12 May 2014

Dear Parents,

As we come to the close of another school year, I would like to thank you for making me feel welcome as part of the Boracay European International School community. I have enjoyed this year immensely. It has been a busy year for the BEIS Board, the BEIS Teachers, and those of us working in the BEIS Office. Now, I would like to share with you a number of decisions that have been made about BEIS for 2014-2015.

We will be making many changes next year to improve student learning. We began 2013 with a shared vision of our school and a list of priorities. Those priorities include

* ensuring curricular rigor, knowing that students are learning on level with students at other international schools to prepare them for high school and beyond;
* offering a choice of foreign languages to be a truly international campus;
* improving delivery of electives and optional classes;
* increasing our use and awareness of technology and e-learning systems;
* acquiring updated textbooks with international significance;
* simplifying our bus service for families;
* organizing parents to improve communication among parents, staff, and the BEIS Board;
* planning time for teachers to share their ideas and concerns about the school to work toward growth and improvement.

The information below represents hours of discussion, negotiation, and compromise to make this vision take shape and become our new reality.

In order to succeed in these goals, tuition rates will be raised, though all fees will remain unchanged. Attached is the new tuition schedule for all grades, including the new Grade 9. The increase will help accommodate for rising inflation, and allow for improvements in curriculum and instruction in 2014-2015.

We are inviting families to make an annual “early bird” payment and take a 5% discount from the published tuition rates. If you wish to avail of the discount, please circle YES on the RSVP form attached to this document before the end of school in June.

The weekly school schedule will be changed in order to add critical hours of math and English instruction. Most students (**Grades 1-9**) will attend school as follows:

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday |
| 8:30am – 2:25pm | 8:30am – 3:20pm | 8:30am – 3:20pm | 8:30am – 3:20pm | 8:30am – 1:35pm |

This will give teachers time at the start and end of each week for professional development sessions, meetings about important events at BEIS, parent conference times, and more opportunities to work together and making our school *excellent*.

**Preparatory** will attend school every day from 8:30am – 2:25pm, per Department of Education guidelines.

**Kindergarten** will attend school every day from 8:30am-11:30am; **Nursery** will attend school from 12:30pm-3:30pm Monday through Thursday, *without having class on Fridays*.

Students in Preparatory to Grade 3 will have English Language Arts and Math instruction every day, instead of three days per week as in previous years. We will ensure a diverse curriculum by maintaining several class sessions per week in art, physical education, Computers & Technology, and other electives within the school day all designed to balance academics with creative expression. We will no longer offer after-school electives using community members as teaching staff, nor will we charge extra fees for electives.

Students in Grades 4-9 will begin taking foreign language in our language lab using internationally renowned software from Rosetta Stone[[1]](#footnote-1). This program has been approved for use in the UK under the new 2014 British National Curriculum[[2]](#footnote-2).

Next, we will be changing our school calendar to begin on 1 September and end in the fourth week of June. A copy of the calendar is attached. Note that we will be having 3 weeks holiday over the winter break and continue the 2 weeks holiday in the spring. This has been done to accommodate families who desire a long August holiday and extended winter holidays. Note that the number of teaching days remains at 180 per school year, consistent with German European School Manila who helped found BEIS following their German Ministry of Education requirements.

We will begin a *Bring Your Own Device* (BYOD[[3]](#footnote-3)) policy in 2014-2015. Students in grades 4 to 9 will be expected to provide their own tablet or laptop computer (a cellphone will not be sufficient) on a daily basis. We will make recommendations for certain devices; if you want to know if your current device will work, you may check with the office before the start of school. This will serve to integrate their personal technology into daily use – not just for video downloads and gaming, but for research and learning. We will also be providing links to download electronic textbooks rather than traditional paper books for these upper year students. They will read the texts on their device. They will create a Gmail account and communicate with their teachers virtually: turning in assignments via email and providing presentations in cyberspace.

If there are family difficulties in acquiring the required electronic device, please contact the school office as soon as possible.

For students in the early elementary years, we will be updating our traditional paper-bound textbooks with resources aligned to the modified British National Curriculum to ensure high levels of learning for all students enrolled at BEIS.

Additionally, we have been trying to simplify the bus service for families who rely on BEIS for daily transportation. Beginning in September, our busses will make three stops total. Children can meet the bus at Balabag Plaza at 7:45am, in front of Lake Town at 8:00am, or at the plaza in front of E-Mall at 8:10am. The bus will make these stops and return to BEIS in time for classes at 8:30am. Drop off in the afternoon will be the same, departing BEIS at 3:30 and delivering students to their stop near 4:00pm.

Bus service will have a monthly fee, rather than a daily fee. This will simplify invoicing and guarantee your family a space on the bus for the whole year. Though some months will only have 12 school days and others 21, the monthly fee will be the cost of 180 days divided into 10 equal monthly payments. To avail of the bus service in 2014-2015, please contact Ms. Cherry in the school office for your bus contract.

This is a lot of information to take in, and I ask that you read through the details and email or visit with any questions you may have.

On behalf of the BEIS Board and Office Staff, I thank you.

Mathew Watkins

Head of School

1. http://www.rosettastone.co.uk/education [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. http://www.rosettastone.co.uk/schools [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bring\_your\_own\_device [↑](#footnote-ref-3)