on their *Ability to Solve Problems*, a BCA value, during their mathematics lessons. In this way, the understanding is built by not only acquiring knowledge, but applying it to unfamiliar situations.



The topic in Year 2 this term is The World Cup and, with that in mind, Robins' class have visited the National Football Stadium.

Inquisitiveness is one of our BCA values, meaning that children's natural curiosity is fostered by real-life experiences such as this, exploring different places and trying new things. Trips inspire children through enjoyable learning.



In our first Primary assembly of the term, Miss Costin spoke about the BCA values with the children. She talked about what they mean to us and how we can use them to guide us everyday in class. The *Star of the Week* certificates were also given in each class as a celebration of learning and achievement.



Art Club is a space for ideas to fly free, and it is inspiring to see our students use their *Communication skills and Inventiveness* to carry out their personal projects!



Students are learning to read music both with and without an instrument.



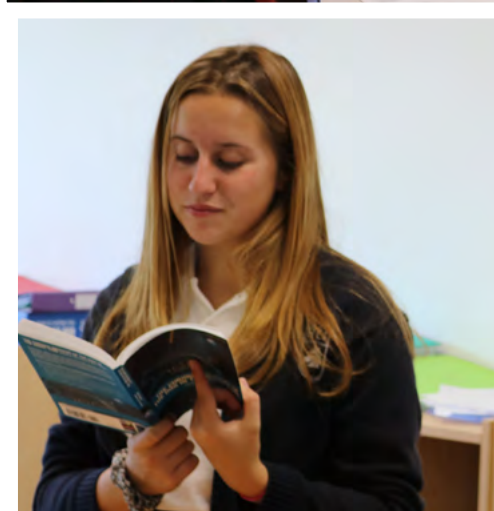
BCA has a collection of guitars, bass guitars, ukeleles and an electric drumkit, that students are welcome to use in breaktimes (with permission).



KS3 are focusing on keyboard skills this term, and learning to read the treble clef in their right hand.



The Year 10s have been developing their *Communication skills* through acting out parts of the play *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time*. They have also shown courage and good *Team-working skills*!



Students from Year 11 have been focusing on the Cold War, and have been discussing and connecting those distant events with the reality we are living nowadays. *Courage, Compassion and a Sense of Responsibility*, all BCA values, are touched upon here.





BCA VALUES

We especially value the following in guiding the learning experience and promoting wellbeing at
The British College of Andorra.



COMMUNICATION SKILLS



INQUISITIVENESS



APPRECIATION OF DIVERSITY



ABILITY TO SOLVE PROBLEMS



SENSE OF RESPONSIBILITY



COMMITMENT TO
SUSTAINABILITY



TENACITY



COURAGE



SELF-AWARENESS



TEAM-WORKING SKILLS



INVENTIVENESS



COMPASSION