

INSPIRE

BIS MAGAZINE 2024-25

+
Special

Digital
wellbeing



Bavarian
International
School

Believe. Inspire. Succeed.

Table of contents

- 3 **Trust is the foundation** – Editorial by Marko Mädge
- 4 **The school of the future** – Editorial by Dr Chrissie Sorenson
- 6 **Academic results in 2024**
- 10 **Facts & Figures**
- 12 **Resilience and strength** – Report by Marco Dahl
- 14 **Update on the Creativity & Innovation Centre (CIC)**
- 16 **Making a difference** – Report by the Supervisory Board
- 18 **A place for everyone to grow and flourish** – Feature by La Mór
- 22 **“Be kind, always”** – Interview with Angela Hölzl
- 24 **Positive Discipline** – Global recognition for BIS City Campus
- 26 **After School Activities** – Developing well-rounded personalities
- 28 **The Lion’s Chronicle** – Much more than writing skills...
- 30 **The Entrepreneurship Club** – Inspiring future changemakers
- 32 **The power of community** – Parent Community Council (PCC)
- 34 **Feature the teacher stories**
- 43 **Special about digital wellbeing:** Features & interviews
- 61 **Success stories**
- 67 **Extra booklet:** BIS International Festival 2024
- 74 **BIS Alumni story with Victoria Dellas** (Class of 2023)
- 76 **University & Career Counselling:** Rock your LinkedIn profile
- 78 **The BIS Careers Day** – A parent reflection by Aleksejs Plotnikovs
- 80 **The BIS City Talk 2024:** “AI won’t replace teachers”
- 82 **Scholarship, record & award** – Report by the Communications team



Imprint

Publisher:
Bavarian International School gAG (BIS)
Haimhausen Campus, Hauptstraße 1, D-85778 Haimhausen
City Campus, Leopoldstr. 208, 80804 München
www.bis-school.com

Head of School & Executive Board:
Dr Chrissie Sorenson

Business Director & Executive Board:
Marco Dahl

Chair of the Supervisory Board:
Marc Aghili

Concept & Chief Editor:
Marko Mädge – Head of Communications & Advancement
Email: m.maedge@bis-school.com

Editorial team:
Marco Dahl, Philipp Depiereux, Marko Mädge,
Prof Dr Christian Montag, La Mór, Aleksejs Plotnikovs,
Maya Rooz, Dr Chrissie Sorenson, Verena Zimmer

Design: Robert Grill – www.robertgrill.de

Photos: Sebastian Stiphout, Marko Mädge, Rakete GmbH,
BIS Community, Joseph Mikos, private

Print: Stulz Druck und Medien GmbH

Paper: Printed on eco-friendly recycling paper
VIVUS silk 100% recycling – FSC®



Trust is the foundation

**Dear members of the BIS community,
dear readers of our new magazine,**

Last year, Bavarian International School (BIS) developed a new guideline for its value system, known as the Statement of Purpose. This comprehensive initiative involved students, parents, teachers, and staff, who contributed through extensive workshops. “BIS – a place for everyone to grow and flourish” is the abbreviated power phrase. The accompanying commitments are Trust, Belong, Engage, Innovate and Flourish (read more on pages 18-21). The result is truly impressive, as the carefully crafted commitments can be applied to all areas of school life and the BIS community.

A place for everyone to grow and flourish

Isn’t trust the most essential foundation inside and outside a school, for people to feel a sense of belonging, thrive, collaborate and grow together? Whether it’s students collaborating on a design-tech project together, the LIONS teams competing in sports, or a student with emotional needs seeking support from the counselling team, trust is always the core. This principle holds true from the very beginning of a BIS journey – when families choose BIS as their school – and continues when dedicated parents contribute significant donations or scholarships to support the school’s future development. This engagement, rooted in trust, creates a strong sense of belonging where each individual can flourish. In turn, BIS, with its 33 years of history as a solid foundation, continues to grow as an innovative institution.



Trust also underpins the success of this magazine, which was honoured with the prestigious CASE Award (see p. 82). A small, yet passionate team, – editors, a photographer, a graphic designer, a printer – work together seamlessly and professionally to deliver a high quality publication. Our goal is to provide the BIS community, as well as readers in the Munich region, with an engaging and valuable resource. My heartfelt thanks go to this incredible team.

I wish all readers an enjoyable and inspiring experience!

Warm regards

Marko Mädge
Head of Communications & Advancement
and BIS dad of a Grade 3 student



www.bis-school.com



Note: The BIS Magazine INSPIRE has evolved from the former Annual Report of the school. Therefore, it partially contains a review of the last school year 2023-24. But to make the magazine even more exciting, we have added a lot of current content and a special.

The school of the future: a vision from BIS

By Dr Chrissie Sorenson

As we propel into an era of unprecedented technological advancements, societal and geopolitical shifts, with continued environmental challenges, the role of education in shaping global citizens with commitments to shared human values is more critical than ever.

Future-thinking schools must evolve to prepare students not only for the unknown careers of tomorrow but also for lives lived with purpose and in service beyond oneself. At BIS we continue to embrace this responsibility and are already pioneering solutions to help our students, our staff and the BIS community flourish.

Education has always faced challenges. So why does it feel more daunting today than 30 or even 10 years ago? Current challenges are urgent, interconnected, and evolving rapidly, leaving less time to adapt. The stakes feel higher as the consequences – whether related to climate, technology, or mental health – are immediate and global, demanding responses beyond traditional methods. Continuing on our path at the forefront of educational innovation, here is how we see BIS thriving despite the challenges of the future.

Global interconnectedness

Since our inception in 1991, one of our main raison d’etres has been to encourage inter-cultural understanding and collaboration.



Over the past 30+ years, globalisation has accelerated, making cultural fluency and global competencies essential. Young people must now navigate a world where borders are increasingly blurred, both physically and digitally. To stay relevant, schools must prioritise curricula that merge science, arts, and humanities while emphasising cultural sensitivity and global skills. With students and staff from over 70 nationalities, BIS reflects the globalised world and remains committed to nurturing critical thinking, creativity, empathy, and problem-solving, preparing students to thrive in diverse environments.

Exponential technological advancements

Thirty years ago, schools were integrating basic computing and internet access. Today, we face AI, quantum computing, and automation – technologies advancing at an exponential rate. Schools must prepare students to navigate, critically assess, and

leverage these tools while developing uniquely human skills: collaboration, ethical reasoning, and cultural sensitivity. BIS has long integrated cutting-edge technology into learning, offering coding programmes, promoting responsible AI use and raising awareness about online presence and cyber-bullying, promoting a balanced approach to tech fluency and ethical awareness.

Environmental urgency

As severe weather events increase globally, climate change has become an existential threat. Schools must embed sustainability into their curriculum and operations, modeling for and teaching students how to care for the planet. For over a decade, BIS has expanded on student-driven initiatives such as waste avoidance, carbon neutrality, school gardens, and healthy living (Green Team, BIS Blooms, Eco-Agents). Certified as an Eco-school since 2019, BIS continues to focus on a sustainable energy master plan, constructing our new CIC with eco-friendly materials and solar panels, and embedding the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) into our ethos.

Mental health and wellbeing

The digital age has brought immense global connectivity, sadly also leading to a rise in mental health issues among young people, largely due to social media, screen time, and societal pressures. With students spending most of their waking hours at school, it is vital to focus on emotional intelligence, resilience, and well-being alongside academic rigour. BIS has prioritised mindfulness programmes and pastoral care within a holistic curriculum for nearly a decade. Future efforts will blend personalised learning, adaptable spaces and collaborative hubs, allowing for crossdiscipline and grade-level experiences and continued emphasis on physical activity, the arts, and community engagement. Staff well-being is equally important. As societal expectations for schools expand, we are reassessing workloads to ensure tasks align with the core learning process, supporting both staff and students in a balanced, sustainable way.

Student agency and lifelong learning

Metrics of success are shifting, with traditional benchmarks like grades and standardised tests no longer aligning with modern skills. Schools must rethink assessments, adopting approaches that give students greater autonomy to pursue passions and develop as independent thinkers. BIS empowers students to shape their educational journey through project-based learning, subject choices, WIN (What I Need) time, student-led organisations, and opportunities for self-directed exploration. To further cultivate lifelong learning, BIS involves students in creating meaningful, interest-driven activities and assessments, guided by teachers. This approach ensures students take ownership of their education at BIS and beyond.

A commitment to continuous evolution

Education is facing significant challenges that are reshaping traditional schooling. We are at an inflection point: continue “doing school” as before or embrace change to nurture young people in a dynamic, innovative learning environment. At BIS, we choose the latter. We embrace change while staying rooted in core values and our goal is to ensure students leave as adaptable, resilient, and empathetic individuals. BIS is not just adapting to the future – it is helping to shape it.

Believe. Inspire. Succeed.

About the Head of School

Dr Chrissie Sorenson has been the Head of School and Executive Director of BIS since 2014. The American-German was the founding Director of the International School of Monterey (USA) from 2001-2007 and headed the Dresden International School from 2008-2014. She is the honorary Board President of the worldwide Academy for International School Heads (AISH) and was on the board of the Educational Collaborative of International Schools (ECIS) for ten years. She is a mother of three and also the swim coach for the BIS Lions.

Almost five points above global average

With the academic results of the 2023–24 school year, Bavarian International School (BIS) once again underscores its reputation as one of the leading international schools in Germany and Europe.

In the largest graduating class in the 33-year history of BIS with 100 students, 85 students in the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme (IB DP) achieved an average score of 35 points – nearly five points above the global average of 30.3. These 35 points correspond to a final score in the German Abitur of 2.18 outperforming the 2024 Bavarian Gymnasium average of 2.25. The BIS pass rate of 97.6% is also out-

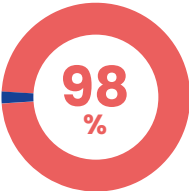
standing (compared to 80% worldwide). Notably, 18% of the Class of 2024 achieved 40 points or more (equivalent to an Abitur grade of 1.3), with one BIS student earning the maximum grade of 45. Additionally, 41% of students completed the bilingual diploma. Of the graduating class, 12 students opted for the IB Career-related Programme (IB CP) with a pass rate of 91.7% and three students chose the path of the High School Diploma.



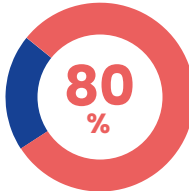
IB DP results:

85

IB DP students



IB DP pass rate at BIS



IB DP pass rate worldwide

35.0

IB DP average score at BIS

30.3

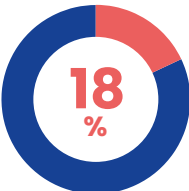
IB DP average score worldwide

2.18

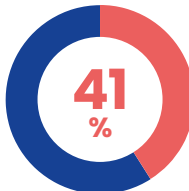
Converted into the German state system, 35.0 points are equivalent to an Abitur grade of 2.18, in Bavaria, the Abitur average in 2024 was 2.25

45

Maximum points achieved by one student



BIS students with 40 points or above

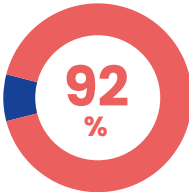


BIS students with bilingual diplomas

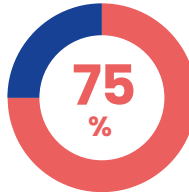
IB CP results:

12

IB CP students



IB CP pass rate



IB CP pass rate worldwide





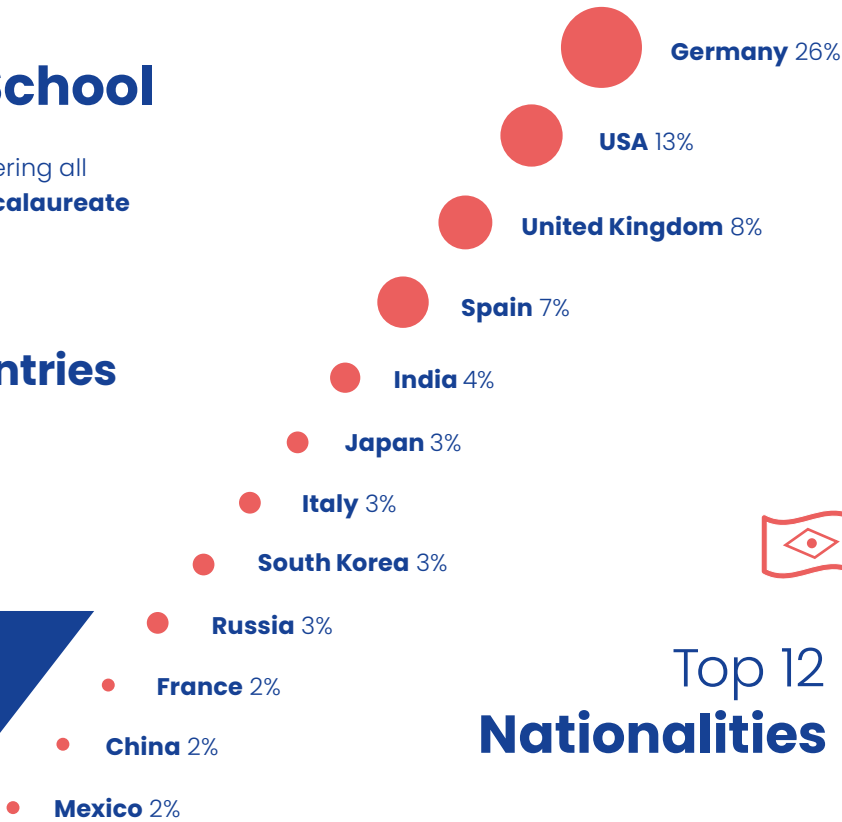
Exceptional learning experiences

Passionate, highly motivated teachers who foster the joy of lifelong learning, essential values and future skills, such as critical thinking, are decisive factors for the high academic standards of Bavarian International School. A very good example and role model among approximately 180 teachers from over 40 nations is David Heath, Head of the Humanities Department and History teacher at Haimhausen Campus. He has one of the most spectacular classrooms in the world and you can find out about him on page 40.

A proud IB World School

Only international school in Germany offering all **4 programmes of the International Baccalaureate Organization (PYP, MYP, DP, CP)**

 **1 of 5,900** accredited IB World Schools in **160 countries**



Top 12 Nationalities



Academic facts

IB DP* students	85
IB DP pass rate at BIS	97.6%
IB DP pass rate worldwide	80%
IB DP average score at BIS**	35 points
IB DP average score worldwide	30.3 points
BIS highest IB DP score	45 points
BIS students with 40 pts or more	18%
BIS students with bilingual diplomas	41%
IB CP*** students	12
IB CP pass rate	91.7%

* International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme (IB DP)
** Equivalent to the Abitur grade of 2.18 in the German state system
*** International Baccalaureate Career-related Programme (IB CP)

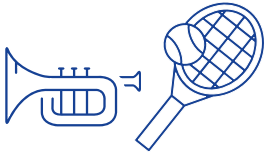
General facts

1991 Foundation of BIS
1 school, 2 campuses, 1 spirit
1,250 students from more than **70** nations
180 teachers from more than **40** nations

 **3rd largest** international school in Germany

Languages

5 modern native languages are taught at BIS: **English, German, French, Spanish, Mandarin**
17 languages in the Home Language Programme



After School Activities
approx. **80 per week** with more than **400 participants**

BIS Awards 2023-24



- Theory of Knowledge (ToK) Award:**
Jane Swanson (USA)
- Creativity, Activity, Service (CAS) Award:**
Ines Oliveira (POR)
- Service Award:**
Louisa Szewald (GER)
- Community Award:**
Daniel Peters (NED)
- ECIS Award:**
Giorgio Agnes (ITA)
- Academic Excellence Award:**
Mohul Shukla (IND)
- Career-related Programme (CP) Award:**
Giorgina Meier (GER)
- Shane Walsh-Till Award:**
Chiara Marcucci (ITA)

BIS Students 1st choice of universities

(examples 2023-24)

- King's College London (UK)
Imperial College London (UK)
Technical University Munich (GER)
Ludwig-Maximilians-University Munich (GER)
WU Vienna (Austria)
IE University Madrid (Spain)
Eindhoven University of Technology (NED)
Erasmus University Rotterdam (NED)
University of British Columbia (Canada)
University of Toronto (Canada)
Purdue University (USA)
Georgia Tech (USA)



Top companies with employees who enroll the most children at BIS

- | | | | |
|-------------|-----------|---------------------------|---------|
| Eurofighter | Microsoft | Eur. Patent Office | Audi |
| BMW | Siemens | Eur. Southern Observatory | Allianz |
| Airbus | Amazon | Infineon | Essity |
| Samsung | Google | Huawei | MAN |
| Sandoz | Linde | Nokia | Denso |

Resilience and strength

The 2023–24 school year marked another successful chapter for BIS, reflecting the strength and resilience of our community. A positive operating result, exceeding the budget by €430K, highlights the school's ability to deliver high-quality education while maintaining sound financial stability.

At the same time, BIS remains deeply committed to supporting families who may otherwise not be able to afford an education at BIS. By continuing to strengthen the Financial Assistance Programme and exploring further opportunities, including partnerships with external organisations and companies, as well as private individuals who provide support such as scholarships, the school ensures that all students can participate fully in every aspect of BIS's life, so that everyone feels a sense of belonging.

Key highlights:

- **Strong financial foundation:** BIS remains on solid financial footing, ensuring **trust** in the school's ability to support its mission.

- **Strategic investments:** Thoughtful investments in new facilities and upgrades ensure that students continue to **flourish** in an environment designed for their success.
- **Government support:** Increased subsidies reinforce confidence in the school's role as a leader in education and **innovation**.
- **Enhancing Bavaria's appeal:** BIS strengthens the region's attractiveness for international families, providing a place where everyone can feel they **belong**.

Looking ahead: growth with purpose

At BIS, we know that growth has its limits. The school's vision has never been about becoming bigger but about remaining a community where relationships matter and every child feels supported. Here, students belong, connections thrive, and personal success is valued alongside academic achievement.

As part of this commitment, the temporary pavilions between the castle and cafeteria/auditorium, along with the interim facilities on the hardcourt, will be removed upon completion of the Creativity & Innovation Centre (CIC) in the 2026–27 school year. While construction will bring temporary challenges, BIS is dedicated to maintaining an environment where safety and uninterrupted learning are prioritised. Through engagement with our community and careful planning, we will ensure that the journey to our school of the future is as smooth as possible.

