



1 March 2024 N.º 43

# BCA Newsletter



## LETTER FROM THE PRINCIPAL

### STRONG PARTNERSHIP- STRONG CURRICULUM

Firstly, you'll see from our cover photo that we should commend our Cygnets team for creating London in the classroom. Not only did they have a classic British red phone box, but also a London bus and other London sights!

One of the stand out features of BCA is that it is a small school with a family atmosphere, focussed on the belief that happy children learn best. The route to happiness is through student agency, on which Mr. Quinton, our Head of Diploma Programme, writes below.

An effective home-school partnership underlies this. It may be presumptuous to quote John F. Kennedy, one of history's greatest public speakers, but his 1963 words to an audience in Frankfurt seem highly applicable to schools:

*"Partnership is not a posture but a process-a continuous process that grows stronger each year as we devote ourselves to common tasks."*

Our common task is providing the best possible all-round education for the children. We have recently taken further steps to develop that partnership 'process'. In the Early Years and Lower Primary we have opened our doors and invited parents to observe the mechanics of our phenomenal new reading programme - Phonics Shed. This so that they can better support their child by reading daily with them at home, and knowing how we do it at school. We have had the third round this year of parent representatives meetings, essential to give and receive feedback in a structured and considered manner. We have invited parent representatives to join the children for lunch and taken valuable feedback and good ideas from that. We have further expanded the use of Seesaw to keep everyone fully informed and provide actionable feedback- please read the article by Mrs. Newlin, our Head of Early Years and Lower Primary, below. Hot on the heels of the recent mid-year report you received, the next round of parent-student-teacher conferences approaches (see Notices, below).

Another stand out feature of the BCA is the rigorous, academic curriculum. This is not a document gathering dust on the shelf. At all levels in the school, our teachers develop and strengthen the curriculum on a daily basis. In the British system teachers have high autonomy, as professionals. They have enthusiasm and inspiration, backed by strong qualifications and deep experience, and a desire to learn themselves. The new phonics programme above is but one example, and you can see the fruits of their labours in the photographs that follow in this and every newsletter. Staff professional development now happens every week, with the current focus being on ensuring best practice on 'assessment'- teachers gather to contribute, discuss, learn and decide how best to proceed, only thinking of the children.

I am delighted that our whole community will be able to come together on April 12th for another whole school charity event (see Notices, below, for the outline information). I am also pleased that winter has made a return to Andorra to provide a nice finale to the skiing season. Enjoy!



**Mr Harry Lock**  
Principal

## NOTICES

### Reminders

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#### 1. Please don't send your child to school if they are unwell

##### ***WHEN SHOULD A CHILD BE TEMPORARILY EXCLUDED FROM NURSERY OR SCHOOL?***

- If they have a fever (over 38°C) and for 24 hours after it has passed, without the use of temperature-reducing medication.*
- If they cannot carry out school activities as they usually do or require more care at school than they usually receive, because of the acute illness, especially if it can reduce attention to the rest of the students. For example, if the child is tired, has nausea, is vomiting, has diarrhoea, has difficulty breathing, is constantly crying, complaining, in pain, or has some other symptom that indicates an illness more serious and acute, even if it is not an infectious disease.*

*Source: Ministeri de Salut, November 2022, "Malalties infeccioses a les escoles i escoles bressol: Criteris de no assistència temporal"*

#### 2. Home Snack

Please don't include sweets in the home snack, and remind your child that they may not share their snack with others (you need to know what has been eaten and what not). A small quantity of good quality chocolate is acceptable. Sugary commercial drinks are not permitted.



**3. The next round of student-parent-teacher conferences is coming up**

Please check the relevant dates in the document 'Academic Year Calendar 23\_24' on the Parent Portal. Secondary begins in March and Early Years and Primary in April. Booking information will be shared in advance.

**4. Tickets are still available for our secondary school performance of Annie**

on Wednesday 6th March at the Andorra Park Hotel. We hope that many Early Years and Primary parents will join us too. Please get your tickets from the school reception in the next few days. We are aiming for a large audience to support the children!

The British College of Andorra

Production of



## Requests

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### **Work experience placements for Secondary students, CAN YOU HELP?**

We are looking to introduce a one-week work experience placement for our students, towards the end of the summer term. Our initial focus is the current Year 11.

