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# The Franconian International School

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## **From the Director, Mr Fred Runkel:**

Best wishes for the new calendar year 2010 to all members of our FIS community. We trust that all FIS families enjoyed their holiday celebrations, and in many cases as I have heard around the school this week, the children were happy to be back in school, engaged in their daily routines.

With the new calendar year comes the next dates in the life of a school year. Early in January we welcome all students back from their winter holidays. Additionally we traditionally welcome new students to the school, and this is again the case in 2010. Nearer to the end of the month the teachers will be completing the First Semester Report, which this year will be distributed on January 29 at the end of the semester.

In February, with the beginning of the Second Semester, we enter into the "Fasching" or "Karneval" season here in Germany. This is also the time of international school recruitment fairs where we look for new teachers to join our team at the beginning of the next school year. With our enrolment projected to be over 500 students in school year 2010-11, we anticipate adding at least two new positions. February and March are months of professional development events where teachers in the school take training courses to keep their knowledge of changes in educational thinking up-to-date.

The FIS After School Activity Program (ASAP) kicks off again in March. Our after school sports program will also continue this winter season, with some of our basketball and volleyball teams continuing to practice and develop their game skills. Parent-Teacher Conferences also take place.

One last comment - in a recent edition of the Süddeutsche Zeitung, an educational columnist was discussing alternatives to education in the German School system. Among the alternative systems discussed were the British A Levels and the International Baccalaureate Diploma Program. The columnist's comment regarding the IB was in effect that a student who achieves the IB Diploma is proud to have achieved the crème de la crème of college preparatory programs offered throughout the world. This is indeed a strong statement about the program which the FIS offers in the High School.

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## ***Welcome to the FIS***

With the new year comes the chance to extend a welcome to the families who have just joined the FIS Family – Fanny Junger and Caroline Aissen in Grade 3, Flavia Hostalka, Magnus Wilton and Vega Villaca in our three-year-old Kindergarten programme, the Lindkvist Family - Alma to Grade 5 and Rebecca in Grade 8, and the Basson family - Martin in Grade 5, and Annebelle in Grade 2.

Welcome also to a further new addition to the FIS community: Matthias Cole Bay was born at 10:39 on the morning of Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> January at 53 cm and 3350g. Congratulations to our science teacher Ms Tara Bay and her husband Juergen.

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**ATTENTION: Let the book donations begin!**



The **Bookbridge** English-language book collection will be moving ahead at full steam from **Monday, 11<sup>th</sup> January**. There will be class competitions as well as an Elementary, Middle and High School competition to see which section of the school can **collect the most books** for our CAS library project in Mongolia. The class/grade which collects the most books will win a pizza party and a DVD. The school section which collects the most books will also **win exciting prizes**. Our goal at the FIS is to collect 15,000 used or new books for children/young adults in English by World Book Day on 23<sup>rd</sup> April, 2010. All donations are needed and appreciated. Collection boxes will be located in each classroom and a collection box will be located by the Reception desk. For more details contact Luisa Hohmann in Grade 11 or CAS Coordinator Deb Obermanns. Find out more about the project online at [www.bookbridge.org](http://www.bookbridge.org).

**Information Evening 11<sup>th</sup> February – Grade 10s**

We will be holding an Information Evening at 7:30 on 11<sup>th</sup> February in the Aula to explain the programmes families can expect in Grades 11 and 12. While not compulsory, it is highly recommended that all Grade 10 parents and students attend.

**Assessment – Dr. Liam Browne**

With the upcoming exams and the distribution of report cards, I would like to take the opportunity to discuss ways of considering assessment. A lot of confusion and angst can come about as a result of report cards. Exams and reports, unfortunately, can promote a sense of competition, where students compare grades and determine success or failure based on the comparative performance of classmates. Additionally, students may be surprised with the grade they achieve in a particular subject, blaming and harbouring resentment rather than looking at the root cause of the problem. These are the unintended consequences of exams and reports cards. Still report cards, and the grades they bring, can reveal a lot about the character of an individual. If a student is disappointed with the semester results do they wallow in self pity and develop a sense of apathy or, on the other hand, do they set out an action plan to change the situation, establish clear goals and frequently measuring their progress towards achieving that goal.

Winston Churchill said of the democratic form of government that it was the worst of all systems-except for all the others. So it can be with exams and report cards. Basically, all assessment comes down to what a student should know and be able to do.

There are two ways to evaluate student performance:

1. We can compare the performance of a student to another or to the average of a group of students, or
2. We can compare the performance of the student to an objective standard.

