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# IMAGINE

Q1 April - June 2020 Newsletter

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## EDUCATION FOR TOMORROW

The bright side of the academic year 2020-21 is that it brought the entire parent-child-teacher-school community together, partnering at every step and striving to bring forth the best in every one of us. What seemed insurmountable in early April settled down after 6-8 weeks of extremely hard work and adjustment from every stakeholder. Nature has its way to pool back the energies and the greatest beneficiaries were children. They had immense time to bond with parents yet remain connected with school and activities. Thanks to relentless efforts from every teacher and staff at Balsam.

Last three months have been a boon. It rendered us a lot of time to rethink our approach. It provided ample time to reflect and up-skill ourselves, in every sense of the word. It was a paradigm shift. Balsam did not leave even a single stone unturned, to ensure children received uninterrupted holistic support in scholastics, co-scholastics and other essential skills. Parents' support was incredible. While accepting and adapting to change wasn't easy, it was taken in with good stride.

The online class format adopted gave children ample time for experiential learning at home and learning using materials posted in Google Classrooms. Adequately spaced online sessions and one-on-one interaction with teachers boosted the morale to march forward. Teachers' constant motivation and reminders to parents and children, helped in reducing the learning curve needed to transition to digital platforms.

Child-friendly and age-appropriate video content made learning fun and interesting. Teachers invested time to ensure that content was relevant to local experiences, culture and living. The content was delivered incrementally taking children from what they knew to new knowledge. Parental support in learning with children, supporting with devices and data packages was commendable.

Our vision is to empower every child to be at the forefront in adopting and integrating changes, seamlessly. The journey till date has given us best results and proven the superb outlook we have. There is no doubt that we are the 21st century learners, ready to take on technology that is in the best interest of human development.



MRS. SHUBHADAINI JOSHI, NON-EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

*“Change will never change”*

### SMC MEMBER

*Nasiha Parveen*



As quoted, the Covid-19 pandemic has changed the whole world into a new dimension. But it also has also given us a greater gift. Time to connect and reflect with our children. Initially remote and distance learning made me feel excited by the prospect of online teaching but I was terrified at the same time. But the team of Balsam Academy has handled the transition tactfully, making the children to adapt effortlessly to new teaching-learning methods. I take this opportunity to verbalise my appreciation and thanks for the wonderful work that you are doing collectively as an institution. Thank you all...

### MEET OUR COUNSELLOR

Hi. I am **Ms. Sneha Shaji**. I am so happy to be your counsellor and I am really excited to meet you all. I have been a school counsellor for 5 years now and absolutely love my job. I promise our journey together will be filled with fun, lots of learning and an adventure.

- ❖ I love animals
- ❖ I enjoy watching Disney movies
- ❖ Ex “Call of duty” player
- ❖ I spend a lot of time playing with my 3 kittens ( Mathew, Luca, Suzie)



### Contact me

The best way to get in contact with me is through call: 9790977115

Mail:

[studentwelfare@balsamacademy.org](mailto:studentwelfare@balsamacademy.org)

**MS. KAVERI PRIYA***Head of Science*

Learning-from-home mode has abruptly changed the roles of teachers, students and parents. The need for autonomous learning requires that teachers shift to be designers and facilitators of learning instead of the sage on the stage.

Lessons learned from the sudden disappearance of the traditional classroom stage and the isolation of each learner in his or her own space, should drive teachers to unlearn old habits and acquire new skills of online teaching and learning. Thanks to the pandemic disruption, the online teaching and learning – no matter how disorderly inequitable the implementation is across the country – has forced the teachers to realise that they have to reach out to each student in isolation and examine the effectiveness of their teaching.

Our ongoing research reveals that teachers' fear of technology has given way to an emerging sense of obligation to master technology and explore ways to integrate it into their pedagogy, in order to maintain their professional duties. This has awakened desire, can hopefully snowball into concerted efforts to restore the teaching profession.

