



APE Octogone de Pascal

Parlons d'une seule voix !

SUCCESSFUL TRANSITION FROM ELEMENTARY TO MIDDLE SCHOOL

A SMALL GUIDE FOR STUDENTS & PARENTS OF THE 3RD CYCLE

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION.....	3
ADVICE TO PARENTS	4
GRADE 6 AT LYCEE BLAISE PASCAL.....	5
CHANGES, FAMILIAR THINGS	5
PRONOTES	6
SKILLS AND QUANTITATIVE GRADES.....	6
ADVICE TO STUDENTS	7
HOW TO PREPARE FOR GRADE 6?	7
HOW TO MANAGE YOUR WORK EFFICIENTLY ?	7
« ROTE LEARNING ».....	8
WINNING HABITS.....	8
AT SCHOOL.....	8
DURING EXAMS.....	8
AT HOME.....	9
TUTORING.....	9
AUTONOMY.....	9
THE INTERNATIONALE SECTION.....	10
HOW TO GET READY FOR THE INTERNATIONAL SECTION?	10
QUALITY OF HOMEWORK AND EVALUATIONS	10
THE STUDENT LIFE TEAM AT LYCEE BLAISE PASCAL	11
TEACHERS.....	11
WHEN SOMEONE NEEDS HELP.....	11
LYCEE'S RESSOURCES AND MECHANISMS	12
RESSOURCES IN ABIDJAN	12
SPEECH THERAPISTS.....	12
PSYCHOLOGISTS.....	12
CHILD PSYCHIATRISTS	13
ASSOCIATIONS.....	13
HIGHSCHOOL RULES.....	13
RESOURCES AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	14

INTRODUCTION

The 3rd phase of the learning cycle includes the last two classes of elementary school (Grade 4 and Grade 5) as well as Grade 6. The goal is to consolidate the skills acquired in elementary school while introducing students to the middle school curriculum. It represents a significant and not always easy change in a student life. Jacques Prévert Elementary School and Lycée Blaise Pascal together form a renowned institution that praises excellence in Côte d'Ivoire as well as among the AEFÉ 350 schools throughout the world, and therefore offer demanding programs. School Teachers and staff strive to set the best pedagogical methods and learning conditions to promote student success.

This booklet was drafted by the Parents Association Octogone de Pascal. The goal is to offer a methodological approach to Lycée Blaise Pascal students and their parents in order to develop effective learning conditions at an early stage of the learning process. Most of the recommendations on the the French school system and the International Baccalaureate (IB) can also be found in numerous academic guides or on the internet. They have been adapted to the context of our school and are based on feedback and experiences from students, teachers and parents.

We thank all those who contributed to its development through formal and informal interviews.

ADVICE TO PARENTS

The transition from elementary to middle school is similar to the one from Kindergarten to Grade 1. It requires a lot of support from home. It is imperative to help your children, listen to them and give them advice so that they can organize their workload by priority and in a more productive way; or in order to work more efficiently in class. Helping students find the right methods to get them on the road to self-sufficiency at their own pace will help them stay motivated and competent.

The educational team of Lycée Blaise Pascal is constantly reflecting on the issue and has set up several initiatives to harmonize the work and skills from Grade 4 to Grade 6. Among these are:

- Scientific Workshops (in laboratories)
- The Mathematics Rally integrating both 5th and 6th Grade
- The Visit of the Middle School by Grade 5 students in order to familiarize themselves with the site and the life of a middle school student
- Meeting and exchanges with the Elementary School Academic Advisor (CPE) to understand the running of the Middle School
- Joint writing projects with Middle School French teachers and CDI visits
- 5th Grade participation to the solidarity race
- The Traditional day
- The Budding Ambassadors
- Teamwork between primary and middle school teachers

All of these actions contribute to the success and integration of students and create a sense of belonging.

The classes are taught by two teachers, respectively French and English, following the conventional twenty-five hours per week. Jacques Prévert has an average of six classes of 27 students per grade (900 students from Preschool to Grade 5). The school curriculum from Grade 4 to Grade 6 is consistent with the French education program (Eduscol). The workload between primary school and college increases significantly. Evaluations are based on skills. There are no quantitative grades in primary school. Practicing reading and writing at home is crucial.

Link to the parents' guide on Eduscol website:

<https://eduscol.education.fr/cid100930/espaces-parents.html>

Ambassadeurs en Herbe (A model UN similar initiative)

GRADE 6 AT LYCEE BLAISE PASCAL

Eight subjects¹ are now taught individually by a teacher. Methodology courses are given to help students study more effectively. Classes run for longer periods of time, ranging from 7:30 am to 3 pm for students in the standard curriculum section; and up to 4 or 5 pm for students in the international section.