If we accept the first approach we care not whether a student has achieved a result, but only whether the student being evaluated is better or worse than his/her classmates. In some instances such as in the sports world, such a comparative process makes sense. Would this be the case if we changed the venue from sports competition to the cockpit of an airplane? In matters of safety we compare pilots not to one another, but to objective standards. We require equal numbers of take offs and landings. On these matters, we use standards. In matters of games we use comparative measurements.

So it is with education and the programmes on offer at the FIS. For example, in the FIS High School, Both the IGCSE and the IB use criterion-referenced assessment with clearly established and articulated standards. Therefore, success should not be judged by looking around the room at the performance of classmates. The FIS curricula are international programmes for international schools responding to the needs of students often from a wide range of national, cultural and linguistic

backgrounds. The two high school programmes: the IGCSE and IB diploma have two philosophies which at first glance seem paradoxical, yet on further reflection are complementary. The IGCSE is more compartmentalised, prescriptive and skills based; the IB, having some of the attributes of the IGCSE, aims to be more holistic, reflective and constructivist. Together they help provide a balanced learning environment for international students.

Standards are hardly new to education. Kindergarten teachers do not expect students to know a few more letters of the alphabet than their classmates but to know every letter. With criterion referenced systems that are precise and clear, they can tell parents and students which letters, colours and shapes students know and thus provide clear guidance on what students must do in order to be prepared for the next level of learning. Music teachers would be quite confident about the difference between the A and the A flat, with the former corresponding to about 440 cycles per second. Teachers help the student to work, adjust, listen, and adjust again until they achieve the standard; hitting the A with precision.

However, it is not always easy to be so clear cut. The best explanation is that the examples I have provided illustrate matters of easy consensus and clear differentiation between the attainment of a standard and the failure to meet it. But if the context is changed from Kindergarten to Kafka, from music to Macbeth, then objectivity is supplanted by subjectivity. In matters of literature, language, philosophy or history proficiency is no longer clear, and the definition of an acceptable student must rest with the judgement of experts . . . teachers and the standards to which each teacher measures the student's performance!

At the FIS, teachers do not aim to be a "sage on a stage". A brief walk through the corridors or a pop into a classroom prove that transparency, cooperation and collaboration are the order of each day. Teachers and students work in a mutually beneficial learning environment, where there are no academic secrets to success. Even the more subjective standards aim to be broken down and explained. Students are encouraged to become responsible learners, take the initiative, and seek assistance and clarification when needed.

I would like to congratulate all students who have had a successful semester. To those who wish to improve (which I hope would be all); I would like to offer the following words of advice: before setting goals for next semester and means to measure your progress (which are all highlighted in the self-evaluation forms) please ensure that you are clear on the standards and expectations.

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### ***Safety @ FIS***

**If your child/ren will not be coming to school on a given day**, parents or guardians need to inform the Office on [info@the-fis.de](mailto:info@the-fis.de) or 09131 940 390 by 8:45 on the day of the absence. If we do not have written advice of and explanation for an absence, a student's file will be marked with an 'unexcused absence'.

If you are **dropping your child off in the morning** please drive as far down Marie-Curie-Straße as possible before stopping. The duty staff member will be happy to show you where to go. Thank you for your cooperation in helping to keep our children safe by leaving space for the buses to drop our children off at the school door.

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### ***Calling all Calligraphers!***

We are looking for a member of the community who knows a non-European alphabet (Chinese, Japanese, Thai, an Indian language, an Arabic language, Hebrew – you name it) and can come to school on any Monday at some time during first period (between 8:30 and 10:00) to introduce the art of calligraphy to Grade 8. If you think this sounds like you, please contact the Head of the Art Department Ms Slawa at [Slawa.Wrzesniewska@the-fis.de](mailto:Slawa.Wrzesniewska@the-fis.de). Thank you!

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## **Valentine's Day Roses – Fundraising @ FIS**

As Valentine's Day is coming up soon, we have been thinking of another fundraiser in the form of selling roses as a sign of friendship and love. At the bottom of this newsletter is an order form to fill out. These roses can be sent to anybody in the school body, meaning teachers and students. The students can send them to each other and to their teachers if they feel they would like to light up somebody else's day.



### **Important Dates:**

**29<sup>th</sup> of January:** final day to turn in order forms and money!!  
**12<sup>th</sup> of February:** in the Elementary and Middle Schools the teachers will hand out the roses, and in High School some Grade 11 students will go around passing them out at the end of the day.

### **Costs:**

One rose will be sold for **2 €**, of which at least 1€ will go towards the fundraising project for our Grade 11 class for our end of the year trip to an orphanage most likely in Romania or Macedonia.