When schools organise a programme such as this, it is helpful if parents offer placements ('internships') in their own business or organisation, whether that be finance, technology, health care, retail or indeed anything where the BCA student can get a taste of the world of work and perhaps explore a future career.

If you would be interested in offering a work experience placement to one or more of our students, and would like to find out more, please contact the Principal directly.

## Advance notice

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### **BCA Community Charity Event, Friday April 12th. SAVE THE DATE**

You are invited to enjoy an afternoon of activities for the whole family. Similar to the previous highly successful event in December 2022, the aim is to bring the whole school together at the same time as raising funds for two partner charities, UNICEF Andorra and the Patronat de Dames de Nostra Senyora de Meritxell.

The event will take place during the afternoon with the provisional start time being 15:00, finishing by 19:00.

Further information and ticket sales arrangements to follow.

### **Parents learning languages**

We have requests from parents who would like to learn more English, Catalan or Spanish, and propose informal lessons/conversation club as an alternative to attending a formal class i.e "you help my English, I'll help your Catalan".

If this interests you, please contact [admin@bcandorra](mailto:admin@bcandorra).

### **Sports Days**

Looking further ahead still, we have fixed the dates of our popular annual sports days as Tuesday May 28th (Secondary) and Thursday May 30th (Early Years and Primary). Both at the Encamp Rugby Club, as last year.

## THE ROLE OF STUDENT AGENCY IN A BCA EDUCATION

by Warren Quinton, Head of Diploma Programme

In education, there is a lot of talk of student agency. In their publication *What is an IB Education*, the IB talks of:

*skills [that] aim to empower IB students of all ages to become self-regulated learners who know how to ask good questions, set effective goals, pursue their aspirations and have the determination to achieve them.*

*These skills also help to support students' sense of agency, encouraging them to see their learning as an active and dynamic process (International Baccalaureate Organization, 2019).*

But what does it really mean for students to have agency? And if students are in charge of their own learning, what role do teachers play? Often this interplay can be difficult to fine tune.

At BCA, we aim to build these skills from early on, so that when students finally take on the demands of the IB Diploma Programme, they are equipped to show initiative and to determine the direction of their own education. Teachers are there as resources, as expert guides to subject content and to the nuts and bolts of the programme, and as a support for students. However, there is an expectation that students should be approaching teachers to make demands of them, rather than the other way around.

One of the best ways to instil agency is through our enrichment programme and the leadership opportunities that come with this. Here are just three of the opportunities that take place at BCA.

### 1. Year 10 Personal Project

In the summer term, our first-year IGCSE students will be taking on the Year 10 Personal Project, now in its third year, in which they present a topic of their choice to the rest of secondary. They complete this independently and outside of normal lesson time, and through it, they learn time management skills, research skills, and public speaking skills.

### 2. DP CAS Programme

Our year 12 students are currently seeking personal development opportunities via CAS, which is part of the IB Diploma Programme. These might be linked to Creativity, for example, learning a new musical instrument, Activity, for example, learning a new sport, and Service, for example, helping in their local community. They also organise activities around the school, and over Advent and Christmas, they created a Kindness Calendar, comprising, among other things, reading sessions and treasure hunts for early years, and a visit from Santa for primary and secondary.





### 3. Year 12 Trip to Perú

One aspect of a BCA education that we are proud of is our outdoor education programme. Yearly trips are planned with specific goals in mind. In June of this year, we embark on the school's most ambitious educational trip to date. Thirteen year 12 students will be visiting the capital of the Incan Empire: Cuzco, Perú. The aims of this trip are to show our students a reality they seldom experience, and to challenge them, physically and mentally. This trip has obvious links to the CAS programme, and the students will spend a week as volunteers, teaching local children. They will be in charge of planning and preparing their own lessons and activities, thinking carefully about the example they set and remaining sensitive to the cultural context.

The second part of the trip will see us hike the sacred Inca trail towards the mysterious citadel of Machu Picchu.

Trips like this, of course, rely on adults: planning by teachers and support from parents. Nevertheless, the students very much play a leading role. They are formative experiences, bringing a greater bond with their year group, a greater understanding of the world, and a greater sense of who they are. The hope is they then apply what they learn to other areas of their life and schooling and realise that everything they do makes a difference in the world.