Each class is supported by a head teacher. His role is to coordinate the communication between students, teachers and parents; as well as other members of the school community



In order to better support the students of Grade 6, it is essential to regularly check their agenda as well as the “**Pronote**” site and the class notebooks to help them organize their working method and time. At first, the physical presence and availability of parents when the student does his homework is an advantage, even if he is independent enough to study alone. There is also a need for regular exchanges with teachers, via Pronote or face-to-face meetings so that teachers can better understand your child and parents can understand the academic requirements of the teacher..

Every child is unique, different even from his brothers and sisters. That’s why it is important for parents to find the right balance between motivating their children to study seriously without putting too much pressure on them. The role of parents is therefore crucial: to help your child gain confidence in his/her ability to study independently.

CHANGES, FAMILIAR THINGS

In Grade 6, the students geographically speaking change campus location and move eight hundred meters further from Ecole Jacques Prévert (Elementary School) to Lycée Blaise Pascal, which welcomes more than 1,600 students. From this time, students move from one classroom to another according to the teachers and the subjects taught. Some students may need several weeks of adaptation before they can correctly navigate the new campus. The School Life Coordinator (CPE) and his team are on the ground to assist students.

The student now has to adapt to the style and personality of seven or eight different teachers instead of just two, as it was the case in elementary school.

It is no longer possible to play in the playground, except for tennis table fans. However, the school’s spacious and luscious grounds are relaxing; and the cafeteria offers a varied assortment of snacks.

As a parent, do not hesitate to report any particular educational need (Dys, grade repeat or skip) so that teachers can better assist the student. Make an appointment with the head teacher to discuss the child’s academic history. Medical check-ups can be sent to the school doctor who will review and make suggestions.

The six grade head teacher spends an hour one a weekly basis, communicating about school life, teaching students how to organize themselves better, how to use their material properly, and how

¹ French, English, Mathematics, History, Geography, Integrated Science and Technology Education (EIST), Visual Arts, Physical Education and Sport (EPS)

to learn their lessons effectively. This exchange promotes a climate of mutual assistance and respect between students and teachers. It is also an opportunity for students to freely express themselves on topics related to their life at school.

PRONOTES

Pronote is a computer tool for communication between the school, parents, students and teachers; as well as other members of the school community: the school Academic Adviser (CPE), the school psychologist. It provides information about each student grades, homework, schedule, teacher absences, classroom changes, canteen menu etc.

For optimal results, it is imperative, to consult Pronote at least once a day for homework and communications (not necessarily grades). It is accessible via a computer or any mobile support (APP Pronote on smartphone).



The Secretariat of the Deputy Headmaster is available for any assistance relating to its use.

Parents usually create WhatsApp class groups as an effective way to assist their children until they take off on their own.

SKILLS AND QUANTITATIVE GRADES



In elementary school, verbal communication and written assignments are assessed and scored according to the level of skill acquisition on a regular basis. In middle school and high school, the work is assessed by a scoring system ranging from 0 to 20. It is important to note that these numerical observations reflect some knowledge acquired at a specific moment and the level of a student is compared to the rest of the class. They do not indicate the student's skill level nor the child's work effort. For several years now, a score assessing student's skills competencies has been introduced up to Grade 9 in the majority of French schools.

At Lycée Blaise Pascal, this evaluation method will be tested for two years at the start of the September 2019 academic year for Grade 6.

ADVICE TO STUDENTS



HOW TO PREPARE FOR GRADE 6?

- Before or during the holidays, buy school books as soon as possible. The list of supplies is available as of June, on the website <https://lycee-blaisepascal.com>
- Take advantage of the APE Book Fair held in July of the previous year and immediately before the start of the new school year (end of August)
- Play the teacher! Explain to your parents, siblings or a third party what you understand.
- Read, read, and read!! Also read  aloud
- **Learn to highlight main ideas and keywords** 
- For assessments, anticipate questions the teacher will ask, answer these questions aloud and in writing
- Write important information by making detailed summaries of your readings
- Organize notes / cards, mental maps to review and learn
- Practice reading and understanding statements
- Download mental calculation apps to review simple but essential calculations during the holidays
- Consult Pronote at least once a day (homework / communications / grades)

HOW TO MANAGE YOUR WORK EFFICIENTLY ?

- Develop good work practices: regular and fixed schedules under optimal conditions of concentration (silence) and sitting in front of a table
- Determine homework priorities
- Organize your work, understand and be able to explain to someone else what you have learned
- Plan ahead so you do not get caught off guard and do not put things back at the last minute
- Review lessons every day, even when there is no homework
- Do not allow gaps to accumulate
- Always assume that what is done is done

What kind of memory do I have? Auditory, visual, or kinesthetic?

