



# BCA Newsletter

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A PLACE TO PLAY

## A Place to Play

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From birth, children are 'hands-on' natural inquirers and learn through playful interactions with people and their environment. Whilst we are all familiar with the idea of play, it can be difficult to agree on exactly what it looks like.

The five key characteristics of play:

1. Play is **meaningful** – children play to make sense of the world around them, and to find meaning in an experience by connecting it to something already known. Through play, children express and understand their understanding of their experiences.
2. Play is **joyful** – of course, play may have its frustrations and challenges, but the overall feeling is one of enjoyment, motivation, thrill and pleasure.
3. Play is **actively engaging** – watch children playing, and you will usually see that they become deeply involved, often coming physical, mental and verbal engagement.
4. Play is iterative – play is **not static**. Children play to practice skills, try out possibilities, revise hypotheses and discover new challenges, leading to deeper learning.
5. Play is **socially interactive** – play allows children to communicate ideas, to understand others through social interaction, paving the way to build deeper understanding and more powerful relationships.

Source: [\*UNICEF and The Lego Foundation, 2018\*](#)

At BCA we highly value play, and increasingly so. We do not regard it as a distraction from the academics, but rather a way of accelerating progress towards that academic success, through aligning with natural learning.

But play doesn't stop in the Early Years. Surely ALL the best lessons should be meaningful, joyful, actively engaging, not static, and socially interactive? When you compare the five characteristics of play with the elements of a Secondary School scientific investigation, for example (using existing knowledge, making a hypothesis, experimenting with variables, working in a team, applying the results to a new situation), then it's arguably

the same approach. We call this an **inquiry-based learning approach**, and it's central to the pedagogy of the International Baccalaureate programmes. We have many staff currently looking into inquiry-based learning as a way to bring accelerated academic success across the school.

So whether it's Early Years, Primary or Secondary, all of our students really do need A Place to Play within the planned curriculum. Here at BCA, we provide that place, with the many achievements of our students recorded in this Newsletter, and which I celebrate.



**Mr Harry Lock**  
Principal



## Notices

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All teachers have been reviewing their records and assessments and preparing the mid-year **report cards** which will be published on Monday 30th January.

These will provide detailed written feedback on children's progress and achievements over the first five months of the school year, supplementing the parents meetings that have already happened, and the regular updates and learning insights via platforms such as Seesaw.

School report cards remain important records. At the upper secondary level, universities and other post-18 education institutions may require these summative records of learning and attitudes. Their main purpose remains as a key link in the home-school partnership, where parents can read about and celebrate all the developmental steps and achievements of their child over a significant period. In the following years these can be a wonderful way for students themselves to see how far they came then and ever since.

## Electronic devices on the bus- new policy

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We want to avoid problems with devices on the bus, which largely centre on screen time, occasionally inappropriate use, and perhaps missed opportunities for social interaction. We have observed behaviours on the bus and consulted with parent representatives of the year groups that will be most affected by this tougher policy. Therefore, effective immediately:

**Primary: students are not permitted to use or carry any electronic device on the bus.** If a parent wishes their child to bring a phone or other device to school in their bag, they should notify the school office in advance.

**Secondary: appropriate use of phones is permitted on the bus,** for example accessing age-appropriate media (music and video) and games. Headphones must be used. Inappropriate use will be reported by the monitors to the Head of Secondary/Form Tutor, and will result in sanctions. Inappropriate use includes sharing devices with students in other year groups, or accessing non-age appropriate media, or taking pictures.

We will be talking to Secondary students about their use of devices, making the expectations clear. We believe it is appropriate, and more enforceable, to have different expectations for Primary and Secondary.



On Friday afternoons, Primary classes usually have 'Golden Time', meaning they can choose any toys or school material and enjoy playing with friends.





The Peacocks visited the Egyptian Museum in Barcelona as part of their learning on the topic. They had a fun day and learnt a lot of interesting facts. Did you know that the Ancient Egyptians shaved off their eyebrows when their cat died, so that everyone knew!





Break time is part of the education, disconnecting and socializing whilst they enjoy their free play.









This term BCA Secondary students have made an excellent start to the school football club run by Mr McNeish and Mr Waugh. The students have been developing a range of skills and tactics through participating in football games each week.

They made a fantastic start at taking on a variety of leadership roles such as coach, referee and captain.









The Adventure Club learns to use their outdoor cooking stoves, which they will eventually use to cook culinary delights on camping excursions. For now though, they practice with hot chocolate!





















