



IN THE LOOP

UPDATES FOR BMIS SECONDARY PARENTS

28th April 2023

Our Mission

"We are a diverse and welcoming community in a joyful learning environment that promotes well-being, sustainability, and inclusivity and celebrates growth as success".

Week Without Walls is Back!

Good news, we intend to reintroduce WWW from the 19th-21st of September (3 nights). It has taken a while to find suitable sites to accommodate our students since conditions and former contacts have changed considerably since COVID. To make the experience authentic and worthwhile activities need to have a focus that's both valid and sustainable. Many of the former service organisations that we have worked with in the past needed to be re-established and activities explored in terms of practicality and genuine usefulness. Electricity cuts, lack of cooking facilities and travelling distances also needed to be considered. In addition, several former WWW sites no longer operate or don't have the facilities to accommodate 40-50 students at a time. There are lots of lovely places to stay in Malawi, but very few tick all, or nearly all of the boxes necessary for a large group of students.

Due to teachers working across year levels and subject areas, the groups must go at the same time, because if they were staggered it would cause too much disruption to classes and learning. Although we have not yet decided on the destination for each year level our locations include, Cape Maclear, Salima, Luwawa and Zomba. You might want to start planning as students will need tents (which can be shared), a sleeping bag, and a mat.

The safety of our students must come first and presently several of the roads to the locations are in disrepair due to the rains. Therefore, the proviso must remain that the roads have been fixed to accommodate buses and hopefully, we won't have another major fuel shortage at this time.

If all goes well students will once again, be travelling to a range of locations working within the communities, learning more about our host country, and having lots of fun in the process.

Lesley Peacock, Secondary Principal

OVERVIEW:

- Message from the Principal
- Leaving Teachers
- Gym and Health and Fitness
- MAP Testing
- Mental Health
- Social Volleyball
- Kafka's Ape
- Yr 6 Transition Parent Meeting
- Neurodiversity Week
- Up and Coming Events



Wayne Kovacs, Head of Design (MYP & DP) and Personal Project Coordinator

My four years at BMIS have been a fantastic journey. Yes, COVID hit us, but as a community of teachers, parents and students, we all pulled together, and our learning journey continued to our best abilities. I have been fortunate to explore Malawi through not only my eyes but those of others when they express their passions through their design work and Personal Projects. BMIS will go from strength to strength through the dedication of teachers and the student's willingness to care. Although I will not be at BMIS next year, I will continue to be a part of your learning journey as the IBO DP Design Curriculum Manager in The Hague.



Miguel Perez, French and Spanish Teacher

Leaving BMIS has not been an easy decision. After three wonderful years full of learning, experiences and happy moments, I leave behind colleagues who have become friends, and especially students who I will miss very very much. My next destination is Mozambique, a neighboring country, so I'll be back to visit "my family" and this beautiful country soon!

Will Lester, Year 7 Language and Literature teacher

My experience in working with the students at BMIS was enjoyable. There is a great mix of different talents, skills and abilities that shows that the community is diverse. It is the personalities of the students that truly makes the community a joy to be a part of for the last two years. I wish I could stay at the school longer to grow along with the students and community. However, I will still be in Lilongwe, so you may see me riding my bike along the bypass, teeing off at the golf course, and participating in a number of BMIS events



Francis Mponda, MYP/DP Mathematics teacher

As some of you may already know, I have made the difficult decision to move on to new challenges and opportunities in my career. I cannot express enough how grateful I am for the time I have spent here since joining BMIS two years ago. Working with the BMIS community has been an honor and a privilege that I will cherish forever. I am proud of all that we have achieved together, and I will carry with me the memories of the many moments we shared.

To my students, I want to say thank you for allowing me to be a part of your journey. Watching you learn and grow has been the most rewarding experience of my career.

To my colleagues, I want to express my gratitude for your unwavering support, your friendship, and your guidance. It has been an honor to work alongside such talented and dedicated professionals, and I will miss our collaborations dearly.

I wish you all the best in your future endeavors, and I hope that our paths will cross again someday. For those who would like to know, I will be heading to Guangzhou in China at the end of this semester.



Grace Barron (Ms G), Theatre Teacher and HOD Arts

This is not 'goodbye'... Simply, 'See ya later!'

I've had so much fun over the last 4+ years at BMIS and I hope my Theatre classes have been a great escape from typical school life for many of my students. From experimental improv classes to political and devised theatre and of course the school productions, we've conquered a lot!

I must say, 'The Greatest Showman' production and cast will always have a special place in my heart. I'll pop by and see you all after the Summer break and of course I'll bring baby Barron with me.