To find it out, perform the test on the link below:

<https://www.digischool.fr/methodologie/revisions/test-type-memoire-12064.html>

« ROTE LEARNING »

It is still relevant today, especially with regard to math, science, history, conjugations and grammar rules. To learn by heart, it can be useful to:

- Re-read the lesson several times
- Read aloud
- Highlight the important words of the lesson
- Rewrite definitions and important dates
- Reproduce tables and plans

A healthy lifestyle remains a key factor for success. It means sleeping well every night by going to bed relatively early, without electronic devices, eating healthy meals and taking frequent breaks; but also relaxing and undertaking leisurely activities during the week or weekends

Leisure time is also important because it allows students to maintain a balance, which is vital to be more effective.

WINNING HABITS

AT SCHOOL

- Listening and participating in class is already a HUGE part of the job! Focusing and listening in class helps you learn better
- Participate in class: Answer questions
- Ask questions when you don't understand; it is very likely that others may not have understood either
- Be punctual, organized and sort out your locker
- Use a second schoolbag for afternoon books to avoid carrying a heavy school bag, which can be harmful for the back

DURING EXAMS

To learn effectively you must understand the content of the lesson and know the definition and spelling of keywords.

Read the wording entirely to fully understand it before answering; even better, read it several times to avoid being out of context.

Highlight the keywords and justify the answer with the details learned in class.

Some tips to better answer the wordings:

- To the question "Who?" choose a name or function
- To the question "What?" define an object
- To the question "How?" explain a process
- To the question "Where?" give a place name

AT HOME

- Make a regular and continuous effort.
- Re-read the lessons and explain them to yourself or to a third party, even when there is no homework for the next day.
- Consult Pronote and the agenda everyday for homework and communication (not for grades)
- Regularly sort out your workspace
- Prepare your schoolbag and others the day before
- Regularly check the contents of your pencil case
- Practice a personal activity that you enjoy (sport, hobby, etc.)

TUTORING

In Côte d'Ivoire, tutoring is very common. It can be extremely beneficial when it allows students to understand the concepts learned in class which may not have been thoroughly understood by the pupils. This support system relieves parents to go about their other occupations. However, entrusting this responsibility to a third party may also have drawbacks. Make sure the tutor has the required academic and teaching level and skills required, that he does not do the work for the student, and allows him to achieve his success and autonomy.

A tutor cannot substitute parents: he must be accountable and provide feedback, both good and bad, to parents. It is rare to find a tutor that can cover all subjects; better to target them depending on the student's strengths and weaknesses.

AUTONOMY

- Discipline yourself ALONE. Learn to settle down and do your work at specific times without being forced by your parents
- Learn how to identify the work to be done as a priority, and continue with other subjects as well
- Ask for help only after you've tried alone

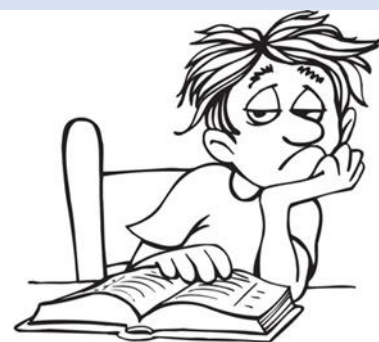
THE INTERNATIONALE SECTION



In Abidjan, the opening of the American international section (SIA) was authorized by the French Ministry of National Education for the start of the academic year 2017-2018. As of fall of 2019, English was generalized to all students in Cycle 2. Four classes of Grade 3 provide a parity schedule (12 hours of French and 12 hours of English). Reinforced English is offered to students in Grades 3 and 4 (standard curriculum sections). This section brings together students with advanced verbal and written English skills to increase their exposure to the American culture. The section requires more hours of class time and personal work than the

HOW TO GET READY FOR THE INTERNATIONAL SECTION?

- Take part in fun and extra-curricular activities in English (playdates with English-speaking friends, visit an English-speaking country if possible)
- If necessary, watch movies, programs or documentaries in English (DVD, YouTube or DSTV / Netflix subscriptions)
- Read, write in English, and provide feedback of your readings through summaries detailed and rich in vocabulary
- For subjects taught in English (history and geography, American culture or literature ...) it is sometimes easier to learn about the subject in French and then replicate in English.



Some useful sites:

<https://www.science.edu/acellus/course/middle-school-american-history/>

www.first-english.org

<http://learnenglishteens.britishcouncil.org/>

QUALITY OF HOMEWORK AND EVALUATIONS

Understand the grading scale to know the teacher's expectations

- The school's pedagogical team requires teachers to provide students with the list of expectations by chapter / module taught;
- Work on lessons from the list of expectations provided by teachers;
- Re-read and learn lessons, and exercises done in class **BEFORE** doing homework and before the course of the next day;
- Read and understand the wordings;
- Arrive in class ready;
- Take care of notebooks and school materials;
- Before returning homework, re-read the wording and answers to correct grammar and spelling errors, and to make sure questions were answered correctly.

