



JUNE 2021

Berkendael School

Newsletter



NEWSLETTER OF BERKENDAEL CLASS REPRESENTATIVES

FOR PARENTS BY PARENTS

Fin d'année rime avec préparations de la rentrée : lisez notre rapport du Conseil d'éducation sur les futurs professeurs de maternelle et primaire, les classes (équipements et localisation) dans les deux bâtiments de l'école, le réaménagement des cours de récréation et la confirmation des voyages scolaires pour les primaires. A la ferme, en forêts, dans les polders, sur la neige ou en pays étranger – nos enfants devraient profiter du retour à la vie « normale » en 2021-2022.

La pandémie n'étant cependant pas terminée, vos délégués APEEE ont exposé à la direction de l'école le vécu de la quarantaine notamment pour en améliorer la continuité pédagogique.

Enfin, sur le plan du « mieux vivre ensemble », nous saluons la nouvelle coordinatrice KiVA (enseignante de P5DE) et l'arrivée d'un nouveau « coordinateur bien-être » (enseignant en P5FR). Nous sommes ravis de pouvoir travailler avec eux dès la rentrée !

Bonnes vacances à tous !

As this school year comes to a close, we prepare for September: read the report of the Pedagogical Council on the future teachers for nursery and primary, on the classes (equipment and location) in the two school buildings, on the restructuring of the school yards and the school trips for primary. At the farm, in the woods, in the polders, on the snow or abroad – our kids should benefit of the return to “normal” life in 2021-2022.

The pandemic is nevertheless not over yet, and your APEEE representatives have shared experiences on the quarantine with the school management to improve pedagogical continuity.

Finally, we are welcoming a new KiVA coordinator (P5DE teacher) and a new “well-being coordinator” (P5FR teacher), all for living together better. We are delighted to be working with them when the school resumes.

Great holidays to you all!



ISSUES THAT MATTER TO US

- **2021-2022 school year**

APEEE expressed parents' concern - during the latest Education Council meeting - over the **full equipment of all classrooms** as of 1 September. Experience reminds us that in the past years, several classrooms were barely equipped on the first week of school and kids had to wait few weeks before they received adequate material. The school management confirmed however, that furniture, equipment and decoration for the new classes have been already ordered - in coordination with respective teachers and will arrive on time for the beginning of the year.

The **classrooms' location** was discussed as well. Nursery classes will be placed in the Hallsdorf building and on the ground floor of the A Building, where adequate toilets for nursery level exist. A switch will be operated with the L2 EN classrooms, that used to be until now on the ground floor and will now be moved to the basement. Pupils from P3-P4-P5 will have their classrooms in the Building B. Moreover, the school management informed that the P2 ES class would be hosted also in the Building B.

Parents also asked for quick information on scenarios (including contingency ones) for canteen reopening, school trips, class visits and external interventions in class.

Names of **future teachers** for nursery and primary cycles were disclosed to parents' representatives. The list of Berkendael's **coordinators** was also shared. The school management specified that coordinators are there to help teachers to develop and support pupils with different talents. From September 2021, L1FR teachers will not be double-hatted, being responsible for their own class in addition to a L2 class, as was the case for the last school years. Indeed, three **L2 FR teachers** (one being both L2 FR and L2 EN teacher) have been recruited as well as one **L2 EN teacher** (being also support coordinator). L1 FR and EN teachers may however teach L2 enrichment class or do support/*rattrapage* in L2.

Enrichment for higher level pupils, and support and *rattrapage* for pupils who struggle more, will be organised by the school for P3-P4-P5. A change is foreseen regarding *rattrapage*/support: the general **support** will be provided for pupils behind the L2 level expected for their grade and **rattrapage** will be provided to pupils arriving in school without background in L2 ("true beginners").

Still concerning L2, there will be a change in the **schedules** for P4 and P5: contrarily to the past two years during which P4 and P5 classes had grouped L2 periods alternatively, all P4 and P5 classes will have now 45 min long L2 classes every day. APEEE expressed astonishment regarding the suppression of those grouped L2 periods justified by pedagogical



reasons because 2 years ago it was also presented as pedagogically advantageous to schedule two subsequent L2 periods and avoid P4 kids leaving their classroom only 45 minutes after they have arrived in it. While admitting that moving back and forth from building B to building A for L2 class implies losing teaching time, the school management seems confident that the new proposed logistics will reduce to minimum the loss in transfer time and consequently the loss in teaching time.