A hub for innovation and creativity

The Creativity & Innovation Centre (CIC) reflects our commitment to innovate and prepare students for the world of tomorrow. It will integrate technology and creative disciplines – such as Design Technology, Art, and Music – into dynamic spaces where students can explore, experiment, and create.

Equipped with modern labs, workshops, art studios, and music facilities, the CIC will encourage students to engage with learning in new and meaningful ways. Whether designing projects, building prototypes, or expressing themselves artistically, students will be empowered to flourish, combining critical thinking with creative freedom. This environment will not only foster innovation but also provide a sense of purpose, collaboration, and growth.



Visualisation of the new Creativity & Innovation Centre (CIC).

Shaping the future together

Realising this vision requires the support of our entire BIS community. To outfit the Creativity & Innovation Centre with the most advanced tools and resources, we rely on your contributions. By coming together, we can ensure that our students have access to learning spaces where they can trust, belong, engage, innovate and flourish.

In addition to this, BIS is ambitiously addressing sustainability by planning to renovate and replace the outdated heating system with a modern, energy-efficient alternative. This step is part of our commitment to creating a more balanced learning environment that responds to the challenges of climate change, particularly during periods of extreme heat. By incorporating solar energy in a meaningful way, BIS is striving to reduce its environmental footprint while ensuring comfortable and sustainable spaces for learning.

Every contribution – no matter the size – matters. Together, we can shape a future that inspires, empowers, and prepares our students for success in an everchanging world.

Let's build this future – together.



Groundbreaking ceremony of the CIC on 30 November 2024.

“The new learning heaven”

A long-awaited vision is finally becoming reality: the Bavarian International School is building the Creativity & Innovation Centre (CIC).

The new heart of the Haimhausen Campus is being built on the site of the old sports hall and will offer space for around 750 students and teachers on three floors and around 6,200 square meters. Flexible, open and interdisciplinary spaces provide ideal conditions for putting the academic philosophy of STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Maths) into practice. BIS is not only building the future of learning and manifesting its position as an educational frontrunner, the school is investing in important infrastructure, can replace existing container solutions and meet the academic requirements of the International Baccalaureate Organization (IB) for contemporary learning environments and interdisciplinary collaboration.

Developing the school of the future

The total cost of € 25 million is largely financed by bank loans, including Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau (KfW)

funds for energy-efficient construction, while the school raised the necessary equity through donations, financial reserves and state subsidies. In the next stage of fundraising, the BIS team is working on collecting € 921.000 in donations to outfit the interior of the CIC with state-of-the-art equipment, technology and furnishings (e.g. robots for learning, science buddies, laser cutters, mobile display walls in arts, height-adjustable furniture).

A milestone in this major BIS project was certainly the groundbreaking ceremony for the CIC on 30 November 2024. “I am very interested in science and I know that the CIC will be my new learning heaven,” said 11-year-old Defne (Grade 6), stealing the show from all the other guests of honor with her statement. Together with her schoolmate Dylan from Grade 7, Defne filled a time capsule with handwritten letters, the newspaper of the day, an architectural



Support the future development of BIS and donate for the CIC!

drawing of the CIC and a BIS lanyard. Then, together with Dachau’s District Administrator (Landrat) Stefan Löwl, Haimhausen Mayor Peter Felbermeier, BMW Vice President Moritz Kippenberger (Global Head of HR Services, Qualification & Recruiting), BIS Head of School Dr Chrissie Sorenson and Marc Aghili (Chairman of the Supervisory Board of BIS), they placed the time capsule in the ground stone and sealed it with concrete.

A beacon of education

In his words, Stefan Löwl emphasized the importance of BIS as the only international school in the district and as an important component of a diverse educational landscape. Peter Felbermeier praised the smooth cooperation and very good neighbourly relations between the municipality and BIS. He is very proud to have one of the most prestigious international schools in the area, which makes a valuable contribution to international open-mindedness, democracy and intercultural understanding. Moritz Kippenberger, HR Vice President at BMW, emphasized the importance of an international school for Munich as a business location in order to attract expats from all over the world to the region. BMW and BIS are important partners who share the same values, such as trust, cooperation and innovation.

The groundbreaking ceremony was a symbolic act for eternity and the official starting signal for the construction of the CIC - hopefully once again an impulse for all members of the BIS community to support this visionary project with donations. The new building is scheduled to open in autumn of 2026.

Facts & Figures Creativity & Innovation Centre (CIC)

Capacity:

approx.
750
students, teachers
and guests



Character:

- modern
- open
- innovative
- creative
- interdisciplinary



Architecture follows the pedagogical philosophy

»STEAM«

Science
Technology
Engineering
Arts
Maths



Construction costs:



approx.
25
€ million euros

Donations, subsidies
and savings so far:
€ 1.5 million

Goal for the
next phase:
€ 921.000

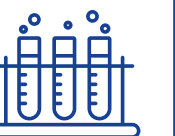
Construction timeline:

Start of construction
Nov. 2024

Completion
fall 2026

Layout:

- 10** flexible learning studios
- 10** science labs
- 3** design technology labs
- 3** art rooms
- 2** music rooms
- 1** black box



Size:

6,200 sqm
on three floors

3,000 sqm
classrooms



The Supervisory Board of BIS: Front row from left to right: Prof Dr Marija Vuksan Delić, Marc Aghili, Roger Hamada, Leonardo Peruzzi. Back row from left to right: Prof Dr Bernd Martens, Rohit Sodha, Kai Klicker-Brunner, Dr Ralph Panzer. Not pictured: Dr Manuel Cubero.

Making a difference

The Bavarian International School gAG operates as a non-profit stock corporation, with parents serving as shareholders. Its governance includes a nine-member voluntary Supervisory Board that oversees, advises and appoints the Executive Board, ensuring legal compliance, strategic direction, and sustainable finances. Board Chair Marc Aghili and Vice Chair Kai Klicker-Brunner discuss their roles in shaping BIS's future while maintaining its educational excellence.

Oversight and strategic advice are often cited as the Supervisory Board's main tasks. Could you give us some concrete examples of which committees handle which topics?

Aghili: "Let me lay this out – we've structured our work into focused committees that meet regularly. In the Governance Committee, we're currently working on updating our long-term strategic plan and ensuring our policies align with international school standards. The Finance Committee handles our budget planning and financial sustainability initiatives – and is an important factor when it comes to tuition fees."

Klicker-Brunner: "In our Executive Committee meetings, held every two weeks, Marc and I

work closely with the Executive Board on immediate operational challenges. Recently, for example, we focused on legal school status and digitalising contract management. Meanwhile, the Search Committee is preparing for one of the Supervisory Board's most important decisions: choosing the next Head of School."

Aghili: "Don't forget our quarterly board meetings, where all committees come together. That's where we make the major decisions, like building the Creativity & Innovation Centre (CIC) or approving the annual budget."

You all do this voluntarily, without payment, in addition to your normal job and family. Why is this commitment worthwhile?

Aghili: "When I joined the board in 2018 and became Chair in 2019, I was already established in my tech sales career, but I wanted to give back to the community that shaped my kids' education. Even though one of my children has already graduated and the other is very close to it, I've stayed because I see how our work impacts hundreds of families."

Klicker-Brunner: "For me, it's really personal. As a father of three young daughters, joining during the pandemic in 2020 was about making a difference. In my role as a communication consultant, I saw how vital school parent dialogue is. But more importantly, I want my girls to see that we should actively engage in what matters."

How many shareholders are there now, and how can interested BIS parents apply for a share? Is the share purely symbolic, with no financial value?

Klicker-Brunner: "While we have many shareholders currently, we feel this number isn't yet where it should be for a school community of our size. While the shares are symbolic and don't carry financial value, they represent something more meaningful – a voice in our school's future. For 2025, we're revising our statutes to make shareholding more accessible to all parents. The current process isn't as well-known or straightforward as it should be, and we want to change that. When our new process rolls out, every parent will have a clear opportunity to become a shareholder and enable them to participate in key decisions at our annual general meeting. It's all about creating a more inclusive governance structure that better represents our diverse parent community."

How do you assess the development of BIS in the school year 2023-24?

Aghili: "Our academic excellence is a testament to our dedicated teachers and staff, who continually go above and beyond. Yet, we now face challenges that demand our focused attention – particularly the unprecedented pressures students encounter on social media and the need for more proactive approaches to digital wellness



Marc Aghili, Kai Klicker-Brunner

and mental health. While current initiatives are moving in the right direction, we must accelerate the rollout of support systems and ensure that technology is leveraged more effectively to bolster student success. Our foundation remains solid, but staying adaptable and taking swift action will be key to shaping a future of learning that truly meets our students' evolving needs."

Last but not least: the long-awaited vision is finally becoming reality. What does the Creativity & Innovation Centre (CIC) mean for BIS?

Aghili: "This is truly a milestone moment for BIS. The CIC represents far more than just a building – it's the physical manifestation of our educational philosophy and vision for future generations. It will stand as a lasting legacy of our community's commitment to innovation and creative thinking."

Klicker-Brunner: "Seeing this vision become reality is incredible, and I must admit – watching the CIC take shape has made my decision even easier: my four-year-old daughter will definitely be joining the BIS family. This is exactly the kind of forward-thinking environment where I want all my children to learn and grow."

A place for everyone to grow and flourish

By La Mór

International Baccalaureate (IB) schools are required to have a clear sense of purpose and direction that align with IBs values. They should also have their own unique guiding statements that strengthen meaningful learning, and support the school’s community. In keeping with the IB’s review of its own mission, we too at BIS have engaged in a similar process, designed to guide and improve how we live and learn together.

This work began in earnest at the start of the academic year 2023–24, and has seen multiple community conversations and workshops that sought to unearth our collective purpose and core commitments, that now replace the former “Mission & Vision”.

These statements will underpin all that we do:

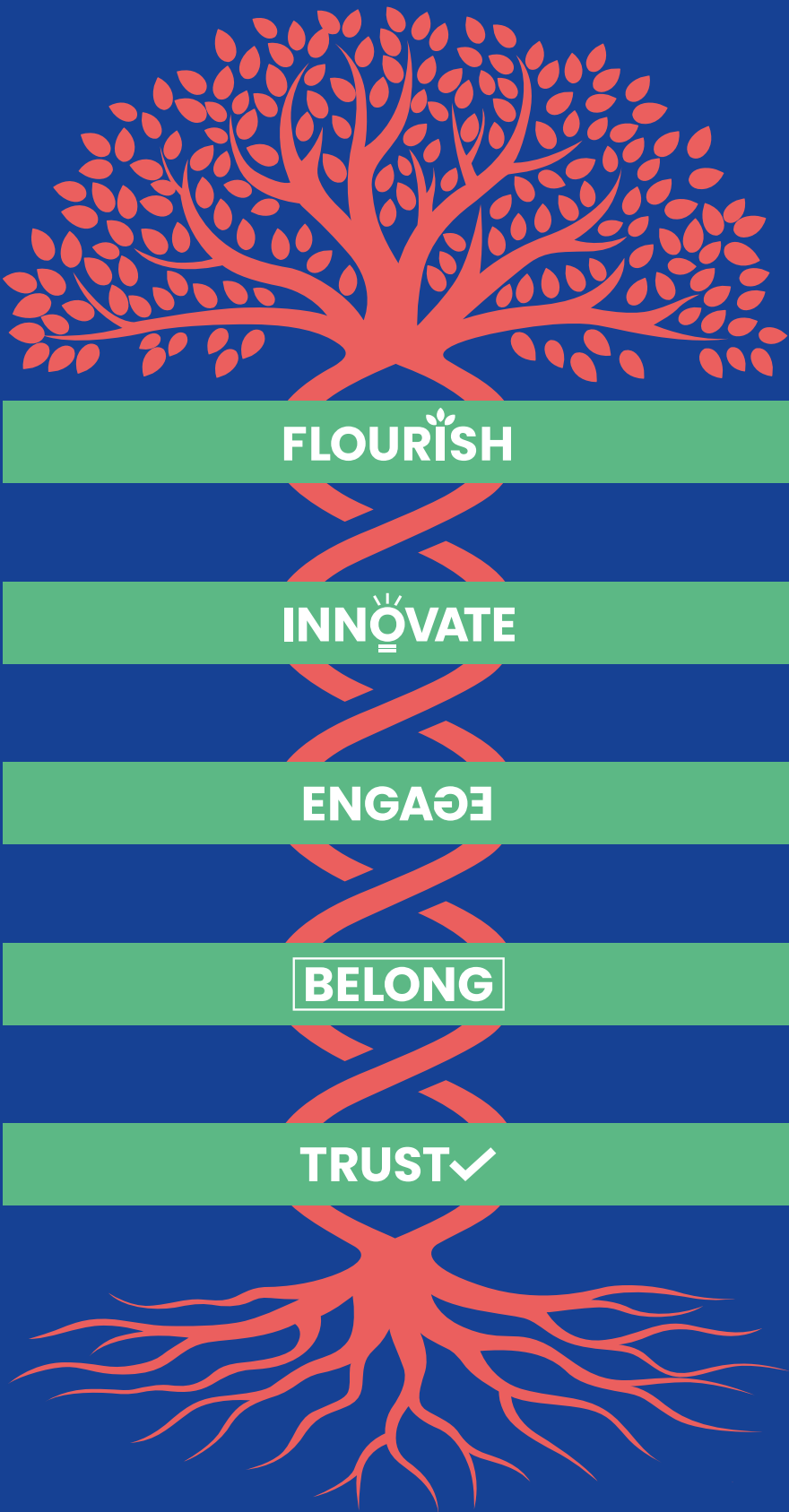
- BIS is a welcoming, respectful, and caring international learning community, where everyone has the right to **belong** and **flourish**.
- Encouraged to believe and **trust** in ourselves and one another, we know that we can inspire others, **innovate**, and succeed in becoming the best we can be.
- Together, we **engage** in making positive and meaningful contributions to a more sustainable and peaceful future.

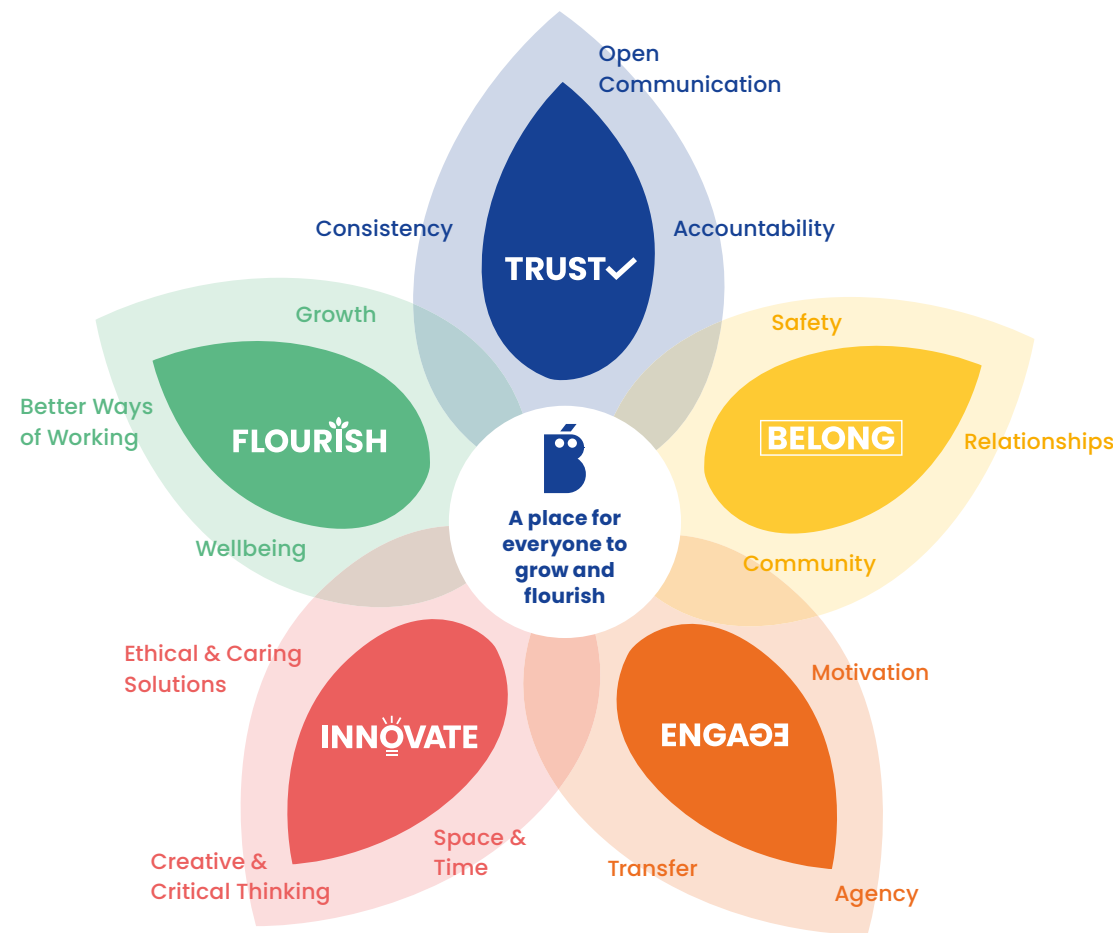
BIS’ five commitments to one another, and our new statement of purpose, create a powerful framework, reminding us of what we strive for.

BIS’ commitments framework of Trust, Belong, Engage, Innovate, and Flourish is designed to build a cohesive and purposeful learning environment. It begins with fostering trust as the foundation of safe, respectful relationships, which in turn nurtures a sense of belonging, leading to meaningful engagement and inspiring innovation, culminating in collective flourishing for individuals, the community, and planet as a whole.

Each commitment is broken down into three areas of focus. These help us to articulate where exactly we would like to focus our attention, measure our efforts, and be successful.

Commitments





What is this all about?

Trust

We are committed to a culture of care rooted in trust, and use high-quality, healthy and safe school-wide systems and procedures that ensure accountability, responsibility and good governance.

Trust is at the root of our framework and needs to be the DNA of any school. Healthy dialogue, successful learning and meaningful collaboration, is only ever as good as the trust we have in one another. Trust is essential to creating a safe place to live and learn.

Consistency helps us know what to expect from one another. Open communication means we are empowered to express ourselves honestly and say what we need, and with a sense of accountability, we understand how we are all responsible for one another.

Belong

We are committed to caring for our diverse, inclusive and collaborative learning community, ensuring that everyone feels safe, respected, and valued.

When individuals feel seen, heard, and valued, and differences are celebrated in daily school life and through the curriculum, a sense of true belonging emerges. Teaching students to value their relationships with peers, teachers, and the environment fosters collective health and growth. And recognising that every word and action matters and has consequences, helps children understand the deep interconnectedness of life.

