

A close-up photograph of a fir tree branch. The branch is covered in dense, vibrant green needles. Several small, cone-shaped buds are visible, which are a deep blue-green color. The background is dark and out of focus, making the branch and its buds stand out.

PROSPECTUS

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# BALSAM ACADEMY

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# Message from the School Committee

**Dear Parents and Guardians,**

We are excited to welcome you and our children back to school. Our focus for the first few weeks will be that of taking the time needed for mindful and healthy reintegration into a new school rhythm for everyone.

This year, our Kindergarten program will be Waldorf Inspired and the faculty is enhancing the curriculum to allow children to engage with each other and discover new and interconnected relationships with the Earth. We initiated a three-month Waldorf Inspired Teacher Training program on 19<sup>th</sup> February 2022 for aspiring teachers and parents. We intend to host another session later this year for more parents to join us.

Small groups of teachers are debating, discussing, and creating a roadmap to implement New Education Policy 2020. The ideas and action items are consolidated in the Whole School Improvement Plan placed on the school website. Our teachers are concentrating on the welfare, social and emotional needs of the children. This means creating plenty of opportunities to play, sing, draw, paint and socialise with friends and teachers. We believe that learning comes best when children are happy, relaxed and feel loved.

Significant changes have been made in the school calendar this year. Two weeks, one per term, is ear-marked for trans-disciplinary projects. No-Bag days are marked for Vocational Education, Subject Enrichment, School Clubs and Community Outreach Programs. Exclusive Saturdays to empower students, sub-committees, teachers and parents are also planned.

Balsam has subscribed to XSeed curriculum for grades 1 to 8 to provide hands-on and integrated learning. Children shall experience blended learning and develop 21st century skills. The jobs in the future do not even exist today. It becomes imperative to prepare our children to the new jobs that are getting created as we read this letter. Skills to be inculcated in children are:

- Strong foundational literacy and numeracy
- Collaboration, Creativity and Innovation, Critical Thinking, and Communication
- Flexibility and Adaptability; Leadership and Responsibility; Initiative and Self Direction; Social and Cross-Cultural Interaction
- Entrepreneurship and vocational activities

We look forward to a very productive, practical, and fun-filled year. We certainly cannot do it as a standalone learning organisation. We require support from parents and community, at large. We urge you to partner with us to build a beautiful future for our children and to nurture local citizens with global outlook.

As Rudolf Steiner quotes..

*Our highest endeavour must be to develop free human beings who are able of themselves to impart purpose and direction to their lives. The need for imagination, a sense of truth, and a feeling of responsibility—these three forces are the very nerve of education.*

**Welcome each one of you into the folds of Balsam family!**





## SCHOOL ETHOS



*Our Vision - For all students to learn to their full potential*



*Our Mission - Educate every student to be a responsible, productive citizen*



*Core Values - The Life of the Mind, Mature Behaviour, Mutual Respect, A Secure and Healthy Environment & A Balance between Individual Achievement and a Caring Community*



*Core Principles - Foster Community, Provide Opportunity, Show Respect & Strive for Excellence*





# Balsam Academy



## WHAT'S IN A NAME?

As majestic as the Balsam firs that quickly grow to become towering architectural trees with a bold presence in the landscape and with a unique dispersal system found in the Balsam flowering plant, we at Balsam stretch our arms to reach the horizons and share knowledge with no limitations whatsoever.

### School Symbol

Our School affirms commitment to nurturing inventiveness in each child. Secure in the warmth of a caring school with parents, facilitators and the environment symbolized by the golden yellow triangles while the green circle represents the student who will be inspired to realize his/her potential and aspire for excellence in all their endeavours.

### Colours of Balsam Academy

Yellow, white and green form the tri-colour of Balsam Academy. Colours taken from the elements fit in with our approach to life and learning.

Yellow - vibrant and charged with energy that we associate with childhood, symbolize a passion for life, learning and knowledge, for action of both mind and body.

White - brings to the mind the values of friendship and unity, of peace that we must help to promote, the world over. It also reminds us that as individuals, we belong to a larger group, the family of man.

Green - symbolizes the gift of life, strength and talents, which we must develop and use to the fullest. It is therefore the colour of endeavour of endless progress and prosperity.

### Houses of Balsam Academy

The primary, middle and secondary school have houses to inculcate the spirit of cooperation, competition and competence. The students are categorized into four houses viz:

**ALPINES:** the enchanting perennials with a wild attitude to reach the Swiss Alps and bloom to engulf the entire planet.

**GRANDS:** the first that rise to the great heights in the rocky Mountains which are home to many animals and birds. Crafted cones are the Grands whose very colour signifies progress.

