BEST OF BES

Welcome! In this seventh edition of our newsletter, we take you on a journey through educational choices, student successes and community moments. We will start with an in-depth look at how to choose the right preschool, thanks to valuable advice from our Head of BAPS and Head of Learning Support. We will then discover a brilliant example of an essay written by one of our students - a real pride for the whole school! Finally, we enthusiastically invite you to our much-awaited Spring Fair: a chance to get together and celebrate the good weather.

How Do I Choose My Child's Pre-School?

How to choose a pre-school: a practical guide for families
Choosing a pre-school is a fundamental step in every child's education and a decision that often generates doubts and questions for parents. What aspects should be considered? How to understand whether an environment is really suitable for your child's needs?

In this in-depth interview Trish Burgess, our Head of BAPS, and Cecilia Picinini the Head of Learning Support offer valuable insights, practical tips and a professional view of what it means to "make the right choice". A discussion full of experience and educational passion, designed to accompany families in a conscious and serene way.
Read the full interview on our website!

Come to our Spring Party

See you Saturday the 10th from 11am
to 3pm in our garden

- A day of fun in our garden

- Games for all ages! Children's make-up, soap bubbles, gardening activities and much more

- Food corners with offers to suit all tastes

Technology and Relationships: A Critical Student Reflection

In this thought-provoking unit, our Year 7 students explored the impact of technology on society, examining how innovations shape identity, relationships, and global connections. Guided by key concepts such as perspective, innovation, and revolution, they investigated both historical and modern inventions, focusing on the central question: "Does technology harm our relationships with others?" To conclude the unit, we are proud to present an outstanding essay by one of our students, who tackles this complex issue with depth, critical thinking, and impressive insight.

Does Technology Harm Our Relationships with Others?
By: Beatrice B.

Have you ever felt the strange sensation of being alone in a crowd? Have you ever been in a room or on the subway and seen that everyone, absolutely everyone, is with their heads bowed immersed in their smartphones, with their fingers moving frantically on the touch screen? Ironically, technology with all its social media and news, which should make us communicate and connect, isolates us and "kidnaps" us into a fictitious and aseptic reality.

Over the past few decades, technology has revolutionized our lives and the way we interact. Staying in touch is now easy and affordable thanks to email, instant messaging apps like WhatsApp or Instagram. Video calls and social media allow us to overcome geographic barriers, even erasing jet lag with tools like Zoom that connect people in real time. As a 2021 *Pew Research* study found, 79% of social media users say they have formed meaningful connections online, demonstrating the power of technology to foster relationships.

Yet, while technology has undeniable pros, such as connecting us across vast distances, its overuse can damage real human relationships. The constant bombardment of notifications, for example, interrupts and annoys daily activities by distracting us from face-to-face conversations, preventing us from grasping the nuances of meaning. A study in *Psychological Science* found that couples who let devices intrude on shared moments experience a decrease in dialogue, emotional connection, and even the loss of simple joys like laughter. This shows that digital interruptions, even seemingly innocuous ones, can impoverish the quality of relationships over time.

Furthermore, social media often promotes fictitious relationships, where connections lack depth and sincerity. Online interactions often turn out to be superficial, without true emotional ties. These are relationships empty and inconsistent where only how one appears matters. In fact, liking a friend's photo or exchanging emojis certainly does not equate to a true friendship. Actually, *Psychology Today* (2023) also highlights that unrealistic representation on social media fuel comparison and envy: if you are not perfect like others, you feel inadequate. Certainly, this discordance between virtual and real life can compromise self-esteem and damage interpersonal relationships.

In particular, teenagers are the ones who suffer the most from the negative effects of the improper use of technology. While it offers them a space to express themselves and connect, irresponsibly handling devices can have serious consequences. Cyberbullying, for example, is one of the highest risks that kids can fall into. Behind the anonymity of screens, harmful behaviors can make kids feel uncomfortable, causing them anxiety and fear and even social exclusion. Continuous exposure to idealized online characters can also create stress. According to Dr. Jean Twenge (2018), adolescents who spend more than five hours a day on screens are 71% more likely to feel lonely than their peers. And this reveals a painful paradox: while these young people are hyperconnected, they are also increasingly isolated.

Another problem with overuse of technology is *technoference*, or the intrusion of devices into moments that should be dedicated to personal relationships. For example, responding to emails or scrolling through social media during dinner reduces meaningful conversations with family and friends. Technology obstructs all those nonverbal communication cues such as tone of voice, eye contact, and gestures, which are essential for understanding emotions and establishing trust. These signals get lost in digital communication, making interactions cold and incomplete.

In addition, it is also unthinkable to ignore broader ethical issues. For example, technology raises concerns about privacy and misinformation, both of which have significant consequences. Misinformation, or the spread of false information, can be used to manipulate public opinion and increase social divisions. A 2023 article in *Psychology Today* revealed that social media often amplifies divisive content, implementing distrust between individuals and communities. Moreover, cyberattacks and the misuse of artificial intelligence can be used in warfare with devastating consequences. A United Nations report states that over 30% of modern conflicts now involve cyberattacks, highlighting the risks of uncontrolled technology.

However, technology is not inherently harmful. Used responsibly, it can strengthen relationships and provide support networks, especially through social media groups that connect people with shared interests. For teenagers, it can offer emotional support when managed properly. Parents play a key role by encouraging offline activities, setting limits, and promoting healthy habits. As *Psychology Today* (2020) notes, raising awareness about screen time can help and reduce its negative effects.

In conclusion, technology has revolutionized how we communicate, offering undoubted benefits like global connection and online communities. However, its misuse can isolate individuals, promote superficial interactions, and disrupt emotional bonds. Issues like privacy breaches and misinformation add complexity, but the solution lies in moderation. As the Latin phrase *in medio stat virtus* reminds us, balance is key. Technology itself is not the enemy; its impact depends on how we use it. By adopting a balanced approach, we can ensure it enhances rather than replaces genuine human connection.

References

- "Can Technology Destroy Relationships? Positive vs. Negative Effects." *BetterHelp*, https://www.betterhelp.com.
- "Daily Technology Interruptions and Emotional and Relational Well-Being." *PMC*, https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc.
- "How Social Media Can Impact Our Mental Health." *Psychology Today*, 2023, https://www.psychologytoday.com.
- "How Technology Can Help or Harm Relationships." *Psychology Today*, https://www.psychologytoday.com.
- Pew Research Center. "Social Media Use in 2021." *Pew Research*, 2021, https://www.pewresearch.org.

Follow us on instagram to find out all the news and keep up to date with our school