Safety is necessary for learning, it is the cornerstone of the trusting relationships that support the community wellbeing and engagement.



La Mór, BIS Deputy Head of School, managed and steered the process of the new Statement of Purpose and Commitments together with dozens of engaged parents, teachers and staff.

Engage

We are committed to facilitating experiences that develop passionate and resilient individuals, who can direct their own learning, transfer their understanding, and exercise agency.

Engaging students in meaningful, relevant, and interactive learning experiences elicits impactful learning. Activities such as outdoor education, community engagement projects and exhibitions of learning, empower students to see themselves as contributors to the broader community and wider world, cultivating a sense of purpose.

Motivation fuels learning, and what motivates us is unique to every learner. Unlocking this transfer of knowledge means we start to have agency to discover our chosen pathway.

Innovate

We are committed to contributing to an ethical and sustainable future by developing our capacity for innovation, adaptability, critical thinking and creativity.

Teaching methods such as project-based learning, design thinking, and cycles of reflection build students' capacity for problem-solving and critical analysis. By integrating ethics and valuing global and local partnerships, we equip students to address 21st-century challenges with creativity, care, and a holistic understanding of their impact on the world.

A flexible approach to space and time allows for dynamic learning environments that mirror real-world innovation, enabling hands-on learning experiences.

When addressing global challenges like inequality, climate change, and geopolitical complexities, applying critical and creative thinking, respect for diversity, and a commitment to sustainability, requires students to find collaborative solutions.

Flourish

We are committed to providing a supportive, well-resourced environment driven by inquiry, where everyone knows how they can contribute, and be successful.

BIS fosters holistic growth by recognising the inseparable connection between individual, communal and planetary health. Flourishing is achieved by restoring balance, supporting all community members, and caring for the broader planetary system. This approach nurtures academic, social, emotional, and physical development.

By prioritising collective wellbeing, individualised pathways for growth, and better ways of working, we create a flourishing environment.

BIS's five commitments of Trust, Belong, Engage, Innovate, and Flourish, foster collaboration, inclusion, and growth. Aligning these values with daily school life creates a transformative, interconnected environment where all have the right to grow and flourish.

What now?

This year working groups for all five commitments started creating measures for all fifteen areas of focus. Most measures have been translated into survey questions to support annual data collection, ensuring future growth is underpinned by data-driven decision-making that informs instructional practices and school improvements. Engaging staff, students, and parents in this process will serve to strengthen trust, accountability, and ultimately our flourishing learners.

BIS – a place for everyone to grow and flourish.





Angela Hölzl, Primary School Principal at Haimhausen Campus, has been working at BIS for 20 years.

“Be kind, always”

Angela Hölzl has been at the heart of BIS for 20 years, shaping the futures of her many students. With a degree in English Language and Literature, Pedagogy, and Physical Education, she began her teaching career in Manchester, UK, in 1997. At a diverse school there, she discovered her passion for teaching and defined the kind of educator she wanted to be. Interestingly, she was implementing the principles of the Primary Years Programme (PYP) long before she realised it was an official framework.

In 2004, she joined BIS as a Grade 3 teacher, quickly advancing to PYP coordinator and eventually becoming the principal in 2015. With a Master's degree in educational leadership, she has introduced innovative programmes that reflect her commitment to International Baccalaureate education. Below, she shares her reflections on two decades of dedication and progress.

Over the past 20 years, how has our school evolved, and what significant changes have you witnessed in the education landscape?

“The adoption of cutting-edge teaching practices, thoughtful integration of technology, and outdoor learning have transformed the way we engage with students. Education as a whole has shifted

toward inclusivity and preparing students for global citizenship, and it's been a privilege to help guide these changes.”

What are you most proud of in terms of student growth and development during your tenure as principal?

“Several initiatives stand out. Introducing the swimming programme in Primary School and coaching the swim team brought students confidence and new skills. Alongside the Ed Tech Coordinator, we integrated iPads into classrooms using the Substitution, Augmentation, Modification, and Redefinition model as a guide, ensuring a balanced and impactful use of technology. I also cherish the Elective Programme we established, giving students ownership

and choice over their learning. The Home Language Programme, where parent volunteers teach their mother tongue, enhances cultural pride and connections for our community.”

What were the biggest challenges you faced as a principal, and how did you overcome them?

“The COVID-19 pandemic was the most challenging time in my career. Navigating rapidly changing government expectations while ensuring the right balance on-screen and off-screen learning was incredibly difficult. I am proud of how the staff came together to support one another and the students. That collaboration remains an example of how we work today, making us a stronger team.”

You have a son who graduated from BIS. How has being a parent at BIS affected your leadership style?

“Having my son join BIS after attending a German Primary School allowed me to see the wonder of what we do here through his eyes. This experience gave me so much appreciation for our programmes and the impact they have on students and families. It also made me more empathetic as a leader, helping me connect more with parents and understand their aspirations for their children.”

Looking back on 20 years, what are the most cherished memories and experiences you've had?

“Sports days and Spooky Day are always special, bringing much joy to students and staff alike. I also treasure the Magic Door ceremony, where students pass through a ‘magic door,’ saying goodbye to their current teacher on one side and being welcomed by their new teacher on the other. The day-to-day interactions with students always bring a smile to my face. Finally, I love the fairly new tradition of the Grade 12 send-off, where primary students sing the BIS farewell song and create ‘good luck with the exams’ posters for the graduates. There are always a lot of happy tears during these events.”



“The day-to-day interactions with students always bring a smile to my face.”

Angela Hölzl

What keeps you motivated and inspired to continue leading the Haimhausen Primary School after all these years?

“Helping students navigate the complexities of technology and AI while teaching them to be critical thinkers and safe users is both a challenge and a joy. I am guided by the principles I live by: always be kind and assume positive intentions. These values, along with the positive energy of the students and my team, keep me inspired to lead and grow with BIS.”

As a wife, mother of two and now a proud grandmother, Angela finds joy in giving back to her family, who have supported her throughout her career. Outside of school, she enjoys swimming, music, reading and yoga, activities that help her stay balanced and energised.



Teamwork is key to success (from left to right): Verena Zimmer, Owen Murphy, Susan Oswald, Alexandra dos Santos and Nicola Moloney.



Positive Discipline expert Joy Marchese at BIS City Campus.



Learn more about
Positive Discipline

Global recognition for BIS City Campus

The BIS City Campus team can proudly claim to be one of only 25 Positive Discipline Lab Schools – such schools act as role models for others worldwide! This achievement has been made possible because of the excellent work of the team, supported by a visit from Joy Marchese, founder of Positive Discipline UK, as well as in-depth training for staff and courses for parents.

All City Campus teachers became certified Positive Discipline educators, two teachers qualified as Parent Educators (Alexandra dos Santos and Verena Zimmer) and Susan Oswald heads the programme as Pastoral Leader. “This is a huge achievement for our team. We will be at the forefront of Positive Discipline research and implementation, sharing our practices with others and connecting with other highly functioning Positive Discipline schools around the world. This proves how strong the City Campus team is at helping students with developing their learning behaviours, and supporting them in moments of challenge. We can be very proud of this level of global recognition

for our behaviour support practices,” says Owen Murphy, Principal of the Primary School in Munich.

Kindness and firmness

But what exactly is Positive Discipline and why is this programme developed by Dr Jane Nelsen so helpful for teachers, parents and students? Positive Discipline is a parenting and guidance approach focused on teaching children to develop self-discipline, responsibility, and problem-solving skills in a respectful and supportive way. Rather than using rewards or punishments, Positive Discipline encourages adults to connect with children, set clear expectations, and

guide them with kindness and firmness at the same time. It emphasises understanding the reasons behind a child’s behaviour and addressing it through solutions that teach valuable life skills. This approach promotes a sense of belonging, self-worth, and cooperation, helping children grow into capable, respectful, and empathetic individuals. Susan Oswald explains the principle using a concrete example: “Class meetings and family meetings follow a specific format, starting with expressing appreciation to one another, then problems are brought forward and the group focuses on solutions together. Lastly the meeting ends with a quick fun game.”

Develop a love of learning

An important cornerstone of Positive Discipline is that encouragement is better than praise, because it emphasises a child’s effort, growth, and intrinsic motivation rather than focusing on external approval. “Encouragement acknowledges the child’s process – such as persistence or creativity – fostering resilience and self-reflection. This approach helps children build self-confidence based on their own accomplishments, rather than relying on external validation. By encouraging, we help children feel empowered to take risks, learn from

mistakes, and develop a love of learning that’s not tied to the need for praise,” explains German teacher Alexandra dos Santos.

The journey to being a Positive Discipline Lab School began in the 2022-23 school year, and City Campus has been offering parent courses for the past year to support the approach. So far, there have been three series of parenting classes, with more courses to follow in 2025. “There are a variety of resources available in our campus library for parents to borrow. We would love for all families to take part in parenting classes and workshops,” says Verena Zimmer, Educational Technology Integrator.

The accompanying book by Joy Marchese “Positive Discipline for today’s busy (and overwhelmed) parents” is part of the learning package. Speaking of Joy Marchese: during her talks at City Campus, she quoted Thich Nhat Hanh and summed up the principle of Positive Discipline with a vivid image: “When you plant lettuce, if it does not grow well, you don’t blame the lettuce. You look for reasons it is not doing well. It may need fertiliser, or more water, or less sun. You never blame the lettuce.”



Developing well-rounded personalities

The After School Activities (ASA) programme fosters holistic education, the discovery of new paths and the development of valuable relationships and social skills.

Approximately 80 ASA's a week are offered at the two campuses in Haimhausen and Munich-Schwabing, most of them in the afternoon, but also some before school (e.g. swimming, volleyball) or during lunch breaks (e.g. Model United Nations, chess, band practice, multilingual services). 400 to 500 students between the ages of 6 and 19 attend these activities. A variety of recreational, competitive and performance oriented courses includes sports, creativity, technology, politics, social engagement, wellbeing and much more (see the information box).

This programme is therefore a cornerstone of the BIS experience and directly connected with the school's Statement of Purpose. "The ASA's not only complement academic learning but also empower students to thrive and make meaningful contributions to society. Our aim is to be inclusive and holistic, offering something for everyone. Ultimately, it is also a great way to make new friends" explains Phil Drake, Athletics Director and After School Activities Coordinator at BIS.



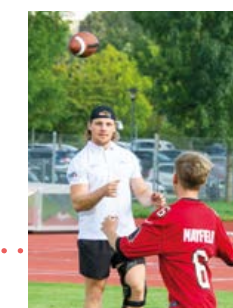
Phil Drake, Athletics Director at BIS. On the right photo: our Primary School girls football team.



Five key reasons emphasise the importance of After School Activities at the Bavarian International School:

- 1. Creating a sense of belonging:** Through ASA's, students engage with peers across diverse backgrounds in shared interests, strengthening connections and cultivating a true sense of belonging.
- 2. Empowering inquiry and engagement:** Students exercise agency, transfer understanding across disciplines, and develop a lifelong passion for learning.
- 3. Nurturing innovation and critical thinking:** The activities encourage students to explore new ideas and take risks. These experiences help them build critical thinking and problem-solving skills.
- 4. Promoting wellbeing and flourishing:** ASA's prioritise students' physical and mental wellbeing. They build resilience and promote healthy habits.
- 5. Fostering global citizenship and responsibility*:** Through projects addressing community needs and global challenges, students develop empathy, responsibility, and a deep understanding of their role in shaping a better world.

It becomes very clear that extracurricular activities are incredibly important for the education and personal growth of every child. It's not just about learning, it's about growing and flourishing as responsible, caring and confident global citizens.



A selection of After School Activities (ASA) at BIS

Art, Astronomy Nights, Badminton, Ballet, Basketball, BIS Blooms, BIS Human Rights, BIS Orchestra, Chess, Capoeira, Cross Country, Bollywood Dancing, Basketball, Entrepreneurship Club, Flag Football, Football, Girl's Scouts, Golf, Debate, Karate, Lifesaving, LIONS' Chronicle, Meditation, Minecraft, Model United Nations (MUN), Musical Theatre Production, Pop & Hip-hop Dance, Pickleball, Rugby, Science Contest Club, Skating, Student band, Swimming, Tennis, The Duke of Edinburgh's International Award, The Green Team, Volleyball, Yearbook Team.

* While the After School Activities (ASA) are voluntary, the students' social and community engagement in "Service in Action" (SA from Grades 6-10) Middle Years Programme, "Creativity, Activity & Service" within the Diploma and "Service Learning" within the Careers Related Programme (Grades 11-12) are all part of the International Baccalaureate (IB) Programme – they are grade-relevant!



Much more than writing skills...

Having a student newspaper is of multitudinal importance for an international school like BIS. In addition to research and writing skills, the young journalists learn teamwork, critical thinking, and time management.

The Lion’s Chronicle is the name of BIS’s digital newspaper, which appears once a month with fresh content in sections such as school news, global issues, green news, sports, creativity, lifestyle and a podcast. Around 20 Secondary School students are working on the ambitious project – led by editor-in-chief Marilia Chiladaki and supported by BIS teacher Tia Martin.

The range of topics and journalistic forms is deliberately kept open. “This freedom allows our editors to make the articles even more engaging as they are written with passion and due to the variety of topics and areas of focus, we cover all interests of our readers,” says the 16-year-old Marilia from Grade 11. Political topics may also be covered, but this must follow the policy of political neutrality.

The content is reviewed in several stages. First, the editors check each other’s articles, the team around Laia, Margeoux and Defne looks at the texts, Isabel reviews the correct implementation on the website and finally Mrs. Martin has a final look. Several artificial intelligence (AI) checkers ensure that the text was authentically written by a human and not a machine.

Teamwork and critical thinking

For Marilia Chiladaki and her team, it’s about much more than developing writing skills. “The aim is not to publish an article to fulfill our CAS (Creativity, Activity, Service) hours. It’s about following your passion, unleashing creativity, developing other skills like critical thinking or research, and getting closer together as a team in order

to achieve our goals and ambitions,” she explains. The world-famous British-Iranian journalist and former CNN chief correspondent Christiane Amanpour is her role model, but apart from this project close to her heart, Marilia is pursuing completely different career plans for the future: To study medicine at Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität (LMU) Munich and work as a neuro or vascular surgeon (“It’s incredibly powerful to me that you get to have such a positive impact in someone’s life and even save them”).

In view of the increasing use of social media, the spread of fake news and political populism, Marilia Chiladaki sees the great value of free, independent journalism. “With the increase of misinformation and biased viewpoints influencing public opinion strongly, independent journalism acts as an effective counterbalance. It provides a reliable source of verified information and ensures that the work produced is not monopolised. This allows

“It’s about following your passion and unleashing creativity.”

Marilia Chiladaki, Editor-in-Chief

for diverse perspectives and fosters an informed public, provided with truth and transparency leading to the audience to make reasoned decisions, protecting their values and critical thinking in society.”

The Chronicle’s team is considering introducing a video column, making the site more interactive and attracting a larger audience. This magazine and its crossmedia extension could certainly help with the last point...

Marilia Chiladaki
and BIS teacher
Tia Martin.



The current team of the Lion’s Chronicle:

Marilia Chiladaki Editor-in-Chief / **Laia Bonafe Mercader** Global News Editor / **Margaux Cayer Vulic** Creativity Editor / **Maya Sansoy** Marketing / **Isabel Van Dijk Berkenvelde** Marketing Assistant / **Tobias Copping** Podcast Editor

The contributors: Nicolas Böhme, Haydn Whyte, Aneska Van Rensburg, Mick Hofmann, Liliya Angelova, Luisa March Kramer, Greta Caravita, Daniela Fikrova, Katarina Salter, Defne Gerelioglu, Jasheer Jameerrul Iqbal, Mila Prisco, Jeany Kwon, Aaron Bockelmann

Inspiring future changemakers

Thomas Murray is one of the many BIS teachers who embodied the BIS Statement of Purpose before it was even brought to life.



The 31-year-old Canadian teaches Business and Economics in the Secondary School and runs the Entrepreneurship Club, which he himself initiated as an After School Activity (ASA). There is a mutual trust between students and teachers, which fosters a sense of belonging. His engagement goes far beyond the classroom (e.g. in addition to the ASA, Mr. Murray also plays in the teachers' music band), he encourages students to think innovatively outside the box and helps them to flourish.

His idea of the Entrepreneurship Club for students in grades 9-12 – which is flanked by Dr Alissa Carter's Infinity Programme "Entrepreneurship" (see information box) – is as simple as it is effective: "Bring the outside world of entrepreneurship into the classroom." In 2023-24, when Thomas Murray moved from a teaching job in New Zealand to Bavarian International School, the Entrepreneurship Club was more of a modest think tank where students learned the basics of start-ups and developed their first products or services. Relatively quickly, he realised that many students "understood the vocabulary and were well acquainted with a few seven second TikTok stars touting their quick cash method, but they didn't get the lived reality. When the students were coming in ready to talk solely about bitcoin and dropshipping with no mention of their own passions, solving problems, or plans of actions – I knew this had to be addressed...!"

Real life experiences

The energetic educator, who married his fiancé Kate Moran (Learning Support Teacher at BIS) at a hut in the Austrian Alps shortly before Christmas 2024, decided to bring external guests from the world of entrepreneurship to BIS – people from Tesla, Google, LinkedIn, but also exciting personalities from the media, tech, content creation or finance sectors beyond the big corporations. This creates special moments of inspiration every Thursday during the lunch break – sometimes on-site at the Haimhausen Campus, sometimes virtually. "Students drive the conversation, make connections and walk away with their own insights. On the

days when we do not have a guest speaker, we dissect the journeys of other young entrepreneurs, work on refining students' pitch decks and business plans or discuss how they can overcome hurdles in their own ventures. It's not a linear lesson plan, but rather a dynamic environment that evolves with their own needs and interests", explains Mr. Murray from Stratford, Ontario (Canada).

"Failure is not a dirty word"

He has noticed some commonalities between all the guest speakers and this has naturally been transferred to his curious students: finding your own passion ("What makes you tick"), constantly wanting to improve, being a team player and developing connections. "The entrepreneurs that join us paint a consistent picture of what you need: curiosity, adaptability, empathy, and perhaps most importantly, resilience. They are clear that failure isn't a dirty word. One guest speaker highlighted failure as your real world 'tuition fees'. Setbacks are opportunities to reassess and come back stronger," says Thomas Murray.