**HIMALAYANS:** the annual herbs with flowers resembling the shape of an English "policeman helmet", recorded as the most invasive species, native to Himalayan region of Asia, which offers a rewarding supply of nectar to pollination.

**TYLERS:** a large growing form of Balsam fir with attractive powder blue foliage, typical vigour and growth form of the species.





## HISTORY OF BALSAM ACADEMY

A child born in the year 1938 grew as a man who did not complete elementary education in school but was an active learner, who not only consumed but produced knowledge by setting up industries in Bangalore. He played a leading role in creating entrepreneurs and job opportunities in Bangalore. A man with a broad vision with thoughts flowing from a stupendous mind made way for the development of the village near Arcot, the birthplace of his ancestors.

His initiation of changing the life in the village and their economic conditions began in 1986 when he preferred agriculture to an industry. A futuristic thinker, a silent performer, he left behind distinctive marks with his green thumb. A temple, a school and a hospital was what he planned for the villagers. The temple was under construction when he left this world in 1989.

Treading in the footsteps of **Late Sri. K. Balaram** was too large to fit in. His life partner who had to transform from a homemaker to an industrialist, completed the temple project and was actively involved in the developments of the village, accomplished all this and more with great ease while she successfully raised her children who are also inclined to shaping a better place for the children of tomorrow. Balsam Academy - a dream project, was founded under the stewardship of **Smt. V.B.Saroja, Founder Trustee of Balaram Memorial Trust.**

First opening its doors in 2004 as an after-school activity centre to a pre-school, the school developed as a co-educational school with 14 students to start off. The school that has moved to its present address is adored by visitors. Today, Balsam Academy stands out exclusively as a place for continued learning - a dream come true.







## FACILITIES

### Interactive Classrooms & Learning Lab

Classrooms integrated with SMART interactive technology to provide the students with a digital experience and complement teaching ideas. Each of the spacious rooms is well furnished with student friendly furnitures ensuring ease of use and safety.

The learning lab has been set up to enable all children to reach their full potential. Many children manifest learning difficulties, which, with early identification and intervention, help with in academic achievement and in reducing behavioural problems. Trained teachers design individual learning plan for each child based on his /her needs.

### Book Nook

Well-equipped with books, magazines and CDs covering a wide range of subjects. The books, magazines and CD /DVDs are bar coded making it easier for teachers and student alike to gain access to them.

The sole purpose of the library is to foster independent, life-long learning through seamless collaboration of staff, resources and technology providing for educational empowerment.

### Giga Nook

The computer labs are equipped with state-of-the-art operating systems supported with LCD monitors. The computers are well connected via Wi-fi and internal networks which is also supported by Uninterrupted Power Supply (UPS).

Wi-Fi facility is available for all the teachers and students under-policies that govern appropriate internet usage and with high end firewall security for each user. Furthermore, the firewall blocks not only all inappropriate websites but also generates reports of internet activity for each user.

### Laboratories

A hands-on based experience is the most effective way of learning and at Balsam Academy we pride on providing the most modern labs for students. The practicality of the theory learnt provides for a better instillment among the students whether it be in Science, Social or Maths. The student is well assisted by the teacher and a lab assistant throughout the experimentation period ensuring safety of the students.





## Bodycraft and Mindgames

The school promotes and encourages a number of sports activities, both indoors and outdoors. One session of Health and Physical Education has been incorporated in their daily schedule. The outdoor sports activities available include tennis, football, basketball, volleyball, throw-ball. After school programs are conducted for extra coaching on selected sports. In addition, there is a facility for indoor activities that range from chess and carrom to table tennis and yoga.

## Visual and Performing Arts

Creative arts exposes the students to an understanding of global cultures, societies and the themes associated along with them. Drama, dance, music and art are given as much importance as scholastics at Balsam Academy with art contests and stage productions during the specific academic year.

## Training Room for Work Education

Pre-vocational programs are provided at the secondary stage to facilitate the choice of vocational courses at the senior school stage. The training room is designed in alignment with the curriculum to help young people experience a tremendous amount of satisfaction, particularly for a generation that's grown up in inhabiting virtual reality.

## Infirmary Room

With a nurse and a well equipped infirmary room, children are treated with utmost care and compassion. If the child is ill, they are taken to the infirmary room where first-aid is administered. In case of any acute injury or medical emergency, the child is consulted at the Thirumala Mission Hospital on informing the parents.

## Admin and School Management Nooks

The school is well facilitated for rooms designated specifically to the principal, teachers and admin staff with additional comforts for the parents during the child's respective Parent Teacher Meetings (PTM).