By the same token, students need to build up a character of interdependence, discipline and responsibility. Along the same lines, the current learning-from-home practices should gear parents to be a beacon of these character-values, instead of extended academic tutors for their children. Covid-19 is bringing about a whole set of new challenges in every possible realm; higher education being just one.

Owing to all these changes our management has brought about several changes in order to cater to the needs of the hour. They have asserted a tech-enabled teaching-learning, ensuring both students and teachers are fully equipped for the digital transformation in higher education. Created a three-way communication channel between students, teachers and the parent, which operates offline and online and bridges the teaching-learning.



## TOOLS FOR VIRTUAL LEARNING



### GOOGLE CLASSROOM

*Google Classroom aims to simplify creating, distributing, and grading assignments. The primary purpose of Google Classroom is to streamline the process of sharing files between teachers and students. It is estimated between 40 to 100 million users use Google Classroom. Google Classroom integrates Docs, Sheets, Slides, Gmail, and Calendar into a cohesive platform to manage student and teacher communication. Students can be invited to join a class through a private code, or automatically imported from a school domain.*

*Teachers can create, distribute and mark assignments all within the Google ecosystem. Each class creates a separate folder in the respective user's Drive, where the student can submit work to be graded by a teacher. Assignments and due dates are added to Google calendar, each assignment can belong to a category (or topic). Teachers can monitor the progress for each student by reviewing revision history of a document, and after being graded, teachers can return work along with comments.*

### GOOGLE MEET

*After being invite-only and quietly releasing an iOS app in February 2017, Google formally launched Meet in March 2017. The service was unveiled as a video conferencing app for up to 30 participants, described as an enterprise-friendly version of Hangouts. It has launched with a web app, an Android app, a Symbian app, and an iOS app. During the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic, the use of Meet grew by a factor of 30 between January and April of 2020, with 100 million users a day accessing Meet, compared to 200 million daily uses for Zoom as of the last week of April 2020.*

*Features of Google Meet include:*

- *Two-way and multi-way audio and video calls with a resolution up to 720p*
- *An accompanying chat*
- *Call encryption between all users*
- *Noise cancelling audio filter*
- *Low-light mode for video*
- *Ability to join meetings through a web browser or through Android or iOS apps*
- *Hosts being able to deny entry and remove users during a call.*

## WORTH A READ

### CHILDREN'S OMNIBUS - RUSKIN BOND

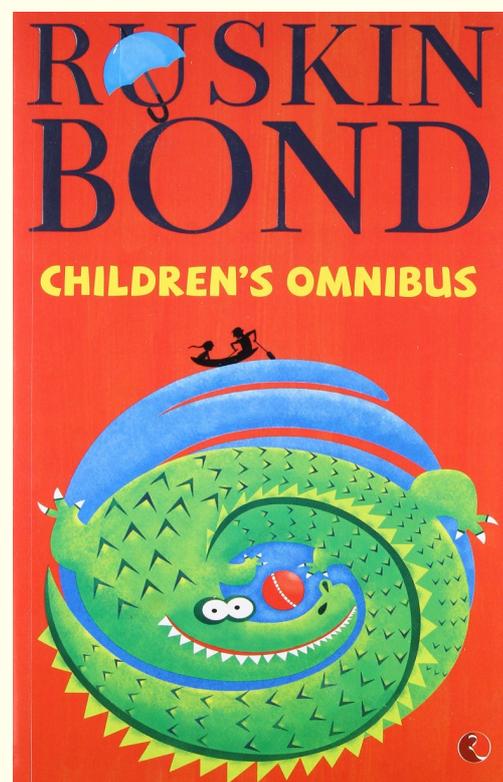
*Ruskin Bond was born on May 19, 1934. He is an Indian author. He is well known for his role in promoting children's literature in India. He is known to have written more than five hundred essays, short stories, and novels. He has also authored more than fifty books for children. He has written two volumes of autobiography including, 'The Lamp is Lit' and 'Scenes from a Writer's Life.' Some of his works have been adapted into films such as the short story 'Susanna's Seven Husbands' and his novel 'The Blue Umbrella.' In 1992, Ruskin Bond won the Sahitya Academy Award for his book 'Our Trees Still Grow in Dehra.' In 1999, he received the Padma Sri award. In 2014, he was awarded the Padma Bhushan Award.*

This is a book by the prolific children author Ruskin Bond with a collection of short stories. He has portrayed the perfect blend of common people on the mountain of Dehra and the lively nature as background characters. It is a treat for readers of all ages looking for a light and entertaining reading experience.