At Bavarian International School, failing forward is not a meaningless phrase, but a real part of the motto from "Believe" to "Inspire" to "Succeed" (BIS). "Failure is a part of the journey. It is a part of life, and most certainly a part of the entrepreneur's journey," concludes Murray.

The BIS Infinity Programme

Initiated four years ago and led by Dr Alissa Carter, BIS provides the Infinity Programme for high-achieving, high-potential students with a range of abilities. Secondary School students benefit from a variety of opportunities to go deeper into subjects that excite them, while further developing their abilities and knowledge in a way that is appropriate to their learning speed. At a high level, the programme gives students time, attention and support to go deeper into topics they are passionate about.

The power of community

At the Bavarian International School (BIS), community is the very foundation of our school's identity. A significant power behind this sense of unity and connection are the numerous parent volunteers, led by the Parent Community Council (PCC).



This group of dedicated volunteers contribute their time, energy, and passion to create a thriving and supportive environment for students, staff and families. The PCC plays a vital role in shaping our school's spirit and success, particularly through the alignment of our commitments: trust, belong, engage, innovate, and flourish.

Building trust through connection

Trust is the cornerstone of any successful community, and at BIS, the PCC serves as a bridge between parents, staff, and students. The council is made up of parents from both the Haimhausen and City campuses, all committed to maintaining an atmosphere where open communication and mutual respect thrive. By acting as a voice for the parent body, the PCC facilitates regular

meetings with the BIS Leadership team, ensuring that concerns are heard and that the needs of the community are met. Through its work, the PCC helps create an environment where parents feel supported, and where they know they have a direct influence on their children's educational experience.

Nurturing belonging

One of the most powerful aspects of the PCC's work is its ability to create a sense of belonging among families. The diverse international community at BIS is a mosaic of cultures, backgrounds, and experiences. The PCC organises a wide range of social events and activities designed to bring people together. From the fun-filled Spooky Day to Hot Chocolate Day, Wine & Cheese

The PCC Representatives

(from left to right)

Katja Drabek Upper Secondary School Representative & Parent Alumni Representative

Anne Andres Lower Secondary School Representative

Karla Noboa-Eckardt Area & Language Representative

Ciera Dobson Primary School Representative Haimhausen

Tea Yrjölä Communications & Events Representative

Martin Strutz Primary School Representative City Campus



Parent volunteers are at the heart of our community (here at the BIS Winter Festival and Spooky Day at City Campus).



evenings, the much-anticipated BIS Quiz Night and BIS Winter Festival, led by the Graduation Committee, there is something for everyone. These events offer parents the opportunity to meet, network, and form lasting connections with others, creating a truly inclusive atmosphere.

Engaging volunteers

The PCC's success is largely due to the tireless efforts of volunteers who give their time to make these events and initiatives happen. Whether it's helping organise a fundraiser, assisting at a school event, or supporting an athletics event, the volunteer spirit is what makes a big difference. The commitment to supporting the school community is key, as each volunteer contributes to the overall success and flourishing of our students. These opportunities to engage not only make the school experience richer but also offer parents the chance to play an active role in their children's education.

Innovating for a better future

Innovation is another pillar of the PCC's work. As a group that continuously seeks new ways to enrich the school experience, the PCC is always looking for fresh ideas and creative solutions. It encourages parents to bring new initiatives to the table, whether it's starting a new club, organising a workshop,

"The PCC at BIS is more than just a group of volunteers – it is part of the soul of our school."

or exploring new ways to enhance the academic environment. This culture of innovation is essential for the ongoing growth of our community and for ensuring that BIS remains a dynamic and forward-thinking institution.

Flourishing through collaboration and support

Ultimately, the PCC's efforts enable the BIS community to flourish. By supporting our teachers with appreciation events and providing volunteer opportunities for parents, the PCC nurtures a culture of gratitude, cooperation, and continuous improvement. It's through the collective efforts of all that we are able to create a school where everyone, from students to staff to parents, can truly thrive. The Parent Community Council at BIS is more than just a group of volunteers – it is part of the soul of our school. As we look to the future, we invite all parents to get involved, contribute their time and ideas, and join us in building a community where everyone can grow and flourish.



From Irish Dancing World Champion to inspiring educator

Kelly Bozic, Grade 1 teacher, Haimhausen Campus

For Kelly Bozic, teaching is a lifelong passion. Now in her 18th year of teaching at BIS, Kelly has come a long way since her childhood dream of becoming a teacher at the age of four.

Born and raised in Ireland, she began her career at her own Primary School, working under the same principal who had been in charge when she was a student. Kelly's dream of seeing the world led her to a job fair, where she discovered BIS. This marked the beginning of her international teaching career and a new chapter in her life. The diverse, multicultural environment at BIS has always been a significant source of joy for Kelly, who says, "I love how international BIS is and that I get a flavor of different cultures here daily." Kelly reflects on how her international career has made her more open-minded and appreciative of the world around her. Her personal life has also been enriched by her experience in Germany, as she married a Croatian man, and they have two children attending BIS.

Nurturing curiosity

Kelly's heart has always been in primary education. Her motto, "I learn every day from my students," shows her love for teaching young learners and nurturing their curiosity. She cherishes the little moments that happen daily in and out of the classroom, creating an environment where her students feel safe and supported.

Did you know that Kelly is a two-time world champion Irish dancer? "It was the highlight of my life", she says proudly. She even taught Irish dancing as an After School Activity here at BIS. She took a break when she had her children but plans to revive this wonderful initiative soon. When she's not working, Kelly enjoys spending quality time at her family's bed & breakfast in Croatia.

As we celebrate Kelly's dedication to our school community for nearly two decades, we recognise her contributions to the many students she has inspired over the years.



"My students make me feel young"

Guncha Bhan, Grade 3 teacher, Haimhausen Campus

Guncha Bhan, originally from India, began her teaching journey out of necessity – to spend more time with her family and secure a stable career. With 15 years of experience and a Master's degree in English, she initially dreamed of becoming a journalist.

Her own childhood, marked by illness and challenges with learning, instilled in her a deep empathy for students who struggle with learning challenges. After experiencing very strict curricula in India, both as a student and teacher, Guncha's perspective on education shifted dramatically when she joined BIS in 2012. "This is how education should be," she recalls thinking as she embraced the progressive, student-centered approaches of the Primary Years Programme (PYP).

Guncha's journey to BIS was shaped by family circumstances, which brought her to Europe. After living in the Netherlands and Switzerland, she found her home at BIS. As an unofficial ambassador for India, she loves sharing her culture and enriching the school community with her traditions.

Known for her lively personality, Guncha describes her classroom as her "happy place," filled with energy, colour, and connection. "I am loud, my body language is loud, and I want to use every minute I have with my kids here," she says. Her superpower? Building strong relationships with her students, often through storytelling – complete with tales of her childhood adventures involving encounters with snakes, elephants, and monkeys!

Outside the classroom, she enjoys singing, dancing, and cooking, which she sees as an expression of love and appreciation for her family and friends. Holding herself to high standards, Guncha strives to continually grow and give her best. Her dedication, warmth, and vibrant spirit make her a true gem in the BIS community.



The joy of learning

Birgit Weller, German teacher at City Campus

“Language connects. It opens doors to new cultures, perspectives and people – and that’s exactly what makes it so important.” This statement alone makes it clear how much Birgit Weller loves languages and how passionate she is about teaching German.

She has worked in the BIS team almost since the City Campus in Schwabing opened, studied German as a foreign language, Spanish and special education at Ludwigs-Maximilians-Universität München (LMU) and speaks four languages herself (German, English, Dutch, Spanish). “Great children, great colleagues, and no two days are the same. Cultural diversity ensures that there’s always something going on in the classroom: sometimes I learn as much from the children as they do from me,” says the 40-year-old German teacher.

Seeing the children’s progress, aha moments when dealing with difficult topics or their growing self-confidence are some of the best moments of her job. The passionate reader (“Leseratte”) also appreciates the cultural diversity, the respectful environment and the holistic approach of seeing the child as a whole. “The Positive Discipline model creates an appreciative atmosphere in which we support the children not only professionally, but also in their social and emotional development,” adds Birgit Weller.

Language is the key

The literature, travel and nature fan sees teaching German at an international school as both a challenge and an opportunity. It is important to take away the children’s fear of a new language, to create playful approaches and to foster a love of learning. “Language is the key to a child’s cognitive, social and emotional development. Bilingual education extends this advantage” explains ‘Frau Weller’, who is one of the few BIS teachers, among more than 40 nationalities, to have been born in Munich.

As of this school year, German classes are structured by grade level, regardless of the students’ language proficiency and Birgit Weller has all classes in Grade 5. There are good reasons for this approach, as the children should learn more from each other. Team teaching and differentiation play a major role, the tasks and learning objectives are tailored to the individual needs of the students.



Lifelong love of learning

Nadya Stefanova & Paula Sullivan, EC2 teachers at City Campus

Early Years teachers have to be much more than just a teacher, sometimes they are a spokesperson, confidant, problemsolver, detective, photographer, handyman, artist, cheerleader and the list goes on. Nadya Stefanova and Paula Sullivan fulfill all these roles with great passion, responsibility and fun.

They both teach an Early Childhood 2 (preschool) class at BIS City Campus. “This is a very special and important class on the way to Primary School because it serves as a bridge between the foundational early years of learning and the more structured academic environment of Primary School”, explains the Bulgarian born Nadya. Her colleague Paula adds that they focus on fostering a love of learning, building social-emotional skills, and encouraging problem-solving through play and exploration. “We also emphasise collaboration, critical thinking and self-expression, which helps students grow not only academically but also personally,” says Paula, who was born in Gainesville, Florida and worked in the USA, Kosovo and Leipzig before joining BIS.

Independence is key

The Bulgarian-American dream team of EC2 is united by much more than the belief that important future skills and well-rounded, resilient learners are best developed through the Primary Years Programme (PYP) of the International Baccalaureate (IB). Nadya & Paula emphasise collaboration, creativity, communication and community. “Promoting independence is key, as we try to support children to the best in taking ownership of their learning and making decisions”, says Nadya.

The EC2 teachers appreciate the special sense of belonging at BIS City Campus, where everyone feels valued and connected. They praise the dynamic and inclusive environment that balances academic rigor with creativity and community. From this foundation, a lifelong love of learning is unfolded, helping to determine the children’s future success. “We want to ensure that every child leaves our classroom feeling confident, capable and cherished. That keeps us passionate about what we are doing!”



“If joy is there, learning will follow”

Krisandra Livingston, Secondary School, Grade 6 Teacher and Head of Department

This school year marks Krisandra Livingston’s fifth year at BIS and her 11th year in teaching. Originally from New Jersey, USA, she always knew she wanted to be a teacher.

After earning a Master’s degree in Curriculum and Instruction, she went on to teach every age group from Kindergarten to Primary and Secondary school, where she taught maths and science.

Inspired by a crossroads in her life, Krisandra joined BIS just in time to help design and deploy our unique “Homeroom Programme” for Grade 6 of IB Middle Years Programme (MYP), one of Krisandra’s proudest accomplishments to date. The vision? A bridge that gives students a strong support system as they adjust from the comfort of Primary School to the “big world” of secondary education. She and the Grade 6 team proudly nurture a culture of emotional intelligence, growth mindset, and academic dedication. Her goal is for each student to know “they always have someone in their corner,” and she’s thrilled that this connection extends even beyond Grade 6, with some students reaching out to her years later for

guidance, even with personal projects in Grade 10.

Focus on life skills

Krisandra values the International Baccalaureate (IB) system’s focus on life skills and is passionate about making school an enjoyable experience. “If joy is there, learning will follow,” she believes, aiming to make every student look forward to coming to school each day.

Outside of teaching, Ms. Livingston explores her interests in robotics and Augmented Reality (AR); she’s even built an AR sandbox at her previous school – a 3D, interactive, educational tool to help geography students understand mapping and topography! She believes in the power of a “mindset reset” and does so every Saturday. “It helps me take in new ideas and stay inspired for the classroom”, she concludes.



“Everything is a wonder”

Céline Saily, Secondary School, Head of the Science Department & MYP Science teacher

Born in Toulon, France, Céline became an engineer in chemistry, studying in Paris before venturing into the pharmaceutical industry in London. With a wealth of experience in management positions, motherhood, and family moves across Europe, Céline found herself reinventing her career multiple times.

While living in Spain, she discovered a passion for teaching, leading her to return to France, train as a teacher, and eventually become the head of a small school. One of her proudest career moments was when she led a pioneering approach to the IB Middle Years Programme (MYP) in Spain.

2023-24 was her third year at BIS and Céline has already become an essential part of our community. With three children of her own, including one attending BIS and two in university, she knows the value of exceptional education. What impressed her most about BIS were the lab facilities, equipment, and materials accessible to both staff and students – resources not commonly available elsewhere.

Igniting a love for science

As Head of the Science Department, she appreciates the trust placed in her and the creative freedom she enjoys. Her personal motto as a scientist, “everything is a wonder,” encapsulates her curiosity and pursuit of knowledge. She encourages her students to explore, experiment, and question everything around them, igniting a love for science.

Céline believes that the International Baccalaureate (IB) is the gold standard in education due to its emphasis on critical thinking, which is more important than ever in today’s rapidly evolving landscape. Despite the challenges of the demanding IB Diploma or IB Career-related Programme (DP/CP), she believes it offers students a significant advantage when transitioning to higher education.

Outside of her work, Céline is passionate about maintaining an active lifestyle through High-Intensity Interval Training (HIIT), running, and hiking.

An artwork as a memorial:

The red neon lights at a Primary School in Türkenstraße switch on for one minute every night at 21:20. The installation by artist Silke Wagner commemorates Georg Elser, who attempted the bomb attack on Adolf Hitler at exactly 21:20 on 8 November 1939.

Bringing history to life

David Heath, Head of the Humanities Department & History teacher at Haimhausen Campus

It's evening in Munich. David Heath stands on Isartorplatz with 20 members of the BIS community. His headlamp casts a bright light on the yellowed black-and-white photos in a worn folder.

He talks about the origins of Hitler's horrific National Socialist movement, connecting pictures, buildings, and historic figures to one another. Swiping through his iPad in parallel, he brings history to life. His listeners are captivated, hanging on his every word, their curiosity sparked. Anyone who has experienced a city tour like this with David Heath gains a clear sense of the passion he brings to teaching history to Secondary School students at BIS.

An expression of his absolute dedication to the subject, immense knowledge and love of detail can be seen in his classroom alone, which is filled to the brim with historical books, uniforms, flags, helmets, armour, figurines and much more (see pages 8-9). Since the Canadian-born teacher joined BIS in 2010, an extraordinary collection of lovingly curated exhibits has been assembled, making this classroom one of the most remarkable in the world. "Such old vintage flags add an extra dimension to my classroom, giving students a subconscious awareness of the traditions and history behind these symbols. The musty smell of the heavy fabric adds weight to the history", says Mr. Heath, whose primary goal is to make history more accessible and tangible for young people.

Encouraging critical thinking

With a teaching approach that extends far beyond the classroom, the ECIS Teacher of the Year 2009 ensures that history explains and inspires as much as it serves as a cautionary tale. "I like to think students leave my classroom with a firm grounding in factual knowledge, critical thinking skills, and an appreciation for the enduring values that have shaped our civilisation," he says.

A dedicated family man, he has worked at international schools in China, Spain, Italy and Greece. He holds a certificate from Israel's Yad Vashem to teach the Holocaust, is accredited by the Dachau Concentration Camp Memorial Site and offers captivating tours of Munich and Dachau. These tours attract a diverse audience, ranging from members of the school community to the former Governor of Colorado, the Israeli Minister of Sports and Leisure, CNN contributors, and renowned authors. His website 'Traces of Evil' documents the legacy of the past through compelling then-and-now images. Once a year he takes his students to Berlin to reflect on the system of the GDR dictatorship and the fall of the Berlin Wall. On all his trips, he captures contemporary photographs and blends them with historical images in a unique style.

Knowledge of history is essential

In light of the current global situation, political changes and the influence of internet media, the historical admonisher David Heath expresses deep concern. "I had family on both sides of the Atlantic who fought to liberate Europe and Asia from totalitarianism and in support of the 'Four Freedoms' (from Roosevelt's famous speech: freedom of speech, freedom of religion, freedom from want and freedom from fear) which I fear are increasingly under attack today. Instead of celebrating and fighting to build a shared sense of values and community, we seem to have returned to another 'Age of Extremes' where those on either side dictate to the majority with the result that people are again having to be categorised in terms of their political and religious beliefs, sexual identity, chosen lifestyles and race", says Heath.

Now more than ever, education plays a crucial role in the essential knowledge of history, in order to learn from dangerous ideologies and ensure that they are not repeated.



Working on “aha moments”

**Matthew Tupper, Head of Design
Department & Design teacher**

**Matthew Tupper has only been working
at BIS since August 2022 and yet the
design teacher has already captured
the hearts and minds of the students.**

As a project-based teacher, he is very fortunate to work one-on-one with his students every day. “These interactions, especially when they have the ‘aha moment’ is what makes it all worth it”.

Pathways to larger skills

For the experienced teacher, who has worked in Rome, Boston, Hangzhou (China) and Tortola (British Virgin Islands), the Design Cycle is a structured way to solve problems. “This subject gives students the

ability to break any problem down to its core, the discipline to generate multiple ideas, choose the best one and implement it”, explains Mr. Tupper. For him, students learn skills such as research, analysis, ideation and evaluation. He sees practical skills such as handling tools or learning CAD programs more as “pathways to explore larger skills.”

With the rise of Artificial Intelligence (AI), his field will also change, not least the way assessments are made, which should focus more on deeper understanding and correlations, for example. “AI will not replace designers, but designers that use AI will replace designers that do not.”

Matthew Tupper’s passion for teaching extends beyond the classroom, he leads a talented group from the Infinity Programme, runs the After School Activity (ASA) for Theatre Design (a subject he once studied) and is involved in the legendary BIS Bike Trip. He finds peace on long, quiet walks with his dog and appreciates the connection between BIS and Bavarian tradition. His favorite tradition is “Maßkrugstemmen”. As mentioned at the beginning, he has only been here for two years, but already settled in fantastically...

Special: Digital wellbeing



The digital detox childhood

By Philipp Depiereux

No gaming consoles, no video games, no free internet surfing, no tablets, and no smartphones until the age of 14.