### **Ordering:**

Each student will get an order form from their class or home-room teachers. There is also an order-form at the end of the Newsletter for you to print out. As mentioned above, we need to have them returned to us by the latest by **29<sup>th</sup> January**. For us, it would be easiest for you to turn in the **money and the order form in an envelope** with your **child's name** on it to their class or home-room teacher, who will hand it to us.

Thank you for your cooperation, and we are looking forward to some great results for this fundraiser!

*Julia Griem and Caroline Dimaczek, Grade 11 Students*

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## **Sport @ FIS**

Practice for the following sport teams resumed this week:

- Volley-ball girls on Mondays 15:45 till 17:25
  - Basket-ball girls on Wednesdays and Thursdays 15:45 till 17:00
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## **Lunch @ FIS**

A reminder that lunch accounts are now due, and that **payment is by bank transfer only**, and that Semester 1 **reports will not be issued** at the end of January until these accounts are paid.

Please remember that you need to tell [lunch@the-fis.de](mailto:lunch@the-fis.de) if you **no longer** wish to have hot lunch by next Friday **15<sup>th</sup> January**, or we will assume that you still wish to be part of the programme in the second semester.

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## **Can't find your gloves? Come and check our 'Found' Property**

With the change in the weather we have an ever-increasing number of items found without their owners at school. Please look through the collection opposite the door to the playground near the cafeteria, or ask at the Office if you are missing any valuables. We will be donating to charity any items unclaimed by the end of Semester.

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**For Sale** – House lot at bargain prices - please see attached list of furniture and other items for sale. Also a White L-shaped sofa (that turns into a bed) for €300. See attachment for images. Contact: Calie Amini on 015222823733 or [calieamini@live.com](mailto:calieamini@live.com)

### BUNCO NIGHT!

Tuesday January 19, 7:30 at Linda Eviston's Home in Gräfenberg.

FIS community members are welcome to come and enjoy a fabulous evening out with the Ladies and try your luck at this easy dice game (100% luck no skill) while conversing with new people. For those of you unfamiliar with BUNCO, the goal is to socialize and have a chance to chat with everyone present. The game is played at tables of four and the winner moves to the next table so as to insure mingling. There will be finger food & drinks. Looking forward to meeting you. Please email or phone Linda at [reiki@energy-healing.eu](mailto:reiki@energy-healing.eu), 0172 8998227. 91322 Gräfenberg is 22 min. from the FIS, N/E in the direction of Neunkirchen am Brand.



### Next Week @ FIS

Monday	11 <sup>th</sup> Jan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ 15:45 – 17:25 Volley-ball girls practice</li> <li>➤ 15:50 – 16:50 French school, CP-CE</li> <li>➤ 15:50 – 16:50 French school, CM2</li> </ul>
Tuesday	12 <sup>th</sup> Jan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ 15:45 – 17:00 Girl scouts regular meeting</li> </ul>
Wednesday	13 <sup>th</sup> Jan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ 15:45 – 17:00 Basket-ball girls practice</li> <li>➤ 15:45 – 17:00 Senior Boys Basket-Ball practice</li> <li>➤ 15:35 – 16:35 French school, Decouverte 1</li> <li>➤ 15:35 – 16:35 French school, Decouverte 2</li> <li>➤ 15:50 – 16:50 French school, CM1</li> <li>➤ 15:50 – 16:50 French school, College</li> </ul>
Thursday	14 <sup>th</sup> Jan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ 08:45 – 10:45 Toddler Group, ES Music Room</li> <li>➤ 15:45 – 17:00 Basket-ball girls practice</li> </ul>
Friday	15 <sup>th</sup> Jan	

### Coming up: 21<sup>st</sup> & 22<sup>nd</sup> Jan – Report Preparation Days

**FIS School Newsletter** The FIS newsletter is published on a weekly basis and is emailed home each **Friday**. Contributions to the newsletter should be emailed to the school at [info@the-fis.de](mailto:info@the-fis.de) by **Wednesday**. The newsletter contains items of information relating to school operations, PTO News, for-sale items placed by members of our community, and much more. The editor reserves the right to... edit... This newsletter and other important school information can also be found on the school's web page. Newsletters are usually placed on the web site [www.the-fis.de](http://www.the-fis.de) a day or two after publication and will remain there until the end of the school year.

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**FIS Valentine's Day Rose ORDER FORM – Print more pages if you need to! Due 29/01/2010**

To: \_\_\_\_\_

From: \_\_\_\_\_

Valentine's Day Greetings: *choose and circle one if you would like it with your rose*

- Happy Valentine's Day!
- Thank You for being a Great Friend!
- I love you!

To: \_\_\_\_\_

From: \_\_\_\_\_

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