



E-Newsletter

Page 1	School Management
Page 3	School Board
Page 5	Parents
Page 7	Teachers
Page 8	SMV

School Management

A word from the Principal

Dear friends of the RIS Swiss Section – Deutschsprachige Schule Bangkok

You are reading the new school newsletter. It is a source of information for everyone who is interested in our school and should provide insights into the work "behind the scenes". You might be asking yourself: Why is there a need for such a newsletter?

One of our goals is to improve internal communication with it. At a school, many diverse groups share an interest: the parents, the teachers, the students, the school management team and the school committee. All of them have chosen a person to represent them in the editorial team of the newsletter.

Together, we would like to show you

what we are concerned with, what we are working on at the moment, what our perspective of our school is. As a consequence, mutual understanding is promoted. For one thing is of utmost importance to all of us: the wellbeing of our institution and the people that are connected with it and through it.

The RIS Swiss Section – Deutschsprachige Schule Bangkok looks back on more than 50 years of existence. A prerequisite for its long history was and is the collaboration of many different people. We would like to foster this collaboration further. Besides conveying current and interesting information, this is an important aim of our editorial team.

I am pleased that the following have volunteered to work on this project on an honorary basis:

Judith Haid for the Executive Committee, Peter Hufschmid for the parents, Lea Müller as the student representative and Hendrik Schuhmacher for the teachers. In this issue, we collectively present to you a wide selection of topics ranging from health and nutrition to e-learning and the current activities of the committee to the Matura examinations. I hope you will enjoy reading the newsletter and I am looking forward to your feedback.

Dominique Tellenbach





School Management

Matura – a very comprehensive school leaving certificate!

RIS Swiss Section is the only school in Asia where students can achieve the Swiss Matura. With this diploma, our students have the chance to study at any Swiss university or other prestigious institutions of higher education all around the world. There are two specialties in our Secondary school: Firstly, students acquire the bilingual Matura in German and English. This means that four subjects are taught and examined in English. With this background, our students continue to retain their high level of the English language. Secondly, our students have the chance, besides the obligatory other foreign languages, to take Mandarin or Thai as Matura subjects.

The exams are wide-ranged. In contrast to other diplomas of Secondary level II, there are many mandatory subjects and students often cannot drop the subjects which they may dislike. At the end of their education, they will have to sit five written exams (each lasting three to four hours) and subsequently five oral exams.

Certain requirements exist for the Matura at our school to be accredited officially by the authorities. It is important that all the exams in Thailand are carried out identically to those in Switzerland. Therefore we closely work together with our sponsor canton of Lucerne in Switzerland. How is this process organized?

Every canton in Switzerland with Gymnasiums has a Matura commission. It is their task to supervise the

proper completion of the exams.

RIS Swiss Section has its own Matura commission, another specialty of our school. This commission consists of five people.

Traditionally, the commission's president is always the Minister of the Swiss embassy in Bangkok. Currently, this is Viktor Vavricka. His committee supervises our exams.

In Switzerland, there are no central Matura exams (as for example in France). Each school can create their own written and oral exams for the students. All of the written exams are then evaluated and marked by two persons: the examiner and an expert.

The preparation for the exams begins in winter. A first draft is given to the experts who give their feedback. The adapted exam is then forwarded to a member of the Matura commission. He or she evaluates the tasks and also gives suggestions and proposals for further versions of the exam.

As a next step, these exams are peer-reviewed by experts in Lucerne. For each individual subject in the Matura exams, there is a group of experts. They evaluate every written Matura exam held in Lucerne and compare them to one another. This ensures that the tasks are comparable, no matter in which school students take their exam. This group of Swiss experts has the authority to approve the exams.

An elaborate procedure? Well, yes.

However, it is needed to meet the requirement that all exams are comparable to the requirements in Switzerland.

This process has another very positive side effect: everyone can profit and learn from each other in the process. Communication with the groups of experts in Switzerland yields particularly valid information.