No access to YouTube, Netflix, or Amazon Video. Movies are only watched together with parents before the age of 14 and must be carefully selected by them. Children and teenagers should be able to play, communicate, and learn freely, without media influence. From the age of 14, teenagers are given a highly restricted and parent-monitored smartphone, along with a lending contract that clearly outlines the usage of the device: it belongs to the parents and is only lent to the teenagers. If any contract points are violated, the parents can confiscate the smartphone. The contract is signed by all "parties."

Sounds like a dream world and a "mission impossible"? My wife and I have managed to raise our four children (aged 18, 15, 10, and 7) largely free from digital devices. Without daily arguments about screen time, with plenty of creative play, and yes, sometimes boredom for the kids – because, as we know, boredom sparks creativity and new ideas.

Now, I could write pages on how we managed to raise our children digitally free, how they didn't become analog outsiders, how they weren't left behind, and how they thrived without digital devices in school, among friends, and in their everyday lives. But I want to focus on addressing the readers who likely have children and teenagers already using digital devices, encouraging them to take a step toward more digital detox times, and to face their children with courage.



The skills of the future in the digital age

Parents often fall into the trap of thinking they need to introduce their children to smartphones and digital media as early as possible, so they can learn the necessary skills and are not left behind in life. The reality is, however, that the younger generation usually masters these devices faster than we do. In my view, it is far more important that our children learn the following seven competencies, alongside analytical and conceptual skills and a certain level of resilience:

- **Critical thinking**
- **Collaboration**
- **Communication skills**
- **Creativity**
- **Courage**
- **Empathy**
- **Social competence**

I'm confident that with these seven competencies every child will successfully navigate the (digital) future. Machines will, for the foreseeable future, be unable to develop empathy or social skills. Humans, even in the age of Artificial Intelligence (AI), robots, and machines, will continue to be

in demand for their ability to collaborate and communicate effectively.

Unfortunately, there is also bad news: our traditional education system especially in Germany, which I am its biggest critic, is not adequately preparing our children and teenagers for the future because these competencies are not included in the curriculum. And by the way, teachers don't learn these important skills during their training either. This has to change!

Creative and communicative inability as a consequence of digitalisation in the nursery

Studies clearly show that smartphones make children hyperactive, anxious, and/or aggressive. The issues that are becoming more and more evident range from feeding and sleep disorders in babies to language development issues in toddlers, and concentration problems in Primary School children. Creativity also suffers: children can hardly focus on one task for long periods and instead want to be digitally entertained. Moreover, because of the "always-on" mode of smartphones, they are constantly in waiting mode, hoping to receive the next emoji, message, video, reel, story, or photo.

German neuroscientist Manfred Spitzer has been warning about the impact of digitalisation in children's rooms for years. His findings are equally alarming: children who are exposed to digital media too early experience "speech disorders, attention disorders, and poorer grades in reading and writing." Furthermore, media consumption leads to "loss of empathy, social adaptation difficulties, a tendency toward criminal behavior, fear of missing out, addiction, and obesity." Early digitalisation thus hampers the healthy development of children and teenagers.

Back to childhood 1.0

In my view, society needs to become smarter and braver! The Australian government is leading the way: they have recently banned the use of social media platforms like TikTok, Instagram, and others by teenagers. I celebrate them for this!

But parents also need to play an important role. Clear rules are needed when it comes to using digital devices. There must be complete agreement between both parents on these rules. Parents must face the issue shoulder to shoulder. Smartphones should always be in the possession of the parents (after all, children and teenagers are generally not allowed to enter into contracts), and only lent to the children temporarily under a "lending and usage contract." Age restrictions, app limitations, and screen time must always be enabled, and parents must maintain full control over the devices. If rules are broken, there must be consequences, and devices should be returned to the parents for a few days or weeks, or screen time reduced. The latter can be done easily with the push of a button.

In addition to the clarity and unity of both parents, it is crucial to face children with courage. Parents must be strong, enforce rules and consequences, and confidently say "no" when necessary.

Active dialogue about media usage with children is also a clear parental responsibility: What content are the children watching? What interests them? What worries or disturbs them? Additionally, parents should →





Leading article

"Changerider"
Philipp Depiereux with
Wladimir Klitschko at the
presentation of Volocopter.

agree with their children that smartphones and chat histories can be accessed by parents at any time if there is a reason for concern. Parents must also continue to develop their own digital competence. There are excellent videos, blog posts, and training resources on smartphone usage and screen time settings, safe internet surfing, avoiding scams, finding sources, critically assessing fake news articles, and many other topics.

And, like everything in life, the digital journey with children should follow the "build, measure, learn" method that I appreciate so much. Parents can experiment and see what works for their kids and what does not. Inspiration can also be drawn from discussions with other parents. Some use a point system for good grades, cleaning rooms, reading, and other tasks, where kids get an extra hour of screen time after reaching a certain point threshold. Others

spend completely digital-free days with their children, doing something special together. And the key word here is "together": no matter how old children are in the digital age, parents must always discuss and explain decisions to their children and clarify why they were made. A close bond with the children is a fundamental prerequisite for raising children without smartphones or with strictly regulated digital usage.

And in all of this, my point is not to claim that there is one true way. No one will be the perfect role model when it comes to media usage, and each family must develop their own parenting style. However, parents should be aware that they can set a counterpoint. That means: children should enjoy their freedom for as long as possible and be allowed to fill their day with their own imagination.

Therefore, I urge parents: Actively engage with your children. Try birthday parties without smartphones, train journeys, car rides, and flights without iPad movies, or phone-free days at home. Sometimes it's tempting to take a break or enjoy the much-needed peace and quiet by entertaining children with an iPad. This temptation should be resisted. Children should remain children – free to explore the world independently, not influenced and directed by machine in their thinking.

Ultimately, it's not about being anti-technology, but about protecting the childhood of the little ones and making them competent users of all these technologies at an appropriate age.

Be smarter & braver!

BIS City Talk

"Empowering digital citizens: smart kids vs. smartphones"



Wednesday, 26 February 2025 (18:00)

BIS City Campus, Leopoldstr. 208, 80804 München



Philipp Depiereux
Digital expert & entrepreneur



Prof Dr Christian Montag
Neuroscientist & author



Magdalena Balica
Education specialist at
International Baccalaureate
Organization (IB)



Dr Chrissie Sorenson
Head of School at BIS



Funda Vanroy
Moderator (TV host "Galileo")



The event is open to all interested guests, registration via the QR code is mandatory. Optional school tour from 17:00 – 17:45



**Bavarian
International
School**

Believe. Inspire. Succeed.



About the author

Philipp Depiereux is an entrepreneur and founder of the digital consultancy etventure, which he sold to the E&Y group in 2017 with over 200 employees. He is also the initiator of the non-profit initiative ChangeRider, an author, and a speaker on topics such as courage, change, digitalisation, and the digital transformation of politics, society, and business. Since 2022, he has been living in California with his wife and four children.



The digital dilemma

By Prof Dr Christian Montag

The right level of digitalisation in our country's educational institutions has been the subject of debate for years. A key issue here is a smartphone ban, which continues to divide people. Is such a measure out of touch with reality – especially at a time when young people need to be prepared for a digital society?

Or is it beneficial because, for example, it reduces the potential for distraction and helps learners to focus on the essentials? A "digital dilemma" is emerging. This term is also the title of the book by Dr Rüdiger Maas (generation researcher), Prof Dr Klaus Zierer (Professor of School Education) and myself. Here we reflect on how education can succeed in our hectic times. We actually advocate a ban on smartphones in schools, but we go beyond this in our considerations and try to think about the issue of digitalisation in our schools in a more nuanced way with the "digital school uniform".

Why a smartphone ban?

In Germany, "bring your own device" was practiced in state schools for a while. This was a reaction to the lack of digital devices that could be used in class to access online content. I didn't think this approach was a

good idea, as distractions are waiting everywhere on your own smartphone. Meta-analyses confirm that extended smartphone use is associated with poorer learning performance.

In a study with data from students in the USA, we were even able to establish this connection with objectively recorded smartphone data and grades. A closer look at our data revealed that, above all, extended use of social media was also associated with poorer learning performance. This also makes another important fact clear: firstly, the smartphone as a device enables users to access different content from anywhere. However, it is also true that an alcoholic is not "addicted to the bottle". Accordingly, we need to focus on content in the debate surrounding smartphones.

The problems surrounding social media are huge. Studies suggest that young people come into contact with non-age-appropriate content there, cyberbullying is made possible via these platforms and young girls in particular can develop body dissatisfaction and eating disorders due to the constant confrontation with unrealistic beauty ideals. A smartphone ban ensures that problems relating to social media are reduced in educational institutions. Studies show that the smartphone ban in schools can lead to better grades, the problem of cyberbullying is reduced and there is also more physical activity during breaks.

The digital school uniform

A smartphone ban is of course not enough to prepare young people for a digital society. That's why I believe a digital school uniform should be introduced. A smartphone ban in schools does not mean that no digital learning methods are used or that there is no access to online content. However, digital learning methods should only be used if they actually work better than conventional learning methods. For example, a meta-analysis shows that reading comprehension is better taught via books than via tablets. If tablets are used as creative tools or digital applications are beneficial to learning, all students should be given the same access to the digital world in the sense of the digital school uniform. Otherwise, learners already differ here in terms of good and bad devices.

The digital school uniform also means that a digitalisation canon must be created. It will certainly not be easy to determine what knowledge should be included in this canon. I am thinking here of topics that go beyond swiping a smartphone and answer relevant questions of our time: What is Artificial Intelligence? How can you detect fake news? How does social media work? I am convinced that we can succeed in compiling digital topics that will still be relevant in a few years' time. But it is also true that updates need to happen faster here than in other specialist areas.

Personally, I would like to see a top-down solution. In other words: We need a legal framework that supports teachers and parents because there are no clear guidelines to adhere to. Ideally, smartphones would not be brought to school.

Who will be responsible for teaching digital topics to our youngsters in schools? Many teachers are already overworked and will not be able to get up to speed with the new digital topics so quickly. Perhaps a solution could be mobile teaching units that specialise in the digitalisation canon, undergo regular further training and present the most relevant findings in schools.

I advocate keeping Primary School students as digital-free as possible. The focus here is on learning how to work together and the basic skills that are important for progressing to higher grades. Secondary Schools should then introduce both the teaching of knowledge from a digitalisation canon and the teaching of evidence-based digital teaching methods into the classroom.



About the author

Prof Dr Christian Montag is a psychologist, scientist, author and keynote speaker for the digital age. He has held a W3 professorship for molecular psychology at the University of Ulm since 2014 and has also been working as an adjunct professor at Hamad Bin Khalifa University in Doha, Qatar, since 2023.

www.christianmontag.de



"Technology is a double-edged sword"



The International Baccalaureate (IB) provides world-class curriculum, teacher professional learning and assessment for around 5,800 international schools in more than 160 countries. The Bavarian International School is honored to welcome Magdalena Balica, Senior Education Policy Research Manager of the IBO, as a panelist at the BIS City Talk. In the interview, the education expert provides an insight into the IB perspective on digital wellbeing.

Dear Mrs. Balica, what have your research and studies on smartphone usage revealed about student wellbeing?

"At the IB, we believe that student wellbeing is the key to helping young people learn, grow, and live happy, fulfilling lives. When schools create an environment that is supportive, connected, and focused on the whole student, students are much more likely to thrive. One area we're especially interested in is how smartphones, digital technology and Artificial Intelligence (AI) impact student wellbeing. A recent study by the University of Oxford's Centre for Wellbeing Research, done for the IB, found that technology is a double-edged sword. On the plus side, technology can help students learn, stay connected with friends, and express themselves creatively. On the downside, it can also expose students to harmful content, cyberbullying, and mental health issues.

The way students use their devices makes a big difference. For example, if you're using

your phone to learn new things, chat with friends, or work on creative projects, it can boost your mood and help you feel more connected. But if you spend too much time on negative content or scrolling mindlessly, it can lead to stress or feeling down.

Finding the right balance is the key: make the most of technology's benefits, but don't let it take over."

What is the solution to these seemingly opposing objectives of integrating technology into learning in a meaningful way on the one hand, and on the other hand reminding children to pay attention to digital balance?

"We know that there's no one-size-fits-all solution. We work in over 160 countries with students from many different cultures and backgrounds, and each school community is unique. The key is finding the right balance for each group of students, and that starts by understanding how they use technology.

Parents and teachers need to ask questions like:

- **How many hours are they spending on their smartphones per day?**
- **What are they doing online – are they learning, socialising, or just scrolling?**
- **Do they know how to use technology safely (digital literacy)?**
- **Are they using technology responsibly and respectfully (digital citizenship)?**

Our research also shows that students need to be part of the conversation. When schools and parents include student voices in discussions about digital balance, we get better results. After all, students know their own challenges best, and they often have great ideas about what kind of support they need."

Based on research, what is the IB's recommendation to parents and guardians to improve the digital wellbeing of their children outside of the school?

"Research shows that the kind of guidance parents need depends on factors like their child's age, their digital skills, how often and for what purpose they use technology, and how technology is used within their family and community. Even though these factors can differ, there are some general tips that can help parents support their children's wellbeing at home.

Listen to your child's voice. Keep open, honest, and non-judgmental conversations with your children about their online experiences – both the good and the bad. When children feel heard and supported, they are more likely to share their concerns, like cyberbullying or seeing harmful content.

Encourage offline activities. Help your child find a good balance by promoting offline activities like sports, hobbies, or hanging out with friends face-to-face. Research shows that physical activity boosts wellbeing, improves self-esteem, strengthens social skills, and even helps with learning.

Set healthy boundaries together. Talk with your child about setting screen time limits and create device-free times – especially before bed and during family activities.

Be a role model. Show your kids what healthy technology use looks like. Families that are mindful about their tech use help create a positive and balanced approach to technology.

By listening, encouraging balance, setting boundaries, and modeling healthy habits, parents can play a big role in supporting their child's wellbeing."

Digitalisation can no longer be stopped, nor can the use of AI. What is the IB's position on integrating AI into the curriculum? And how will this change learning or the nature of assessments?

"The IB believes students should be active participants in their learning in order to be able to shape their own future. Instead of avoiding AI, we're excited about how it can enhance education and help students think critically and creatively. AI tools can make learning more engaging by helping students explore new ideas, get feedback, and solve problems. However, it's important for students to understand that AI can have biases and that AI-generated work must be credited properly.

In assessments, the IB will continue to use human examiners to grade work. But we're looking at using AI to help check for errors and improve accuracy. This way, AI supports the process, but humans stay in control.

AI can also help teachers by handling some tasks, giving them more time to focus on students."

Facts about IB

- **founded in 1968**
- **4 high-quality educational programmes**
- **5,800 international schools in 160 countries**
- **more than 2 million IB students aged 3-19**
- **www.ibo.org**





“We overprotect children in the real world and underprotect them online”

By Verena Zimmer

Both as an educator and being responsible for Educational Technology at BIS City Campus as well as being a mother of a nine year old child, the book “The Anxious Generation” by Jonathan Haidt caught my attention as soon as it was on the market.

The bestseller examines the dramatic rise in anxiety and depression among Generation Z, particularly since the early 2010’s. He attributes these trends to several societal shifts:

- including the pervasive use of smartphones,
- use of social media,
- overprotective parenting.

Haidt highlights how the pressure of curated online personas, fear of missing out (FOMO), and addictive algorithms have exacerbated feelings of inadequacy and loneliness, particularly among teenage girls.

He also critiques the decline of free play and unstructured social interactions, which are vital for developing resilience and coping mechanisms.

Since then three questions have been in my mind and they are coming up in ongoing conversations:

What practices can a school adopt to guide students in developing critical digital literacy, fostering healthy technology use, and ensuring their wellbeing in both personal and academic contexts?

The purpose of the school is to provide a nurturing environment where students not

only gain knowledge but also develop the skills to thrive in a rapidly changing world. By integrating technology into learning, a school can enhance the educational experience and empower students to create, collaborate, communicate, and think critically. However, it is crucial that the use of devices is intentional and balanced to ensure students use technology as a tool for learning, not distraction.

Building an protected environment where students can thrive with technology means creating a culture of responsible and mindful usage. This includes providing lessons on digital citizenship (e.g. media balance in Grade 2, which teaches students how to manage screen time in a healthy way, or age restrictions for apps in Grade 5, which help them understand the appropriate content for their age group).

As educators, we must always ensure that it serves the goal of enriching students’ learning experiences. Let’s be sure to make use of technology that is not just about screen time but about enriching our students’ critical thinking and creativity. A school can be a mediamentor instead of mediapolice.

As a parent, when is the appropriate time for my daughter to have her own smartphone and access social media, considering her developmental needs and the potential impacts on mental health and wellbeing?

What are my values as a parent? What characteristics and life skills do I want my child to learn? From a parent’s perspective, Haidt advocates for minimising screen time during childhood and adolescence as much as possible. This period is critical for developing resilience and social skills through real-world interactions. Allowing devices too early may take away essential unstructured play and face-to-face communication, which Haidt identifies as crucial for healthy development.

It’s important to introduce technology gradually and intentionally. Let’s get knowledgeable. Start by being a mediamentor through ongoing

conversations about digital citizenship. Empower the child to use technology as a tool for creativity, rather than consumption. Make her feel capable of making responsible choices about technology use by setting clear expectations and allowing her to have a role in shaping those agreements. As Haidt emphasises, when children feel involved and responsible, they are more likely to internalise healthy habits.

By being a rolemodel, showing balance in our own screen time, and offering guidance, we can foster a healthy relationship with technology while helping our children develop the skills and values needed to navigate the digital world confidently and responsibly.

What is the best way for parents to respond to their child’s desire for a phone and access to social media, considering the principles of Positive Discipline?

Positive Discipline (see also pages 24–25) encourages parents to have open, ongoing and respectful conversations to understand the child’s reasons and discuss the potential risks and benefits of technology use. Establishing age-appropriate boundaries for screen time and content, along with clear agreements for responsible online behaviour, is crucial. Modeling healthy technology habits and encouraging real-world interactions also helps children develop a balanced relationship with technology.



Digital citizenship

Digital citizens are learners who use their technology-driven powers conscientiously – and with empathy – to help make the world a better place (ISTE The New Digital Citizen).

1. Be responsible – a positive digital agent
2. Be safe – with your digital self
3. Be kind as a digital interactor



A blessing and a curse

Talking about the topic “Empowering digital citizens – smart kids vs. smartphones” naturally includes the perspective of our students. In this interview, the two 11th graders Jovita Boddeda (17, India) and Maya Sansoy (16, Germany) provide authentic insights into growing up in a digital world.

