

CBWG (Community Building Working Group)

The EEB1 APEEE Community Building Working Group was founded in 2015 as an organ of the APEEE that examines and enables initiatives to increase the sense of community, mutual respect and school “ownership” among students, school staff and parents. Beyond the wish to add value and values to the school environment, it was also considered that disinterest and negative views of school, peers and colleagues may be at the root of some risky behaviors exhibited by students (including for example vandalism, harassment, addictions).

The APEEE’s CBWG enables initiatives by all members of the school community to make the school a better place to live, learn and work together, whether by mobilizing APEEE financing, organizing or promoting activities, or raising awareness about values including, but not limited to, solidarity, sustainability, respect, team spirit, belonging.

To this end the CBWG may accept or initiate meetings with members of the extended school community (including but not limited to student representatives and activists; school teachers and other staff members and decision makers; staff members auxiliary to the school such as security and APEEE services; parents; private and public members of the community surrounding the school; vendors or other providers of goods and services linked to CBWG activities).

For 2023, **six areas** fall under the scope of CBWG activities:

1. Solidarity and charitable actions
2. Free time / free spaces (FT/FS) and related school logistics and infrastructure
3. School events and parties (including but not limited to the Fete de l’Ecole)
4. School image campaigns (sweatshirts, other communication/visibility, etc.)
5. Outreach:
 - Welcome initiatives for new students and their families
 - Teacher appreciation
 - Student Committee liaison
6. Community-member driven projects involving a community building objective (e.g. Student Values Workshops – with Bien Etre group; Francis Pirotta Creative Arts Prize; ES School Events – EUROSPORT, MUNUccle, etc.)

Method:

In 2023, the CBWG continues to be an enabling context rather than a coordinating group that meets regularly. It is a loose network of initiatives that invites ideas from members of the APEEE Board and the broader school community: the group provides a space where they can initiate or pitch in and realise activities around the 6 focal areas. Emerging leadership may choose to make the group more proactive.

Most communication takes place via email or whatsapp, and meetings may be organised. Members may represent the CBWG and APEEE in meetings and communications in the relevant area of activity. The group should report back to the Board at least twice a year and consult when a major campaign, initiative or event is planned. Within the bureau, the CBWG reports to the Secretary and the President.

Members:

- Alexandra BERKETI – General, Fete
- Samantha CHAITKIN – CdE liaison, Sweatshirts, FT/FS, ES School Events, general
- Claire GAUDIN – General, Fete
- Viktor HAUK – CdE liaison, financial aspects (as APEEE Treasurer), Francis Pirotta Prize
- Brigitte Luggin – General, Fete
- Patryk MALESA – Fete, sports
- Roberto MARIGO – Community-member driven projects
- Kathryn MATHE – CdE Liaison, Outreach, FT/FS, Francis Pirotta Prize, general
- Sara MILANO - Fete
- Kriszta SZABO – Fete, FT/FS
- Honorary members: Fabio PIROTTA, Kristina SMITE – Francis Pirotta Prize

Activities 2022:

The lifting of COVID pandemic restrictions marked Community Building activities in 2022, as did the change in leadership at the school. Many of our traditions, good practices and sense of constructive cooperation have been partly forgotten. Certain activities have been maintained, and new ones will need to be established in order to reinstall the patterns of the community fabric at our school.

- **Funding Support:** Community Building continued to play a central role in defining and implementing the APEEE's funding mechanism for projects in the school community, alongside the CdE, the school administration, and the Bien-Être and Pedagogical working groups and Safety & Hygiene members. More interesting, high quality projects are proposed in each round, including Spring 2022. In Fall 2022, in part because of the many extensions of project due to COVID, and in part because funds from the 2019 Fete have been mostly depleted, no funding call was issued.
- **Outreach:**
 - **Welcome:** Materials for new families and APEEE representatives were present at the orientation day (Uccle) to help new school families transition more smoothly into life at EEBI. APEEE distributed information sheets and convenient bookmarks so that new families have contact information about APEEE and APEEE Services at their fingertips.
 - **Teacher Appreciation:** To keep up our successful tradition for a fourth year, APEEE organised coffee and croissants for teachers, distributed in the Staff Room during teacher breaks on World Teacher's Day (5 October). Teachers were clearly very touched. This year the school did not cooperate with APEEE for this initiative, choosing instead to distribute chocolates to the teachers.
 - **CdE:** A strong relationship has been established over the years with the annual presidents and vice-presidents of the Students' Committee: the patterns of exchange and trust have been fertile ground for concrete collaboration. Examples of this in 2022 included collaboration on sweatshirt sales (see below), efforts to re-establish S123 Discos, and in commemoration of the loss of a student, Rosa.
 - **Booksales:** The new online system of secondary schoolbooks sales/exchanges has seemed to replace the sales that different sections have been carrying out for many years. Hundreds of families once again benefited from the possibility to clear out their

old books and find bargains on difficult-to-obtain volumes. But the need for volunteers and presence at school for these kinds of booksales has concluded as they now require little human organization; for this reason future booksales will be handled by the pedagogical working group.

- **Sweatshirts - School image campaign:** In Spring 2022 a new tradition was (re-)launched, namely the production of a new generation of EEB1 sweatshirts, inclusive of both Uccle and Berkendael identities and available for students from Nursery to S7, as well as to teachers and parents and everyone. Our hoodie sale brought important innovations, being an online ordering system and, moreover, in close cooperation with the Student Committee's sale of their own line of fashionable sweatshirts aimed at teenagers. The sale raised money for a Ukraine charity and for projects to improve our school life, and more importantly, lets children and adults alike proudly wear a symbol of our school. Demand was so high that a further round of sweatshirts were sold in the Fall for those who had missed out. In total more than 900 sweatshirts were ordered and distributed.
- **Memorial for Rosa - School event:** After a long struggle to adequately honour the memory of a student who was lost in the terrible floods that swept across Belgium in summer of 2021, a touching ceremony was held in September in the presence of school staff, parents and numerous students, as well as external guests. APEEE and the CDE worked together to design and hand-paint a bench, which was dedicated during the event, and decorative messages were attached to the overhanging tree. The school director, APEEE representatives, teachers, students and Rosa's parents all said some words, and three student groups performed musical pieces.
- **And more...** as for solidarity action, some members of our school community came out to **march for the better treatment of locally hired European School teachers**, who are so often important pillars of our community and responsible for roles and traditions that we value very highly; the **Francis Pirotta Creative Arts Prize continued in 2022 in the Uccle primary through cooperation with** the family of Francis Pirotta and the Primary Teaching Team ...

Looking forward:

- **Fete:** The main event for 2023 will be the School Fete! We expect this community building event extraordinaire to inspire and link activities in all the fields of community building work.
- **Uccle-Berkendael bridges:** The fact that we are one school with two campuses is not only the strengthening position of EEB1 and European School management: it is also a reality for students and families. While common school community feelings have been growing over the years, it remains a great community building challenge to tie our campuses closer together.