The canton of Lucerne supports our school generously in all pedagogical matters. Despite the distance between Switzerland and Thailand and the time difference, the collaboration works perfectly.

The written exams are followed by oral exams. They are supervised by two persons: a teacher and an external expert. The grading is done together.

Now you might ask yourself how our exams perform in all these evaluations and comparisons. The pleasant answer is: very well! For this year's tasks, we received a lot of compliments as all of them meet the criteria for an excellent Matura. Our "Bangkok" Matura is considered to have the same standard as Matura diplomas in Switzerland. This makes us happy – however, our students can even be much more delighted and pleased when they pass this year's demanding and intensive exams. Currently Grade 12 takes the Matura exams. We wish them a lot of strength and endurance and of course much success.



School Board

A look behind the scenes of the Executive Committee of the Swiss Educational Association

Today: Marketing, Sales and PR

The major task of the school committee is to determine the school strategy and to supervise its implementation, to be in contact with the school management team, to represent the interests of the parents as well as to outline the further development of our school. What does this mean in practice? Which subjects does the committee focus on specifically?

In the following issues of our newsletter, we would like to give you an insight into what the five teams are working on continuously. These are Human Resources, Education, Marketing, Finance and Infrastructure.

Marketing/Sales/Public Relations

It is our objective to inform RIS Swiss Section's school community about what we are doing in the field of Marketing, Sales and Public Relations and also to indicate where we are of the opinion that there might still be potential. There was a change of responsibility in the area of marketing after the last AGM in October. As a consequence, it was our first task to consolidate and to understand what had been done in this area up to now. Based on this background knowledge we were able to look into further aspects and details for development. There are quite a number of stakeholders who are responsible for various tasks in the area of Marketing, Sales and Public Relations at RIS Swiss Section. It is not only the school management team and the

responsible person in the area of marketing. All of us take responsibility to promote RIS Swiss Section in Bangkok. The job of the marketing committee is, first of all, to cooperate with the person in charge of marketing and support him/her in matters of strategic and conceptual decisions. But this job can sometimes also be very "hands-on".

To be successful and to position RIS Swiss Section in the wide range of international schools in Bangkok, we have to promote our own individual profile that is so very different from all our competitors'. It is our task to strengthen our image and our reputation. But how do we do this successfully, which specific measures do we take?

Marketing

Pictures can often communicate more than words. This is a well-known fact. For this reason, we have organized an extensive two-day photo shooting event at school some weeks ago with a photographer specialized in child photography. It was our aim to generate new, attractive and professional photo material to be used in all future marketing activities and applying a uniform, emotionally charged visual language. Now this material is available and it will in future be the stock of the visual language of our school. You can see the results exhibited on the ground floor of the school.

One crucial task for us is to find specific niches to place our adver-

tisements successfully in different media.

We have defined some relevant target groups and consequently specific titles. The print media we will focus on in future are, among others, "Bangkok Post" and the magazines "Bambi" and "Expat Ladies". We keep observing the market and will watch out for future relevant magazines. For example, the magazine "Expat Kids" appeared for the first time in March and we have decided to also advertise in it.

Another instrument for our public image are our posters and banners. Now that we have our photos and a new school name and logo, our next task will be to create new brochures.

Direct mailings to expats and other parents are another means of raising awareness for RIS Swiss Section. The internet and the countless electronic means of communication are also at our disposal, for example our website or our Facebook account. These need to be maintained and updated regularly.

At present, we are also focusing on a kind of "dissertation": the revision of our marketing concept. The task force dealing with this mission will summarize all aspects of Marketing, Sales and Public Relations that are important for our school. This concept will also be presented at the next evaluation visit from Germany.

Let's focus on our internal "gem", our school's yearbook. It has a lot of different target groups:



School Board

A look behind the scenes of the Executive Committee of the Swiss Educational Association

All our students and teachers receive a copy, but it is also sent to former students, to the Embassies of our home countries and to companies that have a close connection to RIS Swiss Section. It is furthermore presented to all parents who show an interest to enroll their children at our school.