In the year Jovita was born, the iPhone was invented (2007), three years later the iPad came onto the market and Instagram was launched (2010), TikTok was started in 2016 and ChatGPT has been revolutionising the world since 2022.

As digital natives, how do you feel about this? Or is it simply the new normal and you can’t even imagine a world without all these digital services?

Jovita & Maya: “It’s definitely the new normal for us. We’ve grown up with smartphones, social media, and tools like AI, and it’s all so integrated into our lives that it’s hard to imagine a world without them. At the same time, we feel this pressure of constantly keeping up. On one hand, it’s amazing to have everything at our fingertips, information, entertainment and staying connected with friends. On the other hand, sometimes we don’t even realise how much time we spend staring at screens. It’s easy to get lost in endless scrolling without even noticing, and we can lose track of time or feel overwhelmed by the constant notifications.”

Which social media channels do you use, do you still consume traditional media such as television, radio or daily newspapers? How much time do you think you spend in front of digital devices in a week and how much of this time is learning or entertainment?

Jovita: “I use Instagram (entertainment and connections), YouTube (entertainment and knowledge) and WhatsApp (connection), I don’t consume traditional media, except television, but solely for streaming platforms like Netflix. I spend around 35 hours in front of digital devices in a week, five hours per day and of this time, probably 60% of it is for learning and schoolwork, especially since so many assignments require online research or apps. The rest is social media and watching shows when I need a break.”

Maya: “For me, I primarily use Instagram and YouTube, and I also haven’t ever consumed all that much traditional media like television or newspapers – all of it has been replaced by social media or online streaming platforms. However, I’ll still

“I definitely agree with smartphone restrictions in schools, for both younger and older students.”

Maya Sansoy

listen to the radio when taking the car, or occasionally I’ll join my parents when they turn on the TV. On average, I spend about four hours on my phone per day, or around 33 hours per week. A large percentage of this is purely for entertainment purposes or for talking with my friends; when using digital devices for school or to complete assignments I tend to rely more on my laptop (which adds probably another four hours of screen time per day).”

How do you feel about smartphones and social media – is it a curse or a blessing?

Jovita & Maya: “Smartphones and digital devices are both a blessing and a curse. On one hand, they bring people together and make life so much easier, things like emails, online payments, messaging, and access to entertainment and information. They help us learn new skills and stay connected with friends and family around the world. But on the other hand, it can be overwhelming. Spending too much time online can make us feel isolated or distracted from real life. We’ve all found ourselves doomscrolling on Instagram or TikTok for hours, and it often leaves us feeling empty or dissatisfied. It’s easy to lose track of time and sometimes it feels like we’re more focused on our phones than the people around us. We’ve all gotten addicted to these devices, and are constantly craving those short bursts of dopamine. It’s a cycle that we need to be more aware of if we want to really make the most of the digital world and everything it has to offer. For us, it’s about finding that balance and using technology in a way that adds value to our lives and not letting it control our life.”

What do you think of a smartphone ban at schools – which already exists at BIS?

Jovita: “I wasn’t allowed to have a phone at my previous school in India, everyone was much more connected with their surroundings and quite frankly I think my childhood wouldn’t have been the same if we were allowed to have a phone. At an older age where we are more responsible to travel alone, having a phone is a necessity, for safety and for ensuring that we remain connected at all times. Ban on smartphones at our school is reasonable, given that we are allowed to have it but not allowed to use it within school hours.”

Maya: “I definitely agree with smartphone restrictions in schools, for both younger and older students. I used to live in the US, and many schools there don’t have many restrictions in place for using smartphones, which obviously hinders learning and engagement in students.”

You are part of the age group that is already learning how to use Artificial Intelligence (AI). How do 16- and 17-year-old students see the possibilities of AI – and the risks? How does the school need to adapt to this, e.g. for exams?

Jovita & Maya: “AI is a great tool if used wisely. For instance, getting ideas is great, but these ideas should be molded with the help of our own creativity rather than completely relying on AI to complete a task/project. Too much dependence on AI will surely kill one’s creativity and in scenarios like examinations, causing struggle in forming answers. Additionally, AI is not completely accurate and overly relying on it is not a wise choice. AI simply can not match the level of genuine hard work and can be easily detected by detection tools, and as seen in AI generated art pieces, which just uses other artist’s work on the internet. The school could adapt to this by assigning more handwritten assignments and prohibiting the use of AI in classrooms when not required.”



“You pay for social media with your time”



Dino Ambrosi’s visit during school year 2023–24 was something of an initial spark to shed more light on the topic of digital wellbeing – in this magazine and at the BIS City Talk.

Because in the era of digitalisation, social media, and smartphones, a significant issue known to all parents is the excessive screen time for children and the prevalence of mindless entertainment – essentially, time wasted. Parents themselves are not immune to this, often setting less than ideal examples.

The expert in digital wellbeing, TEDx speaker, and lecturer at the University of California, Berkeley startled the BIS audience with a revealing chart. It illustrated the remaining years of life for an 18-year-old today, deducting time for essentials like sleep, school, work, meals, hygiene, etc. The chart revealed that the individual would spend a significant portion of their remaining

lifetime – 312 months – in front of a screen, the majority of which would be unproductive. Thus, only a fraction of genuine free time remains.

The digital pacifier

Dino Ambrosi, the inventor of Project Reboot, a guided digital toolbox programme designed to help teens reset their habits, made it impressively clear that most teenagers have an “addictive relationship” with their smartphones, the “cigarettes of our generation”. He compared iPhones and the like to a digital pacifier, which is used immediately in case of discomfort or boredom; scrolling leads to distraction and an easy escape into contemplation. “Unfortunately, the dopamine factory is right in your pocket, all the time,” says Dino Ambrosi.



Scan the QR code for Dino’s TEDx talk about “The battle for your time: exposing the costs of social media”



Dino Ambrosi’s eye-opening slide during his presentation at BIS.

Everyone needs to realise that social media can be seen as addictive entertainment, where the user is ultimately the product that the companies are selling. “You pay for social media with your time – and your data,” says Ambrosi.

In order to make your digital usage behaviour healthier, changes should be made in three areas: Mindset, environment (physical, social, digital) and habits. Adults should question themselves as to whether they are a role model for healthy tech habits or whether they keep reaching for their smartphone in the evening while their children are around them.

Building a tech-healthy household

Summarised in a nutshell, Dino Ambrosi recommends these three biggest learnings from his presentation:

1. Kids who are addicted to technology know that they are addicted to it. If they are hiding it from you, it’s likely because they blame themselves for it and harbour feelings of guilt and shame.

2. Just because technology can be addictive doesn’t mean that kids shouldn’t be using it. Rather, we should focus on instilling a desire in them to leverage its positive aspects.
3. Building a tech-healthy household requires cultivating an “us vs. addictive tech” mindset rather than a “me vs. you” mindset. Although rules and guidelines around screen time are important, make sure your child feels as though they have a say in the rules they are subjected to. Instead of being a judge, be a guide that helps them clarify their intentions for their tech use and holds them accountable to that ideal.

After his presentations, the top speaker for digital wellbeing was enthusiastic about the engagement and discussions with students and parents at BIS. He concluded by saying. “The work doesn’t stop there. Solving this problem requires working together to cultivate a new set of cultural norms around how we use technology.

www.projectreboot.school





“Urgent need for digital boundaries”

When talking about digital balance, the perspectives of two BIS leadership members are particularly important: Claire Ashbee, Pastoral Coordinator and Austin Lambe, Head of Student Wellbeing, Community Welfare, and Child Protection Officer.

The topic of digital wellbeing is being discussed now more than ever. What stance does BIS take on this important issue?

Lambe: “BIS has been a leader in implementing social media restrictions recognising early on the importance of good “digital hygiene”. It was one of the first international schools to restrict smartphone use during the school day with an even stricter policy introduced for secondary students in January 2025.”

Ashbee: “At BIS, we’ve been proactive in addressing digital wellbeing, ahead of many schools globally. Recognising the sharp rise in smartphone use and its impact on young people, we introduced a mobile device protocol in 2018 to encourage greater interaction and awareness. Through education on screen time, social media use,

and digital citizenship, we foster meaningful discussions with students and families, addressing the concerning links between smartphone use and social-emotional wellbeing.”

“We are seeing more and more students with difficulties in self regulation and with diminished abilities to tolerate even small stressors in the environment.”

Austin Lambe

Achieving responsible digital citizenship plays an important role at BIS. What exactly does that mean?

Lambe: “This means instilling in our students a true understanding and appreciation for

the power of the technology they hold in their hands. This means striking a balance between the freedom and the amazing access to information technology with its responsible use.”

Ashbee: “Understanding the impact of your digital footprint – being mindful of what you view and post, and considering the longterm implications of your online actions. It’s about behaving online as you would face-to-face, communicating respectfully, and using technology responsibly.”

How do you notice in your daily work in Pastoral Care and Student Wellbeing that the use of smartphones has an impact on children?

Lambe: “In modern society, I see a huge problem for our children; competing with technology for the attention of their parents and their peers. Wellbeing, healthy social maturation and language development in particular are highly sensitive to the number of social interactions that a child has with its parents and peers. If this number is diminished because the adult or peer is distracted with their device; the child loses out. We are seeing more and more students with difficulties in self regulation and with diminished abilities to tolerate even small stressors in the environment.”

Ashbee: “Beyond general mental health concerns, cyberbullying and poor behavior choices are on the rise. Unfiltered exposure to harmful content like porn, violence, racism, sexism, and self-harm is deeply concerning, influencing attitudes and behaviours in ways that most wouldn’t express face-to-face, highlighting the urgent need for digital boundaries and education.”

Can students come to the self-realisation that they are better off without the smartphone and TikTok or do they then have a fear of loss?

Lambe: “All the current forces are operating against this realisation happening; students see older students and most adults constantly on their devices. There is a growing peer pressure to fit in like everyone else and

“Beyond general mental health concerns, cyberbullying and poor behaviour choices are on the rise.”

Claire Ashbee

spend significant time where your friends are hanging out, on social media.”

Ashbee: “I fear many have forgotten how to enjoy their own company, quiet their minds, and break free from constant stimulation. While we see moments of mindfulness during the school day, the pull of constant activity remains strong. For meaningful change, adults must model healthy tech behaviour – setting boundaries, being present, and showing children how to live a balanced, connected life.”

What are your golden rules for reducing unproductive time on smartphones or social media and achieving a digital balance?

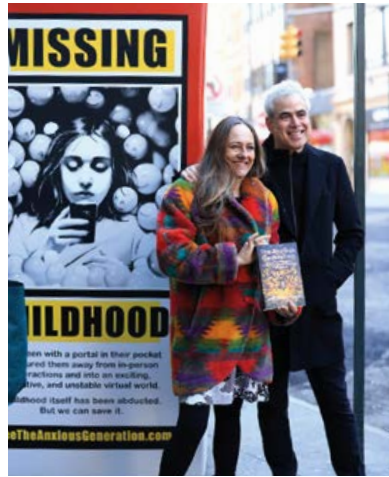
Lambe: “Understanding that your device, as Dino Ambrosi said; ‘functions like a child’s pacifier’. Being able to stand minor discomfort sets you up for being able to tolerate larger concerns; the things that happen in life: grief, illness, disappointment, high stress jobs. There needs to be built in breaks from devices and social media every couple of hours, every day, every week, and so on.”

Ashbee: “Start by being honest about your screen time and recognising when it’s unproductive. Take intentional breaks and vary your activities – don’t just trade one screen for another. Balance is about using technology purposefully while ensuring it doesn’t dominate your day.”



Empowering digital citizens

With the magazine special about digital wellbeing and the upcoming BIS City Talk on 26 February 2025, we would like to give all parents, teachers and students supportive guidance for dealing with smartphones and screentime. On this page we offer further valuable tips and links.



YouTube lecture of Jonathan Haidt about “Smartphones vs. smart kids” (“ExcelinEdSummit 2023”)

Bestselling author and social psychologist Jonathan Haidt shares research findings from his book “The Anxious Generation: How the great rewiring of childhood is causing an epidemic of mental illness” (Penguin LLC US, March 2024). He addresses the many unsettling connections between social media and the wellbeing of today’s students – with a call to action to rescue our kids.



Watch the lecture on YouTube.



Common Sense Media & Education

Healthy Childhood. Advice, research, and community outreach to support kids’ mental, physical, and emotional health and explore tech’s effects on wellbeing.



“Das Digital-Dilemma: Was für die Entwicklung unserer Kinder heute wichtig ist”

(The digital dilemma: what is important for the development of our children today”) – in German. Rüdiger Maas, Christian Montag, Klaus Zierer, Friedrich-Verlag, August 2024



“The tech-wise family: everyday steps for putting technology in its proper place” – Andy Crouche

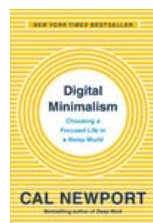


Be internet awesome

Empowering kids to be safe, confident explorers of the online world: https://beinternetawesome.withgoogle.com/en_us/families



“Raising humans in a digital world: helping kids build a healthy relationship with technology” – Diana Grabe



“Digital minimalism: choosing a focused life in a noisy world” – Cal Newport

Believe. Inspire. Succeed.

The 2023–24 school year has once again brought our slogan to life in three striking words: Believe. Inspire. Succeed. As a strong community, we have stood together, supported and inspired one another to pursue individual paths of growth and success. The following pages provide just a glimpse into the countless stories of flourishing at BIS.

“The Beauty and the beast”

The Primary School production is one of the highlights of the school year for students, teachers, parents and grandparents at both campuses. At the Schwabing City Campus, the young actors performed the play “The Beauty and the Beast”. Adapted for a large cast version, this timeless tale was brought to life by 30 incredible students from Grades 3 to 5, guided by our dedicated teachers under the leadership of Birgit Hauke-Swain and Alex Dos Santos. With sheer enthusiasm, perseverance, and heaps of talent, they mastered their lines, developed their characters, synchronized songs, and dance moves, all in anticipation of their moment to shine on stage.

The dedication and creativity of the amazing volunteer costume designers, set designer Alex Zuebisch, and the parents, staff, and students were instrumental in bringing the characters to life with stunning costumes and breathtaking set designs.



Woodwork for the youngest

You can never start too early when it comes to practical, real-life experiences. At BIS City Campus, the woodwork project was introduced for our youngest learners in the Early Childhood Centre (Kindergarten). By designing and creating their own unique pieces, students developed creative thinking and problem-solving skills. Through sawing, hammering, and painting, they improved their fine motor skills and and-eye coordination. Overcoming challenges and mastering new skills, they took pride in their accomplishments and and above all, had a lot of fun!



An artwork in the Pinakothek

Exhibiting at the honourable Pinakothek der Moderne museum in Munich at the age of eleven is not an everyday thing. Admittedly, the works of young BIS student Nikolai Koch are part of a large collective artwork. And yet it is still something special. "I'm very proud that so many visitors see our work, which was created as a team effort," says Nikolai. The large-format work was exhibited at the Pinakothek as part of the exhibition "Only we can de-rubble the world" in honour of the 100th birthday of Otto van de Loo (1924-2015). Nikolai loves drawing and painting. He is a member of the Kinderforum van de Loo, an art workshop in Schwabing that is very open-minded and keen to experiment and develop the creative potential of children. Like many of his classmates, Nikolai had a big step ahead of him after the summer holidays: the move to Grade 6 at Secondary School and thus from the Schwabing City Campus to Haimhausen. "I'm really looking forward to new classmates, teachers and new subjects like science and design!"



A highlight – the BIS City BBQ

Two years ago, the BIS City BBQ was invented – an event to recognize and celebrate the community at the Schwabing campus in a special way. The school fête in May 2024 was a highlight in the calendar, as children, parents, grandparents, teachers and staff came together in a happy, relaxed atmosphere and enjoyed the various performances on stage, food, drinks and music. A surprising highlight was a visit from professional basketball player Martin Kalu from FC Bayern Munich. In a stage talk, he gave insights into the life and values of a sports pro, played a shoot-out with the kids and then showed them tricks in the sports hall. The Parent Community Council (PCC) once again made a valuable contribution with its extremely popular coffee, cookies and cake bar.



Voice, choice and ownership

The Grade 5 Exhibition is the final highlight of the Primary Years Programme (PYP) and an important step towards the transition to Secondary School. At the BIS City Campus and Haimhausen Campus, around 100 students from Grade 5 shared their learning with classmates, teachers and parents – including invitations to conversations, presentations, process journals on iPads, research notes, infographics and visual representations of their learning journeys. Inquiries were wide ranging, connecting to global issues from the 17 UN Sustainable Development Goals. The Grade 5 PYP Exhibition is a prime example of the value of the pedagogy in the Primary School at BIS: collaborative inquiry and learning that leads to curiosity, agency (voice, choice and ownership) and finally, to action.



Lion's Den – Primary School entrepreneurs

As part of their Unit of Enquiry about Design, our Grade 5 students at the Haimhausen Campus had a challenging task to identify improvement opportunities around the school, develop solutions and pitch their ideas to a group of judges (ranging from Leadership, to faculty and Secondary School students) to get "pretend funds". The best ideas, however, might be brought to life and these creative students did a fantastic job at collaborating, designing, presenting and convincing – skills they will always need in life.





Talent, passion, energy

41 talented students in Grades 4 and 5 at our Haimhausen campus worked for five months to deliver a phenomenal performance of “The Grunch – A New Children’s Musical” in front of large audiences, from students to parents and beyond. The long preparation with such a large group of students certainly paid off, as they received a tearful standing ovation at the grand finale, following a demanding week-long performance schedule. The spirit of BIS was felt through and through and we are ever so grateful to all our incredible teachers and staff, led by Jennifer Orszag and Judith Clements, the helping parents and the magnificent students for such a wonderful show!



Three-star Eco-school for the fourth time!

For the fourth consecutive time, BIS has been awarded the prestigious title of a European Eco-school with three stars. “Thanks to the dedication of our BIS Blooms Team, Green Team, Eco-Agents, and others, we’re making great strides in our environmental initiatives in our community. Here’s to a green future as we aim to unify our projects in 2024 for an eco-umbrella of change,” said Grade 12 student Louisa Szewald, who graduated in that school year.

Environmental protection and sustainability are overarching themes across the school. The Eco-Agents (Haimhausen) and the Eco Club (City Campus) actively engage students in the Primary Schools, while the Secondary School is home to various sustainability teams, including the Litter Teams, Permaculture, BIS Blooms, The Green Team, Community Clean-Up Team, Bund Naturschutz Team, and Giving Greens. Initiatives focus on Healthy Living, Biodiversity, Waste, and Sustainable Mobility, with numerous mini-projects operating under these umbrella topics.

