

## A. Rimbaud – Minutes of the Primary School Council First meeting

Held on Tuesday, November 14th 2017 at 6:00pm

Study room

Absent with apologies: France de Villard (CM2 A parent representative), Kayte O'Donovan (English teacher, Nursery school), Sergine Le Rossignol (CP B teacher)

Session opens at 6:08pm.

1. Nomination of the secretary for the session (administration, teacher or parent representative): owing to minutes often being sent too long after the meetings – *issue raised by a parent representative* – the administration suggests to change the current system so that now the administration will take charge of the three annual minutes.

Members of the Council are however reminded that the minutes cannot be published until they are approved of by a majority of the representatives elect.

2. Agenda of the Primary School Council 1

The date of October 20th set to close transmission of questions has been put off in this session so as to include some questions received after the deadline yet considered as indeed relevant for the Primary School Council rather than for the School Council (*email from a parent representative on November 06th / topics: length of circulation of the minutes, break time supervision, safety supervision standards, language policy*).

3. Minutes of the Primary School Council 3 held on Thursday 15/06/2017: approved. As a reminder: once approved, the minutes are translated and posted online on the School's bilingual French/English website, for the 4th consecutive year.

### 4. School news:

• **Internal Rules (IR)** in French\* and in English: amendments?

\* French version prevails.

A parent representative notes that the IR specifies the rights and obligations of students and their parents, but not those of the teachers.

These rules were specifically worked out by a dedicated commission of parents and teachers in 2014-2015. The rights and obligations of the service users – students and parents – were developed and elaborated by parent writers. The teachers are not mentioned in the IR for it is clearly recognised that their obligation as professionals in the school binds them as much as to abide by the IR as to monitor its implementation. As a matter of fact, the issue raised is about catching up with homework in case of student's absence: why would the parents be in charge of it with no access to the needed information? More specifically, this point in the IR was added because of a massive number of absent students on a regular basis by choice of the families, reported by the teaching team. The teachers used to be requested by families to supply them with extra homework in anticipation and/or remediation of an absence, which is not acceptable. Any absence from the third day, at the latest, must be excused with a valid apology to the school administration. Absenteeism shall not be endorsed or supported in any way by the teaching team. The families bear the responsibility to follow up and to commit in their children's schooling and to enquire about their homework. Absence for illness and absence for personal convenience are to be distinguished in a positive manner. School homework is usually communicated to the families who ask for it.

School ID cards: the IR is not updated on the introduction and the way these cards work, implemented only at a further stage. Yet to be noted: a written regulation is signed upon the delivery of the school ID cards.

A parent representative draws the Council's attention to the health risks of sun rays in Tanzania: why not write down in the IR that hats be compulsory? To be encouraged or to be made compulsory?

The Primary School Council suggests raising awareness of the risks incurred rather than making hats compulsory. It seems more convincing to have the adults, parents and teachers, be in line with this assigned information, in order to encourage good habits as soon as the Nursery school years. A public awareness campaign is considered from January 2018. The need to cover the basketball field from the sun and the rain is reminded.

**- Internal Rules to be taken into account by all within the School community:**

The Head of School notifies the Primary School Council of a regrettable failure to comply with the IR once signed, due to the way some parents faced other members of the School community. Adults must behave with respect and dignity around and within the school premises, even more so in front of students and children, incidents must be shielded from children by the adults. Generally speaking, one must avoid emotional conversations over a specific topic and must consider making a later appointment that will truly aim at settling the issue.

### **- Teaching language at the French School, languages taught at the French School and communication languages at the French School:**

With no intention for language protectionism, the School reminds, the mainly non-French speaking school community, that French is the language taught at the French School.

School communication made exclusively in English, based on the grounds that more than 75 % of the school public does not speak French, is totally excluded and must not be expected, in the very interest of the students. Meanwhile, the French School has undertaken many steps so that each and everyone can access as much information as possible – bilingual communication in every field: admissions; educational assessments (parents-teachers meetings); Newsletter in English; website ... However, the French or French-speaking teachers have no obligation to speak in English, even less to correct their students' productions in English. An English-speaking parent can nonetheless easily request some help to translate during a meeting with his/her child's teacher. This is a common thing at the French School.