James Braithwaite, Language and Literature Teacher and HOD English

After 4 years at BMIS, I am trading the chimanga fields of Malawi for the cornfields of rural USA. The last four years have been amazing and I feel privileged to have worked with so many inspiring people.

I'd like to thank everybody for the good times we have shared and how much we've all grown in this time.

BMIS is a special environment and I'll miss it dearly. Hopefully they do Chitenge Monday in Lancaster Pennsylvania.



Patricia Lees-Rolf, Maths HOD

The eight years that I have been here have gone by in a flash. It seems as if it was just yesterday that we moved to Malawi and yet it feels as if we have always been here.

Teaching in an international school is so different from teaching in a school in South Africa as each student arrives with a multitude of experiences and the school community becomes the focus of their lives, as their own cousins and relatives are many kilometres away. So many of the students have filled the gap for me and become my surrogate grandchildren and I am going to miss them!

As my mind thinks back over the years there are some occasions that will stick in my mind: -

- Crazy Fridays and the Y13s throwing dice before school to see whether they would wear hats or bells (and my apologies to the teachers for all the bells that jingled every time a student wrote if they had the misfortune to wear the bell on their wrist!)

- International Day, and my tutor group learning how to do the gumboot dance; and on the day every boy in the class going on the stage and the girls encouraging them from the sidelines. The vibe that day was amazing as the Y13 students took leadership and ensured that the parades ran smoothly.

- During Covid, the Y7 students often did exercises during mask breaks to burn off some of the stored energy bursting to be released after sitting in their allocated seat for a whole lesson! Well done! They also showed me how quickly they could log onto Maths Playground and add and subtract numbers so that their cars could race in one direction only and beat their classmates.

The Maths Team (teachers) have always been an amazing group who were always prepared to go the extra mile- and so teaching has been a shared experience not something one does on one's own. This has been an added advantage to teaching here and I am grateful for the support I have received from every teacher. Thank you.

This has been an adventure, sometimes stressful but always eventful, and I would like to thank you all for the memories you have given me



Sabira Nathanie, Chemistry Teacher

As I approach the end of my time here at BMIS, I wanted to take a moment to express my gratitude for the opportunity to work with such a wonderful and joyful community of individuals. To all my students, I want you to know how much you have inspired me over the years. Your enthusiasm, dedication, and hard work have been a constant source of motivation for me. I am so proud of all that you have accomplished, and I know that you will continue to do great things in the future. I will miss you all very much as I move on to the next chapter of my life in the UK with my family. Thank you for everything.



Komal Thakkar, ELL Teacher

I have been working with our ELLs as an English Language Acquisition and an English Language Support Teacher for the last two years. I have loved working with this group of students to support their language development as well as their adjustment to BMIS. I am grateful to have had the opportunity to improve my teaching practice from some of my colleagues who have also now become lifelong friends. As I move back to the US after four years in Malawi, I will fondly remember all of the memories I created with my students in classroom S3A!



Message sent to our Yr. 13 students by the DP Coordinator as they begin their DP Exams

Dear Year 13 students,

As we approach the final stretch of your IB Diploma journey, I want to take a moment to express my admiration for all the hard work and dedication you have shown over the past two years. You have faced many challenges and obstacles, but you have persevered and grown into the exceptional individuals you are today.

As you prepare for your final IB exams, I want you to know that you have my unwavering support and confidence. You are well-prepared and capable of achieving greatness, and I believe in each and every one of you. Remember that these exams are just a culmination of all the knowledge and skills you have acquired, and they do not define you as a person.

It is natural to feel anxious or nervous during this time, but trust in yourself and your abilities. Take care of your physical and mental health, and remember to eat well, sleep well, take breaks and rest when you need to. Remember that you are not alone, and that your teachers, peers, and families are all rooting for you.

As you embark on this final leg of your journey, I wish you all the very best of luck. May you enter the exam room with a clear mind and a positive attitude and emerge with a sense of pride and accomplishment. You are all capable of achieving your dreams and making a positive impact in the world, and I cannot wait to see all that you will accomplish.

Mr McClenahan

Gym Renovation



A major focus this year has been to improve our sporting facilities to help develop our students passion for a healthy lifestyle. The Secondary Student Council has generously donated some of their funds to improve the BMIS weights room which is now seeing more than 30 students use it on a weekly basis. The gym is now equipped with: two squat racks, a smiths machine, a pec deck, a leg extension/hamstring curl machine, 3 brand new benches, 6 barbells and a selection of plate weights and dumbbells. It really is everything you need to improve strength and become a fitter, healthier individual. Neil Black, Sports Coordinator

Health and Fitness Focus

Students in Y11 are looking at different ways to stay fit and healthy in the 'real world'. This week we looked at the obstacle of 'money' and how they can overcome the cost of gym memberships by using equipment that's around them. Here are some of the students doing a muscular workout on playground equipment.