It includes the Grandfather's private zoo, where the grandfather loves to keep a collection of animals, birds and even reptiles as his pets and their adventures, this story would become favourite among little children and adults too. Dust on the mountains- is a story of a boy who leaves the mountain and moves to a city for his living . While the Angry River and The Blue umbrella are the main stories in the book. Both the stories have a little girl as the main character.

Cricket for the Crocodile revolves among the two groups of boys and Nakoo a crocodile. Ranji's team, a group of boys from the town play a cricket match against the village boys at the river bank. The teams find an unexpected opponent, a nosy crocodile who gets annoyed at the swarms of boys crowding the riverbank and the cricket balls flopping around his place of rest, Nakoo the crocodile decides to take his revenge. It is thrilling, but an enjoyable treat

Stories like The Road to the Bazaar, The Ghost Trouble adds up to give a finishing touch to the book. This book is sure to impress readers for Ruskin's vivid writing!



**JAYASHREE M**

*Librarian*



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## MERCY DEBORAH - GRADE 9A

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*(Once, there was an old grandma in a village, who took good care of a turtle. A lady came near the pond and inquired about the turtle's wellness).*

**Turtle:** Hello mam.

**Lady:** Hello turtle, what do you think about the old grandma?

**Turtle:** I think she makes my life easier. My friends envy me, because of her. She got many reasons to live.

**Lady:** Don't you think it is selfish of you to have her help?

**Turtle:** Yes, I feel bad for my friends. But I do call my friends to come along with me to get treated by her.

**Lady:** What is your opinion about the human world?

**Turtle:** Humans are good, but sometimes I think they are selfish and greedy for their happiness. On the other hand, we have that old lady, who is precious and praiseworthy. I just wish if every single person on this planet earth can do good deeds like her, Then the world can really turn out to be the most beautiful residence. If people like her are everywhere, all turtles will be absolutely fine.

**Lady:** If you could do anything for her, what would you do?

**Turtle:** I will ask God to give her more days to live for her deeds as people who do good deeds are a piece of art. I really appreciate her help.

## செம்மொழி தினம்

உலகின் மூத்தமொழிகளில் ஒன்றான தமிழின்தோற்றம் அறுதியிட்டுக் கூறவியலாத தொன்மைவாய்ந்தது. அதனால் தான்,

“தொன்று நிகழ்ந்ததனைத்தும் உணர்ந்திடு

சூழ்கலை வாணர்களும் - இவள்

என்று பிறந்தவள் என்றுணராத

இயல் பினாளாம் எங்கள் தாய்”

என்றான் மகாகவி பாரதி.

தன்னிகரற்ற இலக்கிய வரலாற்றுடன் நிலைத்து வாழ்ந்து வரும் தமிழ் மொழிக்கு செம்மொழி என்கிற உயர்தகுதியை 2004 ஆம் ஆண்டு ஜூன் ம் தேதியில் இந்திய அரசு அறிவித்தது. இதன் மூலம் தமிழ் மொழிக்கு உலக அரங்கிலும் தேசிய அளவிலும் மிகப்பெரும் அங்கீகாரம் கிடைத்தது. செம்மொழி தினத்தைக் கொண்டாடும் பொருட்டு ஜூன் ம் தேதியன்று பால்சம் பள்ளியிலும், மாணவர்களுக்கு வாட்ஸ் ஆப் குழுவின் மூலம் செம்மொழித் தமிழின் சிறப்புகளை வெளிப்படுத்தும் ஒளி - ஒலிக்காட்சி பதிவு பகிரப்பட்டது. இச்செயல்பாடு செம்மொழித் தமிழைப் போற்றும் விதமாகமட்டுமல்லாமல், தமிழ் மொழியின் வளர்ச்சிக்கு வித்திடுவதாகவும் அமைந்தது.