## Transport

Extreme caution is considered while appointing drivers and attendants to ply the school transportation. The buses are also equipped with first-aid and safety equipment in case of emergency. With the facility of CCTV on all the buses, which is monitored by the surveillance team, the safety of each and every student is further enhanced.

The buses are GPS enabled for deriving the exact location the position of a bus at any time during commute and in case of a breakdown, can send a replacement bus instantly. The buses are installed with speed governors to avoid rash driving and speeding.





# ACADEMIC APPROACH

Balsam Academy Curriculum is much more than a syllabus, which outlines what is to be taught. The objective is to follow practical yet professional approach to develop application oriented competencies that are precise and measurable. The curriculum encompasses the points listed below to ensure that students are enabled to go beyond mere accumulation of knowledge.

- The learning environment
- Resources
- Teaching approaches and strategies
- Assessment programs and methods
- The values and ethos of the school
- The relationships and behaviours among students and teachers.

These are all interconnected and provide the experiences that contribute to student learning. Pedagogical processes are child centric and inclusive in nature as the focus is on individual achievement. The idea is to support student's ability to become an independent /self-reliant and lifelong learner by using a variety of interactive methods.

Interdisciplinary Instruction addresses scholastic and co-scholastic areas such as Arts, Sports, Work Education and SEWA. The main teaching-learning processes are Collaborative Learning, Cooperative Learning, Reciprocal Teaching, Discussions, Group Projects, Blended learning with integration of ICT (Flipped Classrooms), Experiential Learning, Problem Based Learning, Case Studies, Portfolios, Presentations, and Projects.

Pedagogies and Waldorf Inspired Teaching Approach are adopted to take care of diverse background of students catering to the stages, learning styles and intelligences.

**Programs offered: Kindergarten to Grade 10**

# BEYOND ACADEMIC APPROACH

An integrated curriculum approach at Balsam Academy provides continuum of concepts with skills -based learning, and provides opportunities to students to enhance artistic skills, pursue physically active and healthy lifestyle and build life skills. The integrated approach helps to build the strongest possible foundation for children from the elementary years onwards.

## Art Education

Art Education is a part of the curriculum at all levels from class 1 to 10.. Two periods in a week for each section of each class is allocated to involve students in the activities as specified in the CBSE Manual. Students explore different media and techniques and their use for creative and productive expression for common use. Opportunities are provided for development of awareness about folk arts, local specific arts, and other cultural components leading to an appreciation of national heritage. Locally available material is used to make different products. Visual Arts, Performing Arts and Language Arts (creative drama, puppetry, poetry) are some of the media of creative arts that are facilitated.

## Art Integrated Learning

Arts Integrated Learning is a creative and constructivist teaching-learning approach through which students demonstrate their understanding of a concept through various art forms. It signifies exploration of academic content (ideas, concepts, prior knowledge) and skills sets to be acquired by a student through the various forms of Art.

## Art Integrated Project

Art-Integrated Project work for classes I to X is designed to make teaching-learning Competency-Based and joyful. As part of this, at least one Art-Integrated Project in each subject are taken up by all students of classes IX and X from the academic session 2020-21, and students of classes I to VIII are also be encouraged to take at least one Art-Integrated Project (trans-disciplinary project) in a given academic year.

Art Integrated Project are conducted as per the following guidelines: Classes I-VIII, Art Integrated Project should be of trans-disciplinary nature. The project work includes more than one subject and this is considered for Internal Assessment in the subjects concerned.

Classes IX and X, the students take up the art integrated project work as subject enrichment activity in all the subjects for internal assessment. Minimum of one project work for students from classes I-X is mandatory to integrate any art form of the paired State /UT, as defined under Ek Bharat Shreshth Bharat Programme.



## Health and Physical Education and SEWA

Health and Physical Education includes mental and emotional health of the learners apart from physical health. Health is often a state of physical, mental, emotional, social and spiritual well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.

A comprehensive view of Health and Physical Education includes and encompasses the three areas of Health Education, Physical Education and Yoga as integral to achieving holistic health (physical, mental, intellectual, emotional, social and spiritual). Given the interdisciplinary nature of this subject, it is transacted in innovative ways across the curriculum.

## Library

Library has over 12000 volumes which include books, videos, DVDs, CDs, subscription to periodicals which are added to continually. The library also provides students and teachers with a range of reference books, encyclopaedia, journals and newspapers and internet facilities to enrich their classroom activities and knowledge.