As a consequence, our yearbook has to meet expectations across all age groups. Last year's extremely professionally made yearbook has done all credit to the 50-year jubilee of our school. Regarding the yearbook

We want to produce a yearbook that evokes pleasure and shows emotions while at the same time it is an expression of the professionalism of our school. Our yearbook will show our students in action during various events that took place over the school year.

Moreover, we have asked our students to hand in their creative products and to contribute with paintings and drawings. At present, we are working very hard and under high pressure to publish and deliver the yearbook 2013/2014 in time.

RIS Swiss Section has two Open-House Days during a school year in order to promote our school and to create new contacts. We also participate in various fairs in Bangkok.

Members of our team are present at various events in Bangkok to develop and extend our network contacts. After having met potential candidates, the marketing department keeps track of the contacts, informs and arranges talks with our school management team to discuss all questions that may arise.

Public Relations

It is important to maintain close contact to journalists and to constantly present interesting topics and articles about events going on at RIS Swiss Section to the magazines and newspapers in focus. All kinds of interesting events are covered by press releases, for example the appointment of Dominique Tellenbach as our new Principal. And not to forget: At present we are very much engaged in publishing our newest project, this newsletter.

Sales and Public Relations are important for external communication, but one should not forget to lose track of internal communication as well. Communicating in an open and transparent way with all stakeholders is a sign of professionalism. A well-informed community can honestly support RIS Swiss Section's quality and its development.

We are pleased to offer our first issue of this newsletter and hope that you will very much enjoy reading our articles.



2013/2014, we have decided on a different layout, hopefully nevertheless as professional as last year's edition.

We have contacted various agencies and finally decided on one applicant.

Sales

Sales generates new contacts and maintains existing ones in order to promote RIS Swiss Section, hopefully leading to enrollment at our school.



Parents

Break catering: Fine, but properly please!

The parents' council of our school dealt with the break and lunch catering for our children during its last meeting. The decision was taken to pick this as a central topic of the newsletter.

To develop their intellectual and physical strength, children need enough nutrients, vitamins and mineral substances.

Healthy break catering can contribute to this aim.

More and more children are overweight, but other eating disorders like anorexia or bulimia are also widespread. Healthy food and healthy eating behavior can protect against overweight without creating eating disorders.

find pleasure in a collective community and experience cultural values.

This aspect should also be taken into consideration when talking about healthy nourishment. The school, especially on long school days, becomes central environment outside home, with many options. A healthy catering offer and a relaxed eating atmosphere full of pleasure make an important contribution to the coinage of good eating habits. Thanks to precise instructions and basic rules, children can experience healthy food in their daily routine.

Nevertheless, by giving good examples as role models, the parents can contribute a lot to this process. It is their duty to provide healthy and excellent food of good quality when packing their child's lunch box. It is also their duty to urge their children to abstain from unhealthy food.

In today's article, we will focus on the break catering. In the following roundup, we want to point out some aspects of sensible break catering and on some types of food that should rather be avoided.

What can be considered a really healthy break catering?



During infancy and youth age, children develop their individual preference for specific kinds of food and their eating habits are formed. Children who are raised with healthy food will hopefully keep these eating habits when they grow older.

Children who are brought up with well-balanced and healthy food are able to study much better and achieve better results. Children need main meals and snacks which deliver energy and nutrients on a regular basis. It is an important job of our school to help our students achieve the best possible results.

Many illnesses are promoted by an unbalanced diet: Type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular diseases, disturbances of the fat metabolism or different types of cancer. A well-balanced diet can help to prevent these kinds of illnesses.