- **Forced quarantine**

Class representatives reminded that placing children on quarantine is not optional but is an obligation. However, it seems that this year many quarantined Berkendael families had to make significant efforts in order to be able to keep themselves up to date with the class programme. APEEE wonders whether this is how the things should work. Moreover, with the prospect of potentially more pandemic waves in the autumn, class reps suggest setting up a reflection group. Such a group would be composed of selected teachers and parents that would share their experience on pupils in quarantine and see together what can be improved. The purpose would be to identify modalities ensuring pedagogical continuity during quarantines, with the goal of reducing the efforts required to be done by children (and their parents) to stay up to date. Removing students from the school for health reasons, for one to two weeks, does not release the school and teachers from their obligations towards students (and parents).

Still on the topic of quarantine, the FR section sent a questionnaire to parents for feedback on self-isolated kids (only referring to individual cases and not to school closing or class online teaching). 64 replies were received. On its basis, the FR section representatives asked the school to apply a more homogeneous approach among the teachers, including L2 teachers, and possibly establish a guideline for teachers of quarantined kids. Such guideline on what should be done to ensure continuity could be then shared also with parents (in a similar way that the online teaching guideline for teachers was shared with parents). Psychological support would be also welcome, or at least a more empathetic approach by the school towards the quarantined kids who may feel stigmatised.

- **School trips 2021**

The Berkendael school management explained that because of the pandemic, a waiver guaranteeing school and parents' rights needs to be signed by the structures organising the school trips. Therefore it is now more difficult to find partners to organise trips. For next school year 2021-2022 there are currently the following trips foreseen:



- o P1: three times one-day trip to a farm, in Belgium.
- o P2: three-day (and two-night) trip to the forest, in Massembre, Belgium.
- o P3: trip to the sea, in Duinse Polders, in Belgium.
- o P4: a nine-day (and eight-night) snow class to Valmeinier, France.
Dates for this trips are: from Thursday 27 January 2022 morning to Friday 4 February 2022 evening. Travel by coach. Approximate budget is 790 euros. Kids will ski during 2h30 per day during 6 days and have pedagogical mountain related activities each day.
- o P5: linguistic trips:
 - ❖ L2 EN: in Dublin and surroundings (Ireland). Dates: 9-13 May or 16-20 May 2022. Fly to Dublin, travel coach in Ireland and fly back to Belgium. Foreseen budget 680-700 EUR.
 - ❖ L2FR: in Merlieux et Fourquerolles (France). Dates : 2-6 May 2022. Travel by coach. Foreseen budget to be confirmed (last year budget was 480 euros)
 - ❖ L2DE: in Bad Münsterfeld (Germany). Dates: 21-25 March 2022. Travel by coach. Foreseen budget to be confirmed.

- **KIVA**

The school management reported that a **new KIVA coordinator** has been appointed, Mrs Alexandra Ehrenhauser (DE teacher), who will replace Mrs Virginie Vergught. Both presented KIVA activities and the KIVA team.

The plan for next year foresees intensifying teachers' knowledge about KIVA, encouraging kids to talk and making sure they are aware of focal points.

APEEE praised the efforts done so far but suggested that more actions should be done as parents keep signalling violent or inappropriate behaviours in courtyards and in classes. Parents would like to be informed regularly about KIVA activities in the classes - as it is done in Uccle. This should allow parents to understand better what is for example happening on emotional level, etc. and to promote the school community approach towards working out **relations** that are more peaceful and preventing harassment.



- **Gender equality**

Following parents' request for a more **balanced gender approach** in teaching, the school management has established contact with Pina Caporaso, who due to her experience, could provide an information session to teachers during next school year. APEEE offered establishing a reflection group with motivated teachers and parents. The school management considers the issue however too sensitive and would prefer to keep it organised by the school only.

- **Courtyards**

School presented the plan for reorganisation of the **Building B's courtyard**: it will be more spacious due to extension and shall include a play area, constructed by a specialised playground construction company. A quiet area with benches will be added, as well as a green zone with trees and plants. A new fence will be placed, and lines will be drawn to indicate playground zones.

The playground of the Building A shall be also revised: limitations for the different areas will be marked on the floor, and a pic-nick zone - with tables and benches - will be created.

APEEE underlined parents' interest in organisation of sport competitions during breaks, as it was organised in previous years. This has positive effects on kids and on the school atmosphere. Parents highlighted willingness to participate in a reflection group on the issue.

- **Projects supported for 2021**

A number of projects for the Berkendael School have been recently endorsed by the Board. The projects include funding for gardening project in Berkendael School, educational games for the library during lunchbreak, wellbeing conferences (in school or online), conferences on cognitive science for parents to better support their children and project 'cyberHero' on smart and safe use of internet for P4-P5.



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