E-newspaper is posted daily to the students and students discuss the happenings and articles of their choice, during sessions. To further enhance the literary and language skills selected literary works including stories, poems, videos, articles, biographies, comics etc. are shared with students. Literary weeks are conducted in collaboration with Language departments.

## ICT

Our comprehensive selection of ICT resources draws on wider computing areas from ICT literacy and competency skills to choosing careers in IT. Students are encouraged to explore the theory of ICT, while taking a practical approach to graphs, charts, data manipulation and authoring. Our ICT infrastructure is well equipped and utilized effectively. Provisions are made for periodical upgrading. Students have access to computer systems and the student computer ratio is 1:1. Classrooms are equipped with facilities for computer mediated learning. Digital lessons attribute to integrated and multi-disciplinary collaborative learning. The e-learning from home is integrated in the curriculum. ICT training and professional development programs are organized on a continuous basis.

## Outbound Learning

Outbound Learning provides our children with learning opportunities through challenge, adventure and service, which motivates the students to go beyond their own limitations and discover the strengths they never thought they had. The wilderness settings encourage them to push their own boundaries and limitations and to gain confidence in the process.

## Community Outreach

The Board has been propagating life skills, health, hygiene and sanitation, disaster management, vocational education, environmental education, values education etc., which are intrinsic to reaching out to the community, nation and the world. The Community Outreach also creates awareness among children, develop life skills and train the young growing minds to look beyond academic and global boundaries.

Community Outreach projects commonly take place in settings outside of the school that directly or indirectly benefit community partners. Management, faculty and student engagement with community in both formal and informal settings are the types of activities that are most commonly associated with outreach. It describes all projects, assignments, workshops etc., which are offered outside the regular premises. On the other hand teaching the students weaving, handcrafts, traditional arts, crafts, painting and other folk arts etc. to the young generation so that these ancient art forms do not become obsolete.

## Clubs

At Balsam, we lay due emphasis on different activities through active participation in various social, athletic and artistic clubs and societies. We guide students to discover and create their own understanding. Besides scholastic, co scholastic activities form an integral part of the school curriculum. This aspect includes wide range of co-curricular activities. A student will join a Club and he /she will be assessed on their level of participation and achievement.

The students demonstrate the ability to work in teams and actively participate in various school clubs - Heritage, Book, Spell Bee, Poetry, Writing, Tourism, MUN, Earth, Math, Alchemists, Tech, Fitness, Music, Visual Art, Dance, Culinary.





## STUDENT ACTIVITIES

- Value-based Assembly & Theme-based podcasts for Broadcasting
- 21 Day Challenges for skill development
- Balsam Enterprise
- Celebrating Diversity
- Student Mentoring and Counselling
- Leadership Training
- Life skills & Community Outreach projects
- Outbound /Extended Learning
- Clubs
- Trans-disciplinary Project weeks
- Student Support Program for At-risk and gifted learners
- Scouts & Guides
- Story house in Education
- STEAM Fair
- Innovative and Skill based Contests

### SCHOOL TIMINGS

Nursery to Grade 4: 08:50 a.m. to 02:40 p.m. (Monday - Friday)  
 Grade 5 to Grade 10: 08:50 a.m. to 03:40 p.m. (Monday- Friday)  
**NOTE: Sessions will be conducted on certain Saturdays marked in the School Calendar (subject to change)**

### OFFICE WORKING HOURS

08:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. and 02:00 p.m. to 03:30 p.m. (Monday - Friday)  
 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. (Saturday)

**\*Parents will be informed of working Saturdays if any**

### SCHOOL UNIFORM SCHEDULE

MONDAY AND FRIDAY	SPORTS UNIFORM
TUESDAY AND THURSDAY	HOUSE UNIFORM
WEDNESDAY	FORMAL UNIFORM

**\*Students will be informed of any changes due to special occasions**



# PARENT INVOLVEMENT

We believe our relationship with parents begins the moment you first consider Balsam Academy and extends beyond your child's schooling. The Balsam experience is one that is shared both by parents and their children therefore it is our goal to keep parents well-informed to stay involved.

## PARENT INVOLVEMENT HOURS

The Partnership for Success initiative requires Balsam parents to complete ten (10) Parent Involvement hours per school year. Parent Involvement hours are documented on the Parent Involvement Card and parents who have fulfilled the required hours will be recognised on the Awards Day.

## Find Out More

Interested in serving the school as a parent volunteer? Contact front office or obtain the form (link: [//goo.gl/forms/kaqddS3ZUajbAGLd2\\_](https://goo.gl/forms/kaqddS3ZUajbAGLd2_)), fill and submit



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