

## Concept paper: Memorial for Francis Pirotta 2012-2018

This paper aims to describe Francis' main personality traits, his loves and the things he was passionate about, in an attempt to steer discussions on a fitting memorial for Francis at the European School in Uccle.

### Francis, the child

Francis had just turned six in February 2018. Even the night before he passed away in May, he took yet another first step in his very short, but full life when he lost his first tooth. He was proud to be both Maltese and Latvian, and who also felt proud to be "Belgian" (even though he wasn't) – in other words a true European. There's no description that can really portray this little boy. A boy that was full of life, energy and creativity: who loved being told stories and singing his own songs; who was determined but extremely loving and caring; who was proud to play for his village football team; who would spend endless hours playing and drawing; who one day was a knight of Malta, the other a famous spy or a mighty pharaoh; who loved playing chess and; who viewed the world as his playground. Just a few days before leaving us forever he was showing us how he could swing higher than his older brother. But Francis was a boy who above all dreamt about his future. He dreamt he wanted to play the bagpipes and start piano lessons (and had a hand at trying to improvise his thoughts on the piano at home), who wanted to travel to Japan and Scotland, and who knew no boundaries to the limits of his imagination. He "wrote" his own books, about him and his brother, about cars stuck in traffic, about the daily things that surrounded his own little life. That future is now beyond reach for him and his family, it would be appropriate if it could however remain alive through other children.

### The Francis Pirotta Creative Arts Prize

Francis used to spend countless hours drawing. It was by far his favourite pastime and an opening into his world. It was also his favourite schooltime activity, to the extent that in his mind it was more important than any other activity or lesson. Having an annual prize that celebrates Francis' creativity would be a very fitting initiative, that would reward the creative minds at the EEBI primary and nursery sections. As a commemoration of Francis' time at school, this is something that can be set up in a relatively short time and put into place already for this scholastic year.

*The competition:* The competition would be open to all language sections. Each class would select its best entry through an internal class activity. These best entries would compete against each other for the final prize and would be selected on the basis of their skill, originality and creativity. Subject to the advice of the arts coordinator, we recommend that the competition be split into age groups to be able to give the younger students a fair chance to compete (e.g. Nursery, P1-2-3 and P4-5, or as appropriate).

*The prize:* The winning entry receives a prize for the whole class, thus fostering a team-like sense of belonging to the initiative. The prize would ideally consist of a special outing related to the theme or perhaps a junior masterclass on the theme itself or on the arts.

*The committee:* A committee, would select a theme. Francis had a very fertile imagination; his parents may be able to advise on those themes he had at heart. The committee would also include APEEE representatives, who would sponsor the prize. Francis' parents would also like to contribute to the prize. The committee would ideally also include Francis' teachers and assistants (notably Ms Naphine, Ms Privitelli, Ms Coates), as well the school arts coordinator. The committee would also adjudicate the prizes.

### The world is our playground

Playtime is an important time of a child's development. Like most children his age, he loved playgrounds including those at school. Acknowledging that this would require more time and finance, there could be two options to consider:

We understand that the some of the items in the nursery section will be replaced. The APEEE and Francis' parents would be willing to sponsor an installation that bears his name. There are various themes that could be considered and that would have a meaning for Francis, for example a castle, a pirate ship, a space rocket, a pyramid, a wigwam and many others.

We are also aware that the school is considering building a new playground and one could explore what possibilities exist to link this with Francis. This could include merging the first option into this one, or considering them separately.