Food is more than absorption of nutrients

Food also means well-being, pleasure and quality of life. Not only what we eat influences us, but also the way we do it. When we sit at the table and enjoy a meal together, we can



Well-balanced break catering delivers liquids, energy and nutrients for an ideal physical and mental performance:



Parents

Break catering: Fine, but properly please!

Unsweetened drinks

Water or unsweetened teas supply the body with liquid. Drinking water during even the smallest breaks should be promoted and supported with drinking mugs or drinking bottles in the classroom.

milk products for breakfast, it makes sense to add those products to their lunch boxes.

Recommended food (green list)

Seasonal fruits and/or vegetables
Wholemeal bread or unsweetened,

Products high in saturated and/or trans-fatty acids in particular (cakes and pastries, deep-fried products, convenience food)

Strongly processed convenience food products with addition of synthetic colorings and preservatives, artificial aromas or flavor enhancers.

Those and/or other products with high fat content or rich in sugar should not be offered during breaks at all.

This article was composed and arranged by:

Bernadette Vavricka-Michel

Natalie Becher

Peter H. Hufschmid-Hirschbühl

We would like to thank Khun Orapin Banjong from the Institute of Nutrition, Mahidol University, Bangkok for her support.

(Based on guidelines by the School Health Service of the city of Zurich, Switzerland)

Additional material for this article is available for download from the school website.



Grain products

Preferably wholemeal products, because wholemeal bread or flakes include an enormous amount of digestible carbohydrates, B-vitamins, mineral substances and food fibers.

low-fat wholemeal products
Milk or unsweetened milk products
Water or unsweetened tea

Food suitable to only a limited extent (yellow list)

White bread, half white bread
Fruit juice without sugar addition, a mixture of fruit juice and water
Dried fruit
Sweetened milk products like fruit yoghurt or fruit milk shake

Fruit (or sometimes fruit juice) and vegetables

They contain different kinds of sugar, vitamins, mineral substances and food fibers as well.

Milk, yoghurt or cheese

Milk products are important for a sufficient supply of proteins and calcium. If children do not like to eat

Food not suitable for breaks at school (red list)

Sweets and sweet drinks
Artificially sweetened drinks and food





Teachers

E-learning on its march forward

According to a new survey, 1/3 of all Germans have already come into contact with e-learning. These figures look very positive, even though, according to the daily newspaper "taz", only 18% of teachers presently use digital media in classrooms on a regular basis in Germany. On the other hand, almost all children use the computer at home regularly – even 99% in the age group 12 to 18 years. At the same time the computer is also being utilized more and more for school-work: 58% make use of the computer routinely at home for homework, with the internet being used most frequently for research, such as looking up and searching for specific information (80%). But learning programs are also popular among students, 60% learn for school by using interactive learning software.

At the RIS Swiss Section – Deutschsprachige Schule Bangkok, the integration of new media is gaining more and more importance as well, with students being taught early on about the safe and correct use of computers, the internet and media. The recently developed media concept of the school presents the implementation of "new media" for each high school grade level which is age-appropriate and follows the course of instruction as well as dealing reflectively with the issue of the utilization of the internet and social media. Accordingly, students at the school also take the exam for the International Computer Driving Licence (ICDL).

However, e-learning also has an additional important function at our

school: it enables instruction even in times of crisis, which are a frequent occurrence in Bangkok, whether it be a devastating flood or the current escalating political crisis. The RIS Swiss Section – Deutschsprachige Schule Bangkok has set its objective to be the continuation of studying according to plan as far as possible, even in times of crisis, when students or teachers are unable to attend school due to safety reasons. Yet we know full well, even with all technical possibilities, that "normal" instruction is just irreplaceable.

The teachers at the school utilize many channels to reach the students. E-mail, Skype, Facebook, class websites, the school intranet and increasingly also the learning platform "Moodle", offer versatile possibilities not only to make learning resources available to students, but also beyond that to communicate with each other, to review results or also to correct online tests.

For the teacher, this also means having the subject matter ready in digital form, which necessitates a high-capacity scanner.

ner.