Neil Black



MAP Testing

Last week our Years 7-10 students engaged in their end-of-year MAP testing session, which will show their growth throughout the year. It was a smooth week of testing, and our students were fabulous; they are congratulated for their efforts! We will be able to share the results after our Primary students complete their MAP testing, which is scheduled from 8-12 May.

Kathryn Leaper MYP Coordinator

Dear Parents,

Last Thursday during our parent information session I had the opportunity to spend time with some of you reflecting on a topic I am deeply passionate about, which is the mental health of our children and adolescents. We had the opportunity to look at the different definitions of mental health, the contributing factors to mental illness, when to seek help and ways to support our children. Here is a summary of the main ideas discussed at the workshop and the link

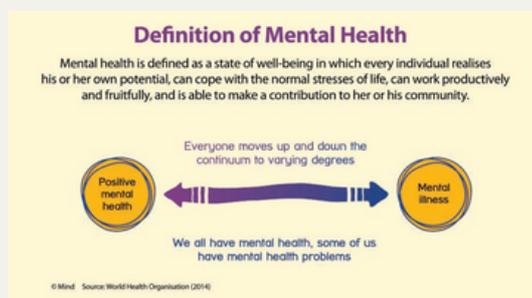
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to the slideshow with the information and resources provided.

What is mental health?

The World Health Organisation (WHO), defines mental health as a state of emotional, psychological and social wellness evidenced by satisfying interpersonal relationships, effective behaviour and coping, positive self concept and emotional stability.

Mental health practitioners understand it as part of a continuum ranging from positive mental health to mental illness.



Anxiety and **depression** are still the most common mental health problems affecting young children and adolescents, and can affect anyone at any time. Though there are different factors in a young person's life that can increase the risk of developing ill mental health, not everyone going through these develops a mental health problem.

There can be many challenges that can contribute to the way young people think, act and feel when they're finding their place as a young person. The challenges they may face can have lasting impacts on their mental health, so it's important, as a parent, to talk to our children about these and also reach out for support.

Mariella Vitteto Castillo



Social Volleyball

This week, members of the community took to the courts for the first installment of the BMIS Social Volleyball League. Playing under the lights, students and adults alike competed against each other in a friendly but competitive manner. This was the first time that BMIS has ever had a floodlit league and goes to show the improvements that are being made a round the school and the benefit that it has on our community. We hope to see you all again next Tuesday, 5-7pm. Neil Black



Kafka's Ape

On Tuesday morning, all year 11 and 12 students gathered in the drama studio to watch a professional production of Kafka's Ape. Madsoc Theatre's director, Stanley, and lead actor, Taddja, worked hard to bring to life Kafka's play in which physical theater takes center stage. Red Peter is an ape struggling to overcome his primate nature, forced into a cage both literal and metaphorical. To escape, he must become 'human,' acceptable to self and modern societal standards.

After the performance, students broke into workshops to discuss the play, discover meaning behind Red Peter's words and actions, and to gather questions for the director and lead actor. Students talked animatedly in small groups about sweeping themes of humanity, identity, shame and pride, and when students asked director Stanley or Taddja-- the actor playing Red Peter-- tough questions, they answered students with warmth, enthusiasm, and directed further questions back at the students. In short, this was a deep, deep three hour show and Q&A, leaving students' eyes wide, brains alive with questions about the essential nature of being human in an ever constricting world.

Richard Braithwaite



Year 6 Transition Parent Morning

This week our Year 4-6 families were invited to a coffee morning to learn more about life in Secondary School. Our team were on hand to share information about their roles, including an overview of: Student Council, trips, our outstanding MAP results, and our teachers' welcoming and caring approach to students

BMIS pathways, university, and scholarship offers our students receive, and the unique opportunities that BMIS Secondary provides our students

The value of the MYP, including sharing research into a comparison between IGCSE and MYP assessments, the strengths of the MYP, and recent joyful learning experiences our MYP students have engaged in

Our restorative approach to Student Support

Our inclusive and responsive approach to inclusion and Educational Support

The trailblazing service opportunities that our students engage in, becoming leaders of our school

The vast range of ECP and sporting opportunities for our students, to build their leadership, creative, and collaborative skills

Our families also had the opportunity to hear first-hand experiences from a Secondary parent and two of our Year 12 students. There were opportunities for questions

and answers, and the opportunity for families to begin to understand the path ahead for their children in Secondary. We would like to thank all parents that were able to attend, and we are looking forward to providing more opportunities for our Primary families to experience life in, and learn more about Secondary at BMIS.