A huge congratulations to all students for their fantastic work throughout the school year, and a heartfelt thank you to the dedicated teachers who guided them, led by our Eco-school coordinators Emma Morris, Andi Pichler, and Monica Godoy Hidalgo!



Eco-school took part in the “Day of Hope”

The organizers of the Eco-school initiative in Bavaria had a special idea to recognize the successful schools in 2023-24. The award winners were able to take part in the “Day of Hope” in Munich’s Werksviertel, under the patronage of Dr. Jane Goodall. Valeria (Grade 6), Matias (Grade 7), Shouzheng (Grade 8) and Sophie (Grade 9) represented BIS excellently, reported on the countless Eco projects at BIS and of course were themselves inspired in many ways.



BIS students at MathsQuest

Four Grade 5 students from Haimhausen Primary School took part in the MathQuest Competition of ECIS (Educational Collaborative for International Schools) at The American School of Barcelona. The competition included 64 students from 15 schools in eight countries. Our wonderful quartet Diego, Maria, Minsoo and Defne represented BIS!

The competition took place over three days. The first day consisted of answering different math questions from exhibits at CosmoCaixa Museum and the following days consisted of both individual challenges and team challenges. “The students have been putting in extra work both at school and in their own time to prepare for the competition. They should be extremely proud of themselves for all their hard work”, said BIS Teacher Heather Prekop. It was an excellent opportunity for our students to showcase their math skills, work as a team and meet other students from around Europe.



Making a positive difference

BIS is well-known for hosting exciting speakers at the school – from Careers Day and Interview Day to the BIS Sustainability Summit or special individual lectures. All Grade 9 students had the chance to listen to Jacob Bourgeois, the Head of Carbon Strategies and Innovation at Volkswagen Group. He emphasised the urgency of having a climate strategy and reported on the challenge of bringing a large corporation like VW to carbon neutrality. “Every person and every organisation face their own unique challenges in addressing their carbon footprint, and I think it’s amazing that the students at BIS are interested in learning about this topic and doing what they can to reduce their climate impact,” said Jacob Bourgeois.

The event was part of the “Service as Action” project, a foundational element of the International Baccalaureate Middle Years



Programme (IB MYP), which encourages students in Grades 6 through 10 to participate in activities that make a positive difference to the lives of others and to the environment. This event kick-started the next phase of our Grade 9 “Service as Action”, which is the challenge of designing a long-term strategy to make BIS carbon neutral. “Inspired by the work and support of Jacob and the Volkswagen Group, we are ready for ‘Service as Action’ at BIS to meet the challenge too!”, said Emma Morris, Service Learning Coordinator at BIS.



The art of persuasion

The grand finale of the Speech Competition took place on the big stage of the BIS Haimhausen Campus: eight Grade 10 students, two from each class, had qualified and presented their speeches of no more than four minutes in front of their excited classmates, the jury and other leadership members. The topics they addressed were taken from the 17 UN Sustainability Development Goals – from ocean pollution to mental health, from gun ownership in the USA to malnutrition in children and animal experiments. Italian Francesco Motta (15) was ultimately awarded first place for his speech on urban poverty, which was convincing both in terms of content as well as his delivery and persuasive power. The judges found it very difficult to make a selection, as all the participants demonstrated outstanding skills: research, critical thinking, communication skills and self-confidence. A big compliment to the “Fantastic 8”: Aitana Pozueco Rodriguez and Fiona Dirilgen (10A), Max Miranda and Lola Menendez Medina (10B), Ellie Dessent and Francesco Motta (10C), Marilia Chiladaki and Felix Drabek (10D).



BIS International Festival 2024


Bavarian
International
School

Believe. Inspire. Succeed.



“It’s where we feel at home”

The BIS International Festival 2024 marked a joyful conclusion to the 2023–24 school year. Bringing together around 2,000 students, alumni, parents, teachers, and staff from 70 different nations, the event was a true celebration of our community and achievements of the past school year.

“We are one big family based on trust, in which values such as kindness, respect, and international-mindedness play an essential role and in which everyone belongs,” said BIS Head of School Dr Chrissie Sorenson. “On this basis, we work and learn together, support each other, and everyone can flourish and develop to become the best version of themselves. This value system and this unique community are of paramount importance – and just like democracy, we need to take care of it, cultivate it, and protect it.”

The festival’s diverse programme offered something for everyone. Highlights included the much-loved international flag parade led by the Primary School students, captivating art workshops, and live music performances that showcased the talent and dedication of BIS students and staff. Our youngest visitors enjoyed the soap bubble artist, participated in face painting, while others explored the parkour display (including a robot arm from AGILE

ROBOTS) that previewed the future Creativity & Innovation Centre (CIC).

Sports enthusiasts cheered on the now traditional alumni football matches and joined a training session with the Rugby Club Unterföhring. The day’s pinnacle was a fantastic live concert by the staff band, THE TUESDAYS, which had the crowd dancing well into the evening, in spite of rain.

The BIS International Festival was a day to celebrate not only the achievements of the past year but also the unique spirit of the BIS community – a place for everyone to grow and flourish.

A heartfelt thank you goes out to everyone who made this event such a success: the facilities team, music teachers, Primary School leadership team, alumni organisers, and all the volunteers who worked tirelessly behind the scenes to make this festival a memorable finale to an incredible year at BIS!









An Oscar winning producer

Film producer Max Wiedemann from Wiedemann & Berg, who produced the OSCAR-winning film “Das Leben der Anderen” (The Lives of Others). With an audience of almost 300 students from Grades 9, 10 and 11, the Munich native gave a very practice-orientated insight into the opportunities and risks of AI. There were several murmurs in the auditorium, for example when Max Wiedemann presented the quality of images that can now be produced with generative AI: He showed perfectly created movie scenes with “Sora”, deep fakes with AI-powered lip synchronisation, had Johnny Cash sing “Barbie Girl” and the distinctive voice of the British icon Sir David Attenborough speak German. There was special applause when his 8-year-old daughter shared her AI-generated rap song about the Bavarian International School.



A real-life superhero

Holistic learning experiences that extend far beyond the classroom are a hallmark of BIS. 365 students in Grades 7 to 10 saw a special, touching and history-rich cinema premiere. At the invitation of film producer and distributor AI Munteanu from SquareOne Entertainment, the students watched the English version of the film “ONE LIFE” at the Filmtheater Sendlinger Tor. The film tells the true story of Sir Nicholas ‘Nicky’ Winton, a young London broker who, in the months leading up to World War II, rescued 669 Jewish children from the Nazis. “ONE LIFE” artfully shifts between the rescue operations in 1939 and 50 years later, when Nicky Winton is now a grandfather, as the BBC presents the heroic story to the worldwide public for the first time - and reunites the protagonist with his rescued children in a highly emotional finale. “It’s a real-life superhero movie,” explained AI Munteanu in a student-friendly way about the “British Oskar Schindler”.

“Especially in these times of increasing extremism and anti-semitism, it is of paramount importance that people listen to their moral compass and get involved. The film carries another important message: Ordinary people can do extraordinary things,” says BIS parent AI Munteanu, who studied at the University of Maryland and Ludwig Maximilians-University in Munich.

An important film about core values, civil courage and social engagement that couldn’t have been released at a better time.



BIS @ Biennale in Venice

Can there be a more authentic and intense art experience than visiting the 60th Biennale in Venice? Hardly. That’s why a group of our students from the International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma class for Visual Arts visited the Biennale, the Olympics of Art! They explored the lagoon city, which is a unique artwork or open-air museum of its own. The students saw art from over 60 countries on every corner, in galleries, museums, in the canals and in the piazzas. Two of the many highlights were the Peggy Guggenheim Museum, where there is a collection of modern art like Picasso, Pollock, Dali and Rothko, and the visit of the glass blowing factory in Murano.



Putting theory into practice

The science department is one of the biggest at BIS with 10 teachers and 2 lab technicians and their contribution to the International Baccalaureate Diploma (IB DP) results speak volumes. In the 2023 IB DP exams, 50% of Physics students achieved grade 6 or 7! This was also the case for 30% of our Biology and Chemistry students. 40% of the students who received 36 points or more had two science courses as part of their IB DP.

Putting theory into practice is the core of the work in the classroom, and our Grade 10 Biology students had the opportunity to dissect pig eyes as part of their Nervous System unit. The task was to examine the eye and locate the different parts including the optic nerve, which carries information from the eye to the brain.

The group was led by their beloved teacher Patrizia Paquola, Middle Years Programme (MYP) Science & DP Chemistry teacher, who made the experience fun and engaging. Ms Paquola is also a certified IB Workshop Leader in IB DP Chemistry, meaning that she is qualified to train other IB DP teachers. What an honour for our school to have such brilliant and dedicated teachers like Ms Paquola and the entire BIS Science team, led by Céline Saily!



The Schloss as an art gallery

Once a year, Schloss Haimhausen transforms into a large gallery – at the Art Exhibition of the Grade 12 students. In April 2024, 19 students showed more than 130 artworks in the genres of painting, sculpture, mixed media, photography, film and installation. The works were an assessment part of the International Baccalaureate Diploma (IB DP) in Visual Arts. Just like at an art gallery opening, the 17 to 19-year-old artists presented their ideas in person and answered questions about their work. "With their innovative forms of expression and unlimited creativity, our students are redefining the boundaries of artistic representation. They thus underline the indispensable role of art in promoting critical thinking, cultural understanding and holistic development," says BIS art teacher Anne Dirilgen.



2024



A special celebration

Every year, the farewell for the students of the graduating class is a very emotional event, not only for the students themselves, but especially for the parents and teachers. Developed during the corona pandemic as an idea to celebrate the students despite social distancing rules, the parents' car parade has now become a small tradition. On the last day of school for Grade 12, it becomes particularly emotional when the Primary School students give the older students their best wishes for the future with the traditional BIS Farewell Song and personalised posters. Not to forget the annual brunch, which is always lovingly prepared by the Grade 11 parents. We gave our future alumni this message for their journey on social media: "As you gear up for your exams, remember the incredible journey you've been on and the growth you've experienced along the way. We couldn't be prouder of each and every one of you. Your hard work, dedication, and resilience have shone brightly, and now it's time to shine in your exams! You've got this!"

A toolkit for life

16 BIS students received their The Duke of Edinburgh's International Award from the new British Consul General in Munich, Mark Dittmer-Odell – seven in the Silver category, nine in Bronze. For the award, all of them did their three activities (service, sport and skill) as well as an overnight camp at school, a day hike and two expeditions in the Bavarian Oberland.

“The Duke of Edinburgh Award is a tangible reminder of the importance of real-life connections, meaningful relationships, purposeful action and sustained effort. It reminds us that true success is not just about achieving quick fixes or fleeting wins, but about building lasting relationships, developing valuable skills, and making a meaningful difference in the world,” explained Mr. Dittmer-Odell.



By definition of the foundation, The Duke of Edinburgh's International Award is a informal education and learning framework supporting young people to find their purpose, place and passion in the world. The award was founded in 1956 and is now organised in more than 130 countries for young people between the ages of 14 and 24. The goal of the “toolkit for life”: supporting generations of innovators and changemakers to be truly world-ready. Congratulations to our students: Leo C., Maksim Z., Federico J., Ferris H. Sofia P., Dirk S., James C (Silver) and Lisa R., Sophie M., Victoria S., Emily Tara D., Louise M., Ayokiitan T., Lola M., Austin J., Danika V. (Bronze).



The Interdisciplinary Unit (IDU) is an incredibly exciting project for all MYP students. Over several months, Grade 9 students combined the subjects of German with Visual & Performing Arts. At a grand finale in the auditorium, they presented their projects, which explored topics such as the former German Democratic Republic (GDR), Stasi surveillance, the Berlin Wall and the Peaceful Revolution of 1989. Their stories were also told through self-written songs such as “Grenznah” – an electronic piece in Kraftwerk style, and the Berlin song with raps about “Two Cities, divided in pain, with the wall in between”. The presentations also included 3D art installations, such as a hot air balloon symbolizing border escapes, a Stasi surveillance camera integrated with a smartphone, a brainwashing washing machine, and a Stasi prison. The reactions ranged from goosebumps to applause, from deep reflection to astonishment!



From nothing to goosebumps

BIS hosted one of the ISTA (International School Theatre Association) Middle School festivals, welcoming 78 students from seven international schools. Over the course of the festival, the students collaborated to devise an original performance exploring the theme ‘Build and Fly,’ inspired by the myth of Icarus.

The experience focused on dreaming big, taking risks, and embracing failure as part of the creative process. Students developed team spirit and learned valuable lessons from mistakes, all while shaping their ideas for the future. A visit to the German Museum Flugwerft Schleißheim provided additional inspiration.

The students – including 14 from BIS – impressed the audience in the auditorium with their creativity, risk-taking, personal expression, communication skills, and self-confidence.



The BIS Authors Group

As part of the Infinity Programme for asynchronous learners, the BIS Authors Group celebrates creativity and literary achievement. In the school year 2023–24, 31 students from Grades 3–10, representing 21 nationalities, proudly unveiled their published books. These young authors showcased remarkable courage, curiosity, and inspiration. Through engaging discussions and creative exploration, the Authors Group nurtured a love for storytelling and empowered students to share their unique voices. Congratulations to our talented authors for their outstanding accomplishments and thanks to all the passionate teachers, Heather Prekop from Haimhausen Primary School, and Dr Alissa Carter as the leader of the Infinity Programme.



Exchange of knowledge

A close network of international schools around the globe is an important factor in the exchange of knowledge, tips and trends. Gabriela Coenen-Hoffman, Head of “German A” Department at BIS, visited the German International School in Chicago (USA). She discussed the IB Middle Years Programme (MYP) and the IB Diploma Programme (DP) with members of the leadership team and took the first step in a cooperation. “It was such a wonderful day of collaboration and meetings in a true international IB atmosphere. This exchange of ideas will certainly be an exemplary learning across oceans, finding us all in a vibrant and intriguing learning environment”, said the BIS German teacher.



VON DER VISION ZUM DRUCK WIR BRINGEN ES AUF PAPIER!



sd
m

STULZ DRUCK
UND MEDIEN
Bodenseestr. 226
81243 München



www.stulz-druck-medien.de



The voice of the student community

"We are the voice of the student community, fostering a safe and connected school environment and serving as the bridge between students and faculty at BIS," states Henry Munteanu (photographed), explaining the function of the Student Council of the Secondary School. The Grade 12 student was the President of the Student Council until December 2024, when he handed over the

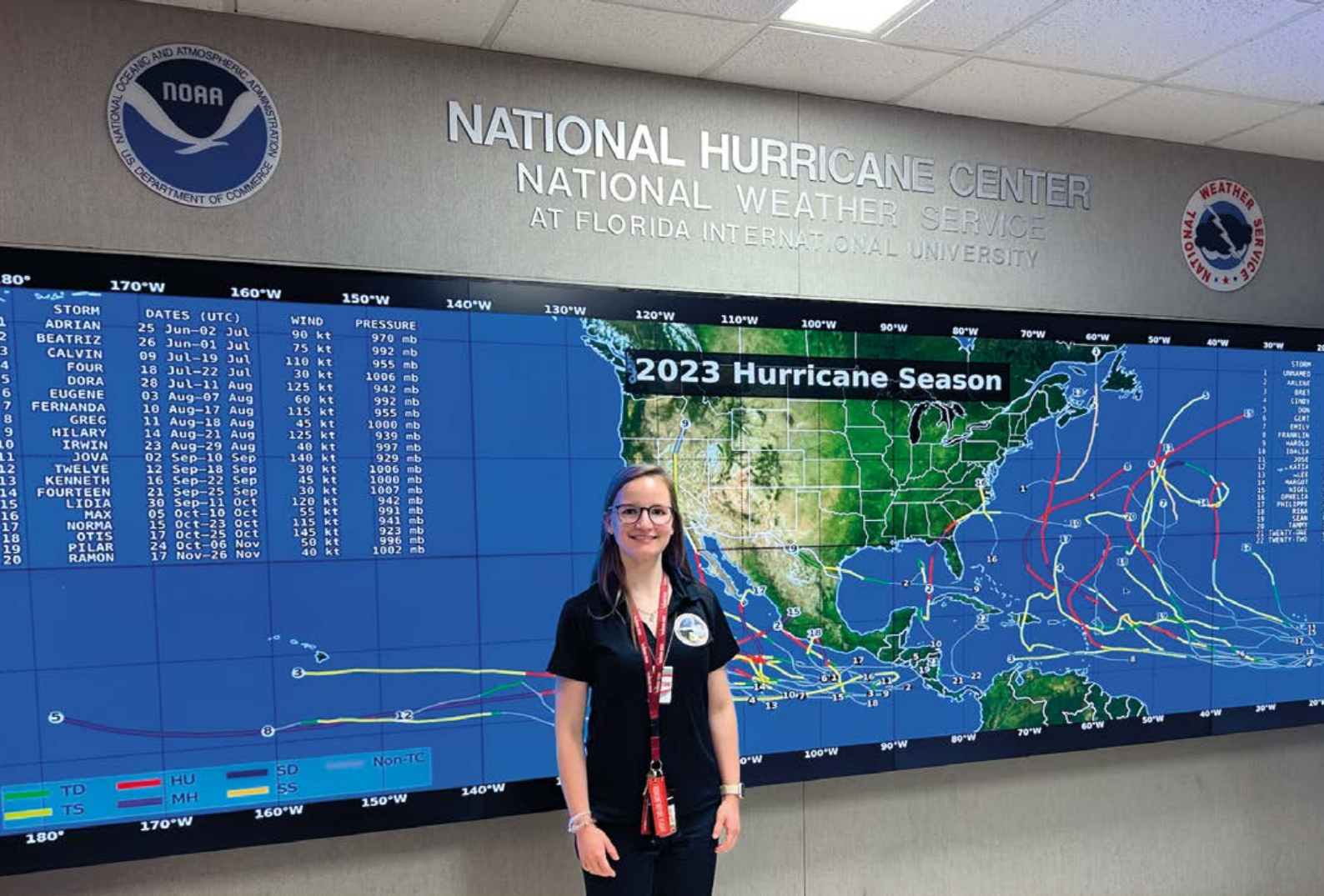
baton to the newly elected President Felix Drabek from Grade 11. The Student Council team – in addition to the President, there is the Vice President, Treasurer, Secretary, Publicity Officer, Arts Officer, Sports Officer and the Sustainability Officer – strengthens the spirit and the welcoming atmosphere at the school, intensifies the sense of community and supports the connection to the people in Haimhausen. "In a large and diverse student community, it can sometimes be challenging to express everyone's opinions and needs effectively. We're working to make student voices more central in decisionmaking, ensuring that opinions and needs are effectively heard and addressed," says Henry Munteanu. In addition, the team attaches great importance to communication via social media in order to enhance the school's image as a creative and caring community – on Instagram (@bis.studentcouncil.2024) and TikTok (@bis.studentcouncil.2024).