[ஒளி - ஒலிக்காட்சி பதிவின் இணைப்பு](#)

## SEWA

*“Life skills are art of living, which helps us to draw a personal and professional sketch of life”*

*Like academics, SEWA is a part of Life skills that benefit from pro-active education, qualified instructions and a dynamic curriculum. In a constantly changing environment, having skills is an essential part to meet the challenges of everyday life. Life skills provide students with important tools for development, such as independent thinking, to socialize and make new friends and to take actions in situations where their parents and teachers may not be around them to help or intervene.*

*In this rapid pandemic of COVID-19, we've created a world in which students must suppress their natural instincts, mindlessly follow paths to nowhere laid out for them by adults. We have assigned project of preparing a manual on 'Post COVID-19 in different sites like markets, educational institutions, restaurants, residences and work places' for Grade 6-10. Our students have created an awareness of COVID-19 through song and skit in their manual.*

## BALSAM BYTES



*Grade 4 students were given a project to make a cube to make them realise how 3d shapes be and to know the concept of face, vertex and edges. Children made colourful and perfect cubes. They enjoyed making the cubes. We observed that children involve them in learning by doing.*

*Students of grade 4 were given the activity of making cutouts of symmetry from square paper and drawing the symmetry of half a leaf to know the lines of symmetry on 30th June 2020. Children came with different symmetrical designs in the cutouts and interpret the patterns of the half leaf and completed drawing the next half. T. Jayashree from G4B did the activity very creatively and shared her work in the classroom.*



## YOGA FOR PEACE AND HARMONY



*We are happy to share our sports activities for the month of June.*

*Physical fitness is not just crucial for a healthy body but imperative for a healthy mind and emotional well-being. Even though laziness seems the new normal amidst others 'newness' that stays at home has brought, there's no substitute to self-care. Knowing the value of good postures helps the children with the way of sitting, walking and standing. Regular physical activities sent to students according to their level wise and it helps the students to stay healthy and fit, manage the weight, to have stronger bones, muscles and joints and keep the disease away from them.*

## CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Balsam believes in continually upgrading teacher skills to cater to the requirements of the 21<sup>st</sup> century learners. This year, we had special and unique challenges due to Covid. The paradigm shift was gracefully accepted and transformed the entire Balsam staff.

Training for Waldorf Approach in mainstream schooling, blended material generation, online teaching and technical skills to enhance confidence in content and delivery have been the main focus in the first two quarters of 2020-21 academic year. Training by experts, peer-training, self-learning and demonstrations was the approach adopted.

The tables below list the training topic, dates of training and the target groups that were trained.

Date	Topics	Target Group
April 20 - May 09' 2020	Waldorf Approach for Mainstream Schools Teacher Presentations	Kinder Team
May 11 - May 30' 2020	Online Material Preparations Online Class Demonstrations and Review PowerPoint Basics Voice Embedded Presentations and Videos Developing Learning Packs for K-G8 ICT Training - Google Meeting, Forms, Classrooms and Drives	K-G10
June 2020	English Language Development Reviewing and Improving Learning Materials	K-G10
Ongoing Since June 2020	Online Class Observations and Feedback Quality Audit of Blended Learning Materials Training Level Monitors and Subject Heads Leadership Development	K-G10

An online staff induction was conducted to integrate new employees with the existing one to make them understand the system and policies of our school and acclimatise their roles.

Head of Operations, Ms.Nownihal attended training session conducted by professional group QCI, Quality Control of India on 11.06.20 about Schools post lockdown - What, Why and How?

We confidently proclaim that Balsam Staff is well educated, equipped and trained to handle situations and we have made a huge shift in adopting the new paradigm.