Problems of e-learning

In the course of an e-learning day, it is possible that teachers try to contact students in vain, and therefore do not always know whether these students really do retrieve the especially prepared teaching contents and work on them. It often turns out that the students who work hard and concentrate

in the classroom also exhibit a lot of self-discipline in e-learning. Other students are harder to motivate. "Unfortunately the internet was not working at our house yesterday!" is a sentence many teachers get to hear after e-learning days. Consequently, in times of crisis, teachers need to rely heavily on the support of parents, who should monitor, as far as possible, that their children really work on their school assignments on e-learning days.

Some teachers themselves have little confidence in the new media and e-learning, yet still show a lot of dedication trying to prevent students from engaging in activities other than online during lessons or during working time.

"E-learning" is a good way to supplement traditional teaching, in order to reach the students in their "digital" environment. Furthermore, for the RIS Swiss Section – Deutschsprachige Schule Bangkok, it is the best possible option to ensure learning in times of crisis – but it will probably never be able to completely replace "conventional" classroom instruction, especially not for the younger learners, who are reliant on the personal support of their teacher.

In conclusion, the teachers ask the parents for their understanding that on days when there are classes held at the school, yet some children remain home because of safety reasons, the learning materials may not be uploaded at the same time as the lessons, but will be available as soon as possible afterwards.





SMV

PASCH-net or books – Which one turns out to be better?

"Excuse me please, unfortunately, I have lost the sheet that we were supposed to work on today as homework", or: "Unfortunately, I have forgotten my book today". – Sentences like these are very familiar to our teachers. Of course, these things can happen now and then. But now, we have found an alternative for situations like that: PASCH-net.

PASCH-net, an online learning platform based on "Moodle", offers the possibility for students enrolled to have access to all materials that teachers have uploaded in different subjects at any time. Students will find self-learning courses as well as individually prepared tasks. Teachers can prepare lessons and provide them for online learning or offline, individually or in class, or they can open tasks for group-work online.

Virtual course rooms can be installed and be filled with all kinds of different tasks requested. Training for further online teaching options is regularly offered in educational courses during

texts as Word documents. There is always the option to view a well-chosen documentary for a specific topic individually during a lesson and to test our knowledge in a quiz afterwards with an immediate result of our success.

We can either work individually or together, no problem at all! Especially in the case of school closures or substitute lessons PASCH-net is a very good option. As long as Internet access is provided and we have a laptop we will be able at any time to check papers, work on tasks and simply study.

It no longer works to "forget" the sheets that are necessary for homework.

One question arises: Which of the two options is the better one? The paper-based books or sheets or the e-learning option of a virtual platform?

We have asked students of all grades about their opinion concerning this topic.

PASCH-net as a computer based learning platform.

However, of course, there is also some criticism: Internet problems were mentioned quite often, especially when many students are online at the same time. Many students mention difficulties when having to study online texts because they are not able to mark and highlight. For exam preparations, they rather prefer printed documents.

Another problem students referred to is that it is not always easy to concentrate well on their essential work during class when other web-based temptations seem more attractive. It is just natural that we check our emails or other web pages casually and start chatting online with friends while we really should be studying. Of course, everyone is responsible for himself and everyone has to decide for himself whether he can take a mental break or whether it is more appropriate for him or her to pay attention.

Finally, one can say that younger students are rather more doubtful about computer-based learning than older students.

Generally speaking, PASCH-net is a good alternative for making studying easier for some students and to improve on lesson planning. Nevertheless, one should not forget that students like books or worksheets equally well.



"teachers' training days". Virtual classroom situations can allow a form of individual learning, at the same time with the teacher on the other end or classmates in group-work.

We, the students, are able to read

Students of grades 5 to 7 are not particularly enthusiastic about learning with computers. They actually prefer worksheets and books. According to their opinion, this is more fun.

Older students, grades 8 to 11, on the contrary prefer working with