During the period of admissions to the French School, the initial language assessment suggests some ways for the parents to follow and support their child(ren) in French. There is not yet, for the time being, any contract between the School and the parents to materialise the moral commitment of parents to regularly help their child(ren) in building a relationship to the French language – still, this requirement is clearly stated to them. The involvement of the related families is genuinely essential and logically expected.

Three languages are taught at the French School: French, English (as a first foreign language) and Spanish (as a second foreign language).

These languages all enrich the students. Yet, let's not forget that French is the main and key language and cannot be overlooked: both parents and teachers asserting/claiming it clearly to the students enables them to understand fully this fact, in order to succeed throughout their school years without resisting or postponing their involvement. The non-French speaking families who, after choosing the French School, accompany their children in this very system, usually succeed well. Results for DELF Prim or Junior exams are significant in this regard. Nevertheless, the DNB (*Diplôme National du Brevet*) and the Baccalauréat exams will be sure to demand a good command of French from all students, French or non-French speakers.

Language policy:

Cf. Minutes of the 2nd Primary School Council, and of the 2nd and 3rd School Councils of the year 2016-2017. The existing scheme was adapted and has started to be implemented from September. The teachers' council along with the Inspector for National Education and the Educational advisor for Foreign Languages (LVE, Langues Vivantes Étrangères) made a decision to double the EMILE hours while maintaining one hour of LVE (English or French), based on educational motives for better-aimed learners, in order to improve performance in French and/or English depending on the students. Teaching various subjects in English enables some students from non-French speaking families to enrich their understanding skills and vocabulary as well as syntax through a variety of language media/tools. Spoken and more « academic » skills (that can be fed beyond the mere casual conversations during break times) being developed must also allow written skills to be developed gradually in the meantime. EMILE in English enables the students from English-speaking families who are mainly taught in French, to access the contents of the subjects with more ease on these occasions.

The curriculum and the development of EMILE this year have been very demanding for the teaching staff, in terms of projecting and pooling the tasks. Individual and class assessments and reviews based on observing and analysing the scheme have been integrated in the currently implemented approach. The team has nevertheless been mobilised to aim at teaching languages which is the most adequate and adapted to each language profile. In this way, our School is actually in line with the spirit of the language policy specific to the AEFÉ network. There is indeed no standard or graded implementation in language teaching within the network, rather a common will to develop it in every school of the network in the most optimal way.

N.B., the « Language Policy » file (2015) available online on the AEFÉ website is currently being updated. Today, the

existing multilingual network is now challenging the bilingual schools scheme: the French Schools are shifting from teaching 50% in French – 50% in first foreign language (English or others) to teaching 70% in French – 30% in first foreign language.

Jean-Louis Doumax, the educational advisor for Nursery/Elementary education currently on a mission in our school, provides us with clarifications on how a language policy is run in various AEFÉ schools in the area – Nairobi, Luanda, Dar, Addis Abeba, 2 schools in Djibouti). A comparative study of the implemented plans, presented to the Primary School Council members, shows that the School Arthur Rimbaud allocates a very satisfying amount of English teaching in Nursery and Elementary school years. Each of the 16 AEFÉ schools in the Southern and Eastern Africa area is implemented a language policy that has been gradually adapted to its very situation.

A parent specifies that the project was not always understood as reducing the English hours to the advantage of the French hours. The relevancy of EMILE with subjects such as Physical Education is questioned: why is the language study – grammar, written skills – not favoured over these subjects?

Grammar should not be considered as the exclusive or ultimate tool enabling students to learn a foreign language. This idea or representation is not shared by all.

It is indeed the teachers' duty to define or reframe the language teaching scheme at the school, while remaining attentive to the way it will be received and will benefit the students.

Certifications: the possibility to have the students sit for English language qualifications has already been considered by the school. It will have to be examined, in due time, when the new scheme will leave some more time to its necessary implementation.

Language of the host country / Kiswahili at school: Cf. Council minutes from the previous years. As a reminder, only one student enrolled in the extra-curricular activity « Swahili » offered in 2015-2016, therefore the activity could not be maintained. Swahili language can only be made compulsory upon an injunction from the host country – eg. Kenya – and the current situation does not seem to allow creating a position dedicated to teaching Swahili. Valuing the host country is however not neglected at the school: it is highlighted in organising school trips, for a day out or longer, on topics that enable accessing Tanzanian culture, and it is also enhanced in the teaching, especially Geography.