# SPOTLIGHT INTERVIEW

BY MR. VIGNESHWARAN, HEAD OF ENGLISH DEPARTMENT

## 1. HOW IS IT LIKE TO BE THE HEAD GIRL?

*I feel good to be the Head Girl sir. I have to be perfect in everything and need to hold a lot of responsibilities.*

## 2. HOW DOES IT MAKE YOU FEEL, BEING THE HEAD GIRL IN THIS PANDEMIC TIME?

*I think that I have a bit more responsibility when compared to the previous batches, knowing and fulfilling every student's needs is not usual manner.*

## 3. WILL YOU CONSIDER THIS A FORTUNATE OR AN UNFORTUNATE TIME?

*I always think positive. So according to me I feel that this is a fortunate time to prove myself better.*

## 4. FOR THE POWERS VESTED IN YOU, HOW DO YOU PLAY YOUR RESPONSIBLE ROLE IN THIS PANDEMIC?

*A leader is a person, who should know everyone's situation and do things accordingly. So, we can replace the word powers with another equivalent word 'more responsibilities. I will do all my responsibilities in a good manner.*

## 5. WHAT ARE THE DIFFICULTIES FACED BY YOU, WHILE YOU WERE TRYING TO ORGANISE AN EVENT OR COORDINATE ANY HAPPENINGS WITH OUR SCHOOL CHILDREN?

*I think that all the students are being active in attending the online classes and being a part of other co-scholastic areas. Students are eagerly waiting for classes, events and activities and with this eagerness. I feel that there are no difficulties in arranging any online meetings.*

## 6. HOW ACTIVE CHILDREN ARE IN THIS PANDEMIC?

*As I said already, students are very active in this pandemic situation. But still some are not showing their full interest sir. So, we need to find the reasons for it.*

## 7. BEING THE REPRESENTATIVE, CAN YOU GIVE US THE THOUGHTS REIGN IN CHILDREN IN THIS PANDEMIC?

*Yes, students think that online classes are really good and help a lot in learning.*

## 8. ARE THEY REALLY INTERESTED IN ACADEMIC PROCEEDINGS?

*Yes sir, the students who are active in normal school are active in academics in this pandemic situation too. But the students, who are not showing interest in school, are still remaining the same way even in this pandemic situation.*

## 9. WILL YOU PREFER TO BE THE HEAD GIRL IN PANDEMIC OR IN NORMAL DAYS?

*I feel even more responsible and good to be the Head Girl in this pandemonium situation. Because, we are facing a different situation and everyone has even more responsibilities. And being a leader, the responsibilities become more and this will make me work more.*

## 10. HOW HAS BEEN THE SCHOOL TRYING TO REACH OUT THE CHILDREN?

*Our school is trying a lot and has done a lot to reach every student in the school sir. I feel satisfied with the work done by our school sir.*

## 11. WHAT IS YOUR PARENTS' PERCEPTION OF THE SCHOOL?

*My parents are much satisfied with the work done by our school.*



HEAD GIRL - SIVARANJINI, 10 B



## INDUCTION TRAINING

*“We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence then, is not an act, but a habit” - Aristotle*

We encourage our human capital to become our organisation’s best asset through their engagement. We believe that an effective induction will help our new team members to feel welcome and fit in quickly. An online induction through Google meet was conducted on 20.04.2020 by Ms. Nownihal (Head of Operations) and Ms. Bharathi (Secondary Chemistry Teacher). As both new and old staff were to go through paradigm shift, induction was done for all to help combat the situation by a cognitive approach.

Employees learned to adapt to the norms, the digital developments and expectations of the organisation to quickly reach maximum productivity. The induction set out our organisation’s Vision and Mission. Staff members were educated about history, culture and ethos, code of conduct and responsibilities in our organisation. The valuable information such as who’s who was given for a best possible start by engaging self, exhibiting inclusive culture, respecting every stakeholder and promoting innovative ideas.

This process doesn’t simply end after the induction. It is an ongoing process to help them discover how best to revolutionise this imperative part of on-boarding.

## SMC MEETING

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The School Management Committee was reconstituted for the year 2020-21. The SMC was constituted with an intention to provide exclusive work on bringing excellence in education in all modern standards with the collective approach.