Sources: International Baccalaureate Organization. (2019, November). What Is an IB Education? Retrieved from [www.ibo.org: https://www.ibo.org/globalassets/new-structure/about-the-ib/pdfs/what-is-an-ib-education-en.pdf](https://www.ibo.org/globalassets/new-structure/about-the-ib/pdfs/what-is-an-ib-education-en.pdf)



**Warren Quinton**  
Head of Diploma Programme

# Seesaw

## WHAT IS SEESAW? WHO USES IT? WHY DO WE USE IT? WHO DOES IT HELP?

**by Anne Newlin, Head of Early Years and Lower Primary**

Seesaw is an all-in-one communication and learning platform. It has long been used in the UK in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Lower Primary as a way of documenting a child's learning journey, but it is so much more! We introduced Seesaw at BCA two years ago to foster effective communication between school and home, giving parents learning insights into their child's progress. We use Seesaw from Cygnets through to Hawks and it is the preferred way (other face to face) for a parent to communicate with their child's teacher and vice versa.





In the Early Years (Cygnet and Penguins), we know that parents may be anxious about how their child is settling at school, so you will see a lot of photographs of the school day and general curriculum learning. For all classes, a photograph or feedback posted on Seesaw can be a great prompt for a follow up conversation at home.

We also keep you informed of the learning going on in the classroom. If you were a Penguins parent last week, you would see from Seesaw that the current letter sounds for the week are “d” and “t”. If you were an Owls parent you would have seen they were learning the trigraph “igh” in phonics. In addition to curriculum information, you will also receive formative assessment of how your child is doing in either reading, writing or maths during a fortnightly period. This could be, for example, a video of your child counting backwards from 10 or 20, or a photograph of their writing with a recorded comment by the teacher. You might even have a recording of your child explaining their learning on Seesaw.

If you were to be in my privileged position of being able to see all the Seesaw posts for all the classes in BCA, you would be able to see:

- Personal comments and accompanying photographs on progress in identifying repeating patterns in maths in Cygnets
- The current focus of phonics in Penguins
- Children commenting on their learning in Owls and Robins
- Freeze frames in Kingfishers of the story of Romulus and Remus
- The results of a spelling test and the current homework for spelling in Eagles
- A report on progress in maths in Peacocks
- Hawk's pupils' videos of persuasive speech writing

Seesaw is so much more than a digital portfolio of photographs for your child. It is an opportunity to support and build on the learning that you will see from your child, a talking point and a chance to give them specific praise for work well done. As a parent you can add a comment to the learning that you see as well, complementing and consolidating the learning loop.



**Anne Newlin**  
*Head of Early Years and Lower Primary*

## EAGLES' VISITOR

The Eagles class has been studying earthquakes, tsunamis and volcanoes and to enrich the learning they had a visit from Marc, a BCA parent, who has previously volunteered with the Red Cross to help people affected by earthquakes and tsunamis.

He talked about his role on the health team, ensuring that everyone had access to clean, potable water. He showed the children some pictures and they asked questions about his experience.



## SCIENCE LESSON IN YEAR 8

Mr Shadbolt, one of our Science Teachers, prepares experiments and even controlled 'explosions' to get the children's attention on the topic. This time, they were learning about the reactivity of the alkali metals, part of the topic on the Periodic Table.





## SECONDARY VISITORS

### UNICEF

These weeks Secondary students had some visitors at school. On Friday, the Director of UNICEF Andorra came to lead a conference with our Senior MUN club, on the impact of war on children.



### Associació Ull Nu

Year 10 received some advice from Marc Camardons, from the “Associació Ull Nu” regarding the production of a short film that they are planning to make with whole class participation, **RECCrea competition** promoted by the Servei de Política Lingüística of Andorra.



## SECONDARY GREEN SCHOOL WITH PRIMARY STUDENTS





## EARLY YEARS

### Nursery





## Reception





## PRIMARY KEY STAGE 1

### Y1 Catalan Lesson



### Y2 Recycling Activities



## PRIMARY KEY STAGE 2









## SECONDARY