A successful cooperation

BIS and the Japanese International School (Grades 1-9) have a close, trusting and mutually inspiring cooperation. Last year, 15 BIS students from the After School Activity "Japanese for Beginners" visited the school in Munich-Sendling. "This visit was a significant opportunity for our students to immerse themselves in an authentic Japanese educational environment, applying their language and cultural knowledge in real-life scenarios," said Aki Schwan, Japanese teacher at BIS. The trip also aimed to promote our Secondary School as the primary choice for Japanese



students transitioning into the international school system. Our students attended lessons in different grade levels and engaged in language and cultural activities. "This experience has fueled their enthusiasm to continue learning Japanese," said Mrs. Schwan.



In the eye of the storm

The Bavarian International School was opened in 1991 and six years later, in 1997, the first 17 students received their IB Diploma. Since then, approximately 1,400 global citizens and changemakers have graduated from BIS – among them is Victoria Dellas from the Class of 2023.

The 20-year-old Victoria Dellas has a very clear plan for her career. One day, she would like to work in the USA to predict extreme weather events such as upcoming storms and hurricanes as accurately as possible and thus protect people and nature. Either at the National Hurricane Centre in Miami, Florida, at the Storm Prediction Centre in Norman, Oklahoma, or as an aviation meteorologist for aeronautical institutions.

“That has always been my absolute dream. I decided to go to the Bavarian International School so that I could follow exactly this path,” says Victoria Dellas, who moved from a state gymnasium in Kiel to Grade 10 at BIS in 2021 and graduated with the International Baccalaureate Diploma (IB DP) in 2023. “BIS

has equipped me academically with everything I need for the next steps, e.g. independent learning, outside-the-box thinking, creativity, international mindedness,” says the Berlin native. The CAS programme (Creativity, Activity, Service) also played an important role, as the young student engaged with the German Weather Service (“Climate data analysis”), worked there in a part-time job alongside the IB DP and completed internships at Munich Airport (aviation meteorology).

Personalised learning

So it’s no wonder that Victoria Dellas is now studying exactly that: Meteorology including Aviation Meteorology as a major and Aviation Management as a minor at the Florida

Institute of Technology in Melbourne (USA), equipped with various scholarships. The renowned private university is located on Florida’s Space Coast in the neighbourhood of companies such as Space X, Boeing, Lockheed Martin, Northrup Grumman or NASA. A quarter of the students come from 80 different countries. “I chose this university because of its excellent reputation. And the student-teacher ratio is small to ensure a personalised approach to learning. The atmosphere and learning climate are comparable to BIS, people know each other, there is a team spirit here. Last but not least, the university stands for inspiration and success – just like BIS,” says Victoria Dellas. As mentioned at the beginning, she always has a clear perspective: the future extreme weather meteorologist would like to do her Masters at the University of Oklahoma or the University of Colorado Boulder. “Meteorology is incredibly important and life-essential in the USA!”

Lifelong community

However, Victoria Dellas also knows that she needs to find the right balance and create a counterweight to her intellectual work. She goes to the gym, plays golf (“a people’s sport in the USA”), enjoys leisure time on the beach or trips to the Kennedy Space Center nearby Cape Canaveral. When holidays and time allow, she returns to her home country and also visits her former school, as she did recently at the BIS International Festival. “I think it’s great to be part of a lifelong



community and I’m really looking forward to meeting up with old school friends and keeping in touch,” says Victoria Dellas. By the way, this is very easy – via the alumni portal BIS Connect!



BIS Alumni



BIS Connect

BIS is dedicated to strengthening alumni relations and expanding its network. Whether you are a former student, parent, or member of staff, we invite you to register on our alumni platform, BIS Connect: <https://bis-connect.org/>. We are always on the lookout for inspiring stories from our alumni! Do you know a former student who has pursued an exciting career path, is doing exceptional work, founded a start-up, or made a difference in the world? If so, please share their story with us via email: [Marko Mädge: m.maedge@bis-school.com](mailto:Marko.Mädge@bis-school.com)



Rock your profile

The BIS University & Career Counseling team, led by Jane Costley alongside Beverly Conway and Christopher Kan, dedicates countless hours to providing personalised guidance for students.

In addition to one-on-one consultations, they organise impactful events like University Fairs, Interview Days, and guest talks from industry leaders such as Gaby Wasensteiner from LinkedIn, helping students prepare for their future pathways. The Senior Brand Manager DACH (Germany, Austria, Switzerland) visited the Secondary School to show our Grade 11 students how to use LinkedIn professionally. The platform has long been far more than just a digital business card, it has become the largest professional network in the world with around one billion users in over 200 countries and regions.

What are Mrs. Wasensteiner's top tips to "Rock your LinkedIn profile"?

1. Have a fully completed profile:

Your profile is your personal presentation, your digital business card. It should clearly highlight your strengths, professional

interests and personality. A good LinkedIn profile not only includes a profile photo, but also a list of your previous jobs, internships or volunteer work. My tip: Add a little more information to each position – what skills have you learned, what projects have you worked on? You also have the option of adding further specific skills to your profile – just by adding at least one skill, you will receive four times more messages and twice as many profile visits.

2. Build up a network early on: It always makes sense to invest time in your own network! I also recommend networking with people from other industries that are exciting for you in order to gain new perspectives and inspiration. Don't be shy: just send a networking request with a short message – what could possibly happen?

"I was very impressed with the energy the students brought to the career day."

Gaby Wasensteiner

3. Use LinkedIn actively: Job hunting is now easier than ever – every minute, seven people worldwide find a new job on LinkedIn. Instead of writing elaborate CVs, applicants can use their LinkedIn profile to become visible to recruiters and potential employers. Always keep your profile up to date and use the filter function (e.g. by location or topics such as sustainability). To keep up-to-date with new job vacancies, it is also worth activating job alerts for specific jobs or companies you are interested in. You can also activate the #OpenToWork feature.

4. Become visible through own content:

No false modesty. No matter where you are in your career, have the courage to write your own posts. Think about what is important to you, what experiences you have had. If your own posts are still a bit too much for you, then simply start by commenting on other members' posts, giving your input and thus increasing your visibility.

5. Authenticity: This is the key to success. Show yourself as you are, talk about the topics that are close to your heart and share your personal experiences and your honest opinion. After all, you want a job where you can be yourself and an employer whose values align with yours. To get the most out of LinkedIn for you, I recommend investing time in your profile every now and then and cultivating your network. Try to set aside around 25 minutes a week to consciously dedicate to yourself, your career and your professional network.



Gaby Wasensteiner gave BIS students valuable tips for their digital business card.

LinkedIn is a platform that has grown enormously in importance in recent years. "What makes us special is the fact that content is not created purely for the purpose of entertainment – it's more about sharing value-adding content and opening up new opportunities for people in the professional world," says Gaby Wasensteiner. LinkedIn is like a compass that accompanies people not just temporarily, but in the long term. The career expert was very impressed by her visit to BIS: "I was very impressed with the energy the students brought to the career day. The LinkedIn workshop was full, even though it was completely voluntary. Everyone was very well prepared for the mock interviews – a pleasure for any recruiter. I really like that BIS offers such career days that really help with the job search and prepare for everyday working life – a great inspiration for other schools, keep it up!"



Join BIS on LinkedIn and support us on our way to 5,000 followers.



Embrace lifelong learning and adaptability

By Aleksejs Plotnikovs

The energy in the room was intense. Rows of bright-eyed 10th graders sat eagerly in one of the classrooms, their curiosity tinged with a mix of excitement and apprehension.

This was no ordinary BIS Careers Day session. This was about the session about AI – a thing poised to revolutionize every corner of our lives, from the jobs we hold to the ways we create, connect, and live. And I had the privilege to present an open look into this future, filled with opportunities, challenges, and a call to action.

“Will AI endanger humanity?”

I started with the question on everyone’s mind: “Will AI endanger humanity?” A hush fell over the room, students leaning forward, waiting for the verdict. “Unlikely,” I said with a smile. The relief in their expressions was tangible. But my next sentence pulled them right back into focus: “Yet – humans who use AI will surpass those who don’t.”

This simple truth captures the essence of the era we’re stepping into. AI is not the antagonist in our story; it’s a powerful ally – if we know how to work with it. But here’s the catch: AI is not self-sufficient. It’s a tool, and like any tool, its effectiveness depends on its user.

The role of humans in the age of AI
To paint this picture clearly, I broke down the critical ways humans and AI must collaborate for success:

- **Annotation and preparation:**
Before AI can make predictions or drive decisions, it needs clean, labelled, and organised data. Who does that? Humans. It’s our responsibility to ensure data governance, quality, and integrity.
- **Ethical guidelines and oversight:**
From privacy to fairness, humans are the gatekeepers of AI’s moral compass. Without thoughtful ethical frameworks, AI could amplify biases or make harmful decisions in sensitive areas like healthcare or criminal justice.
- **Creative inspiration:**
While AI can generate, mimic, and predict, it cannot create completely from scratch. Defining new original ideas, cultural relevance, or emotional depth? That’s human territory.
- **Complex decision-making:**
In nuanced scenarios requiring empathy, moral judgment, or social awareness, humans remain irreplaceable. AI may analyze the data, but humans must make the final call.

The call to action: adapt and thrive
As I moved through these examples, it became clear that the students weren’t just absorbing information – they were reflecting. And this was the perfect moment to challenge them. “If there’s one thing you do today to prepare for tomorrow,” I said, “let it be this: embrace lifelong learning and adaptability.”

I could see them mentally unpacking the weight of this statement. These students, digital natives, already have an edge in familiarity with technology. But the future isn’t just about knowing how to use tools – it’s about growing with them, being critical thinkers, and staying agile in an ever-changing world.

The beauty of AI is in its ability to revolutionise our lives, but it demands responsibility. I urged the students to celebrate the opportunities AI brings – streamlined workflows, boundless creativity, personalised education – but also to remain critical. “AI is a reflection of us,” I reminded them. “Our biases, our priorities, our values – it all feeds into these systems. If we’re thoughtful, AI will amplify the best of humanity. If we’re careless, it could amplify the worst.”

The big takeaway
As the session ended, I left the students with one final charge: “The future won’t wait. Embrace AI. Celebrate it. Use it to stand out and be different. The world needs your creativity, your curiosity, and your courage.”

Walking away, I couldn’t help but feel optimistic. This generation has the potential to redefine what’s possible with AI. They are thinkers, dreamers, and doers – read to collaborate with technology to build a better, smarter future.

AI isn’t just transforming the world; it’s challenging us to transform ourselves. And from what I saw at the BIS Careers Day, the future is in very capable hands.

About the author:
Aleksejs Plotnikovs has a son in Grade 4 at the Bavarian International School. The Latvian was not only one of the renowned speakers at the annual BIS Careers Day, but also gave several lectures on AI at the Secondary School. Mr. Plotnikovs is a data & AI expert, founder of [chiefdata.ai](#), book author (“Data management strategy at Microsoft”) and coach. Previously, he worked for Microsoft for more than 15 years, most recently as EMEA Lead, Data & AI Strategy.



The speakers at the 13th BIS Careers Day 2024
From left to right: **Dr Luis Figueredo** (Munich Institute of Robotics & Machine Intelligence of TUM), **Balazs Roóz** (Bentley Motors), **Monika Schmidt** (MAN Truck & Bus SE), **Rohit Sodha** (MerXu), **Laura Comendador Frutos** (European Southern Observatory), **Karl-Heinz Pawlitzki** (Arabella Hospitality SE), **Bagbakar Güney** (Danone), **Aleksejs Plotnikovs** (Microsoft), **Peter Berg** (Infineon Technologies), **Prof Dr med Matthias Volkenandt** (Medical Doctor).



“AI won’t replace teachers”

The school’s annual public expert forum is becoming a valued tradition. Every year, the BIS City Talk provides exciting impulses, inspiration and guidance. The last timely topic in February 2024 was Artificial Intelligence (AI) & education.

There were no seats left at the stage and cafeteria area of the Schwabing Campus when experts Tristan Post (AI Founders & TUM), Dr Diana Knodel (fobizz & App Camps), Isabell Fries (expert in Future Work & Human Machine Interaction) and Dr Chrissie Sorenson (BIS Head of School) discussed the hot topic. What are the opportunities and risks of using AI in the classroom? How will AI change schools? What future skills will students need in a rapidly changing world? All these questions were passionately discussed by the speakers, with great involvement of the enthusiastic audience, moderated by TV presenter Nina Eichinger.

In summary, the most important seven headlines of the evening were:

- No future education without AI. AI is not a fleeting trend, it is here to stay and will continue to improve. We are only at the beginning of a long journey of change, but schools should approach the technology critically but with an open mindset. “The IB is excited by the opportunities that these tools bring to education to enhance learning experiences,” states the International Baccalaureate Organization (IB).
- AI offers great opportunities for personalised learning, customised as in the Netflix algorithm, and can therefore maximise learning and teaching potential.
- AI can relieve teachers of administrative and planning tasks, which in turn gives them more freedom to focus on their core task: working directly with students.
- AI can lead to greater equality, as the technology can be used regardless of location, time or social background.
- Teaching soft/human skills plays a decisive role in a school of the future.
- “AI won’t replace humans – but humans with AI will replace humans without AI.” (Harvard Business Review)

Last but not least: Bavarian International School is well prepared for the integration of AI into the school and, as an educational frontrunner, is already in the midst of learning, testing and implementation.

In his keynote, AI expert and TUM lecturer Tristan Post emphasised that AI will not replace teachers, but will change the role of the teacher to become more of a learning facilitator. Personalisation, as with Netflix, is a huge opportunity.

Human skills are key

Dr Diana Knodel from Hamburg, EdTech entrepreneur and founder of fobizz and App Camps, added that we should get used to AI becoming a normal part of education, just as it is normal to have electricity everywhere. Teachers’ openness to AI will change dramatically when they see how much time it saves them. “AI won’t replace teachers, but it will relieve their workload significantly!”

Future Work expert Isabell Fries focussed on the change in skills: “Critical thinking will be more important than ever before, because disinformation, propaganda and fake news are among the greatest risks facing the world. For this reason, we need to strengthen human skills, empathy, using our hearts and the four big C’s: critical thinking, collaboration, creativity and communication.” This approach was supported by Dr Chrissie Sorenson. Teaching future skills or human skills plays a key role in the International Baccalaureate and especially at BIS. A clear value system provides a binding compass for all members of the community.



AI expert and keynote speaker Tristan Post.

Critical reflection and responsibility

It was clear from all the statements and discussions that the new technology should be approached with a curious but critical mindset. We need to be aware of the risks and, above all, learn how to use AI responsibly, ethically and critically. In his closing remarks, Tristan Post quoted the Director of the London School of Economics, Minouche Shafik: “In the past, jobs were about muscles, now they’re about brains, but in the future they’ll be about the heart.”



BIS City Talk over the years:

- 2017 Future learning
- 2018 Design thinking
- 2019 Positive education
- 2022 Educating for tomorrow: values + life skills = changemakers
- 2023 Next generation leadership
- 2024 “AI in education: empowering tomorrow’s digital citizens”

Save the date

26 February 2025 (18:00): Empowering digital citizens: smart kids vs. smartphones.



BIS City Talk – register now!

Third scholarship, a record and an award

The 2023–24 school year was equally intense and exciting for the Communications & Events, Admissions and Fundraising team of BIS.



A winning team (from left): Sebastian Stiphout (photographer), Robert Grill (graphic design), Maya Rooz (BIS Marketing) and Marko Mädge (BIS Communications).

In its 33-year history, Bavarian International School reached a record enrollment of 1,269 students in April 2024 including over 330 students at the BIS City Campus in Schwabing for the first time. A generous and committed family from the BIS community funded the third “Succeed” scholarship, covering all costs for a student for Grades 9–12. This further strengthens the incredible fact that BIS is still the only international school in Germany with a scholarship programme.

During the 2024 summer break, our team received the surprising news that the BIS Magazine INSPIRE had won a prestigious award from the Council for Advancement and Support of Education (CASE). The 72-page magazine was recognised in the “Best of Europe Region” category as a “flagship of cross-media school communication”. The award letter highlighted that our “creative and innovative ideas will serve as inspiration for countless others.”

The team also focused on optimising internal communications and, intensifying community relations, particularly with the enthusiastic Parent Community Council (PCC). The relaunch of the BIS intranet as the new Parent Zone, the further development of the app and the clever coordination of the school calendar were important steps forward.

Community spirit

Our team was also busy organising numerous events – from Open Days for Admissions, BIS Careers Day, the BIS City Talk to the BIS City BBQ in Munich and the BIS International Festival in Haimhausen with around 2,000 guests in attendance! The most recent highlight has certainly been the BIS Winter Festival in November 2024, organised by the BIS Graduation Committee (made up of Grade 12 parent volunteers) and countless other dedicated parents in our community – coordinated by Senior Marketing Manager Maya Rooz. With the lovely booths and activities, the international food buffet and the festive decorations, the organisers have reached a new level of community spirit and set a benchmark for the future.



The most beautiful properties in Munich - exclusively at riedel-immobilien.de





PORSCHE

Energize the future.

WITH THE ALL-ELECTRIC MACAN AND THE
BAVARIAN INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL.

While the all-electric Macan provides an electrifying experience for adults, Bavarian International School prepares children for a powerful future. Just get in and experience it for yourself. If you want to know more about the all-electric Macan, visit your nearest Porsche Center in Munich.

Porsche Zentrum München

SZM Sportwagen Zentrum München GmbH
Schleibingerstraße 8
81669 München
Tel. +49 89 48001-911
www.porsche-muenchen.de

Porsche Zentrum München Süd

SZM Sportwagen Zentrum München GmbH
Drygalski-Allee 29
81477 München
Tel. +49 89 660087-0
www.porsche-muenchen-sued.de

Porsche Zentrum Olympiapark

SZM Sportwagen Zentrum München GmbH
Triebstraße 37
80993 München
Tel. +49 89 159399-0
www.porsche-olympiapark.de