Kathryn Leaper, Middle Years Programme (MYP) Coordinator



You are invited to have
**COFFEE WITH THE
COUNSELORS**

18 May
BMIS Secondary Library
7:30 AM until 8:30 AM

Join us to discuss:

- Cross-cultural identity and transitions
- The challenges and effects of significant transitions on wellbeing
- Ways to support your child - before, during, and after a transition
- How rituals can create ease in the transition process



**AUDITIONS FOR:
SINGER'S NIGHT Vol. 4**

**Auditions on now
until Friday, May 5th**

See Mr. Montreuil

**Singer's Night is on June 14th
with the MYP Art Exhibition**

Neurodiversity Week

BISHOP MACKENZIE INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL STUDENT SERVICES

Important Dates:

Neurodiversity Week

Families and Students,

We are looking forward to hosting BMIS's first ever Neurodiversity Week. The Purpose of BMIS's Neurodiversity Week is to celebrate the way all of our unique minds work and cultivate awareness and understanding amongst the BMIS community. Throughout the week, students and staff will participate in activities and assemblies focused on Neurodiversity. Further, we invite you to make this week highly successful by participating in a couple of big events, described below.

	Family Coffee Morning We invite all parents and guardians to join us from 7:30 - 8:15 in the secondary library for a time to learn, celebrate, and support our and our students' unique difference.	May 3
	Neurodiversity Dress-Up Day To represent our celebration of neurodiversity and our unique differences, we invite all students and staff to dress in colorful clothing on 5 May!	May 5

Thank you,
The BMIS Neurodiversity Week Committee
Please Contact Mackenzie Peters with any queries at m.peters@bmis.mw

We are so excited to be hosting our first Neurodiversity Week at BMIS next week, 2-5 May. The definition of Neurodiversity that we are using for this week is the different and unique ways each of our brains work. During Neurodiversity Week, we are simply starting a conversation which is necessary in order to ensure all differences are recognized and respected at BMIS. This is part of our continued efforts to make BMIS an accessible and inclusive institution. BMIS's Neurodiversity week is an opportunity to learn more about how each of our brain's process information differently and to celebrate the strengths and unique perspectives we each have. While some lessons will focus on specific types of neurodivergence (ADHD, Autism, Dyslexia, etc.), no specific BMIS students will be pointed out as having one of these differences unless they personally choose to self-identify. Thank you for your continued support in our community of growing awareness and understanding of inclusivity. We look forward to this week and if you have any questions, please don't hesitate to reach out to our Student Service Consultant, Ms. Mackenzie Peters at m.peters@bmis.mw.

BISHOP MACKENZIE INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL STUDENT SERVICES

You're Invited!

Family Coffee Morning

**During BMIS's Very First
Neurodiversity Week**

A time to **learn, celebrate, and support** our and our students unique differences.



3 May 2023
BMIS Secondary Library from 7:30-8:15

Up and Coming Events

Friday 28th April -DP exams begin in the Upper Hall

Monday 1st May-Labour Day (DP Exams continue)

Tuesday 2nd-Friday 5th May- Neurodiversity Week, Assembly in the Upper Hall at 7.15 am

Wednesday 3rd May- Neurodiversity Coffee Morning in the Library from 7.30 am-8.30 am

Wednesday 3rd May-AIMS Maths Olympiad

Friday 5th May -STUCO soccer match at 12.30 pm

Wednesday 10th May -Year 6 Parent Information on the MYP and Transition from 6.00 pm-7.00 pm in the Break out Space (near the Sec. office)

Monday 8th May-Friday 12th May Year 12 Mock exams

Monday 15th May- Kamuzu Day Holiday (DP Exams continue)

Thursday 18th May-Sunday 20th May- Duke of Edinburgh hike

Thursday 18th May -Coffee with the Counselors 7.30 am in the Library

Saturday 20th May-PTA Boot Sale in the Lower Playground 9.00 am -3.00 pm

Wednesday 24th May- Graduation in the Upper Hall at 6.30 pm

Friday 26th May-Malawi Day celebrations

A reminder would parents please remember to submit their intentions for their children returning or leaving for the next academic year please.