The committee is authorized to monitor the general function of the school. It supports the head in preparing and recommending the entire developmental plan. It shall identify all the suitable curricular, co-curricular, Extra-curricular areas, suitable to the children in the given frame work in the light of CBSE curriculum.

As per the set objectives the members of the committee met for this academic year (1st SMC meeting). It was scheduled on 9th May 2020 through Video Conference. Smt. V.B.Saroja, the Chairperson presided over the meeting.

Finally, members made resolutions in the area of concerns such as Fee ratification, School and transport fee waiver, flexible fee payment options, personnel management, implementation of online learning platform, device arrangement support for online classes, options to operate after lockdown, learning materials distribution and collaboration ideas with STC/PTC.



## PTC MEETING

The Parent Teacher Council (PTC) was constituted for the year 2020 – 21 with the Principal as Chairperson, Vice Principal as Vice Chairperson, HRTs as Teacher Representatives and A parent representative from each class.

The Committee was constituted to provide the platform for parents, guardians, and teachers of students to meet, exchange, deeply analyze issues, make recommendations and effectively pursue the implementation of decisions on matters affecting education / learning. To foster mutual understanding, harmonious relationship and cooperation among parents, guardians, and teachers in the fulfilment of their common aim, the welfare of the school and the pupils/students therein.

Work with the Parent Volunteer System to plan and provide above activities and class room activities that support lesson plans given to the students. Build a sense of community at school through increased and sustained parental participation and involvement in school events.

The Committee has met on 23.05.2020 to generate ideas to collaborate with parents to help children and teachers. Also, the committee has planned to launch Parent Initiative Programme.

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## UPCOMING EVENTS

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# A Letter To Parents - Online Class - Strategic Approach 20/21

Dear Balsam Parents and Guardians,

We hope you are safe and healthy as you read this letter. Thank you so much for your patience and understanding as we have been adjusting, like you, to the drastic changes in life during the last few months. We are extremely appreciative of our students, parents, teachers, staff and administrators for their positivity, flexibility and resilience during these trying times. Balsam Family welcomes you to the academic year 2020-21 with renewed zeal to face unprecedented challenges. Due to closure of schools, the teaching-learning process has witnessed paradigm shift: E- LEARNING. After much effort from our team in having to explore all the possibilities, we are convinced we have come up with the best solution to adapt to the new demands of this new life. We believe that combination of parental support, self-paced learning through pre-recorded videos, interaction with parents, live online sessions, and project-based assignments will provide for our children as the 21st century learners. All members of Scholastic and CoScholastic teams have prepared meticulous plans for our children to emerge as problem solvers. We extend our support to listen to your concerns and address them to the best possible extent. We thank parents who have supported us financially despite challenges, who have cooperated in at-home learning, and have patiently worked through online mode of learning.

Teachers have addressed following concerns that could arise in an online session:

1. Engage every child in learning
2. Provide combination of learning materials to cater to students with different learning styles
3. Plan to adopt differentiated teaching
4. Plan to evaluate learning after every concept
5. Allow group-wise interactions
6. Provide clarity about assignment submission, links and due dates

We request you to assist your child in following teacher instructions to make online learning fun and fruitful. Any observation or a query or any concern, please write/text to the respective Level Monitor or the Home Room Teacher.

We will resume digital learning as mentioned below:

1. Grade 9 and 10 - from 11th June 2020
2. Kinder to Grade 8 - from 18th June 2020

Please read Annexure 1 to get a detailed information about our academic plan for the months of June. Please refer to the video tutorials that our ICT team will be sharing with you in the upcoming week for guidance to digital learning. Time Table for Online Sessions will be shared soon. We look forward to the innovative solutions to breakthrough all challenges and become role models to our children. We request all parents to support us in this new educational approach. We shall keep you updated of further developments regarding reopening of schools based on the notifications we shall receive from the government. We would like to thank you parents for your continued support. We look forward to more fruitful interactions and feedback from you.

**Regards,  
Team Balsam**