#### **- Around and near the School's premises; public health, safety and social responsibility:**

→ Reminder: parking safely is necessary to drop the children at school, by taking them to the school gate and NOT by stopping the car in front of the school, right on the road.

→ Call for civic spirit and respect of others: our community is highly diverse in cultures and this must lead each and everyone to take into account one another, in adapting occasionally what is taken for granted and yet may be an issue for others. Therefore, we would appreciate if you could not tie your dog at the entrance of the school without you being around, as this may indeed be seen as an issue.

→ Internet routers must and will be placed out of immediate proximity of the students' heads in the classrooms where they have been added.

→ Break time supervision / safety supervision standards:

Supervision during break times is organised during the teachers council, with safety being effectively taken care of by taking into account the site layout, the type and the condition of the school premises. The supervision duty board is displayed in the school.

As for time out of school hours – lunch hours and AES – the *Vie Scolaire* takes in charge the supervision of the students as long as the Elementary school and Secondary school are on the same campus in Oysterbay. However, a maximum of 48 students (for 4 supervised studies of 12 students each, starting at 2pm) may potentially remain in the school playground during lunch break, which has therefore led again this year to add one more person for supervision during lunch time – 2 outside instructors recruited.

→ Smoking area was moved away from the main gate last year. There are no smokers within the school premises.

→ Toilet hygiene and door locking: a frequent cleaning is implemented. The number of toilets is not enough however, given the number of persons on the campus. N.B., the adults have only one toilet for both men and women. Whenever there is a need for repair regarding the door lock, students and staff must notify the CPE (Mrs Bernadette Mande) who

organises with the Administration and Finance Manager (Mr Erwan Hanlée) the work needed.

→ The ongoing work on the Msasani School Road leads us to foresee the need to request for road bumps to be added. To be continued.

•**New Primary campus** (Nursery + Elementary): ongoing construction, to be delivered on 30/04/2018.

A projection of the needs for furniture and equipment was carried out by the teachers, administration and Head of School, together with the French supplier Manutan.

An introduction from the plans – projected and not yet final – is made during this Primary School Council meeting: a specimen classroom for the Nursery, for the Elementary, for a language classroom, the teachers room, the library, the reception double-gate – Nursery and Elementary – offices, administrative offices, filing and storage room, infirmary, canteen...

•**Vie scolaire and Primary school:**

→ Organising the time outside school hours for 2018-2019 must be anticipated for, especially supervision of the children during lunch hours and the extracurricular activities (AES).

This was already brought up during Primary School Councils in 2016-2017. Bernadette Mandé, partly in charge of coordinating the AES from this year, is foreseen as the person in charge of time outside class (*périscolaire*<sup>1</sup>) on the new Primary campus. To be continued.

•**Teaching news:** to be found in the PRONOTE Agenda

- Arthur Rimbaud: school of the AEFÉ network, certified by the French Ministry for National Education → the educational advisor is visiting the school, assigned by the Inspector for National Education, AEFÉ Southern and Eastern Africa, from November 13th to 16th 2017.

- Term handover of the school reports to the families from GS to CM2, first term: on Friday 15/12/2017.  
Elementary school teachers to meet the parents: on Tuesday 19/12/2017 from 4.00 to 8.00 pm.

- Semester handover of the younger school reports for TPS, PS and MS, first semester: on Friday 02/02/2018.

•**Schedule of events:**

- Schedule of events for the first ongoing term and for the school year 2017-2018:

•Kermesse / Funday: Saturday 18/11/2017 from 9.00am to 2.00pm. The school thanks the Events Committee for organising the event.

•Christmas show, Friday 22/12/2017. Beginning of the school holiday for Nursery, Elementary and Secondary at 1.00pm.  
→ decorations: all are welcome to commit.

•Carnival, Friday 23/02/2018 before the school mid-term break.

•Francophonie week (Saturday 17/03 to Sunday 25/03/2018)

•Friday 26/05/2018 (**? date to be confirmed**), charity run.

•End of the year show at the Little Theatre, Friday 29/06/2018: the venue is maintained because transport is easy on the spot.

Session closes at 8.00 pm.

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<sup>1</sup> *Temps périscolaire*: refers to time before or after school, outside class, as well as lunch time – whereas AES (*activités extrascolaires*) refers to supervised activities outside lesson time.