For more information, visit the following site:

https://histoire-geo.ac-noumea.nc/IMG/pdf/lire_un_e_nonce_et_comprendre_les_consignes_en_histoire_justine_rouillier.pdf

THE STUDENT LIFE TEAM AT LYCEE BLAISE PASCAL



For Grade 6, the staff responsible for school life includes:

- The Deputy Headmaster (Mr. Mosnier),
- An Academic Advisor - CPE (Mr. Yapo)
- Four counselors/coordinators, (Mrs. Kassi and three on-site rotating supervisors on the site).

They make sure day-to-day activities during times outside the classroom run smoothly. They monitor individual communication notebooks (attendance, delays, authorizations), and supervise canteen time and recesses. The Deputy Headmaster attends three formal meetings with 6th grade teachers during the year.

TEACHERS

There are twelve classes of Grade 4 and 5 with 15 teachers (twelve teaching subjects in French, 3 teaching subjects in English). In middle school, thirty teachers teach seven classes of Grade 6, five of which follow the standard curriculum (Classique) and two follow the international section curriculum (SIA).

In elementary school, the two teachers exchange amongst themselves on a daily basis, while in middle school, the teachers only discuss occasionally about class performance. They meet formally three times a year during teacher class meetings. Given the Lycée's size (almost 3,000 students), there are limited opportunities to know each student individually, which is an important change for the students of the third cycle.

Given the school's excellent academic performance and track record, teachers can be very demanding and have high expectations of their students.



WHEN SOMEONE NEEDS HELP

Make sure you inform any challenge or special need a student faces as soon as possible. The Lycée's chain of command operates as follows:

- The teacher
- The Student Representative and Octogone Parent Representative;
- The Head teacher;
- The Academic Advisor (in case of disciplinary matter);
- The Deputy headmaster

LYCEE'S RESSOURCES AND MECHANISMS

The school procedures and resources are compliant with those required by the Ministry of National Education (France).

- Lycée Blaise Pascal's psychologist is an education professional who counsels students. The school's nurse room and medical team should also be consulted as they know a wide array of resources available in Abidjan. The nurses are very competent and provide significant support to our children.

A support team is generally put in place (including teachers and parents) to establish a program for the student's academic achievements:

- The Personalized Support Program (PAP) specifies academic arrangements required for the success of students with learning disabilities;
- The Personalized Educational Success Program (PPRE), this plan is established when a disability is diagnosed;
- The Individual Reception Plan (IAP) for medically related issues (allergy, asthma, etc.)
- The Personalized Educational Success Program (PPRE) is sometimes suggested for repeat students.

For more information, consult the Eduscol website (How to prevent school difficulties and help students in primary and secondary school) :

<https://eduscol.education.fr/cid66148/les-psychologues-a-l-ecole-primaire.html>

<https://eduscol.education.fr/pid23670/prevention-de-la-difficulte-scolaire-et-aide-aux-eleves.html>

RESSOURCES IN ABIDJAN

There is a wide array of professionals in Abidjan who can diagnose and help students with challenges. The best are often in high demand so do not hesitate to inquire through the school psychologist, nurses or by word-of-mouth.

SPEECH THERAPISTS

- ✓ Mrs. Manon Piecuch, (+225) 59 88 70 99
- ✓ Mme Lauriane Château

PSYCHOLOGISTS

In Abidjan, there are several psychologists with different specialties. Do not hesitate to contact the Lycée's psychologist or nurses for additional contacts.

- ✓ The neuropsychologist of Dr Vanié office
- ✓ Mrs. Lebohang Bereng, Psychological Wellness Center, Boulevard Latrille Cocody, (+225) 06 14 04 31 or (+225) 22 41 54 04

CHILD PSYCHIATRISTS

- ✓ Pr. Assi, Saint Albert Clinic, Riviera Bonoumin (+225) 22 49 21 91 or 09 71 22 38

ASSOCIATIONS

- ✓ Dys-cutons of Mrs. Samira Petit (+225) 22 43 09 70

This association has many resources in Abidjan.

HIGHSCHOOL RULES



The rules of the school are the first laws of community life that we owe respect to.

Students are not allowed to carry mobile phones within the school compound.

The full set of rules is available at the following address on the school website.

<https://www.lycee-blaise-pascal.com/reglement-interieur-college-lycee/>

The following behaviors are strictly prohibited and proscribed under pain of heavy penalties:

- Harassment and respect for others;
- Drugs;
- Cheating



College years may be the best ones of student's life, with great friendships. It is important to make sure students remain well, surrounded by friends driving them to success and keep them moving forward.

Do not hesitate to talk to grown-ups (older siblings, parents, Academic Advisor...) in case you have a problem.

<http://www.education.gouv.fr/pid24209/le-college-en-pratique.html>

https://histoire-geo.ac-noumea.nc/IMG/pdf/lire_un_e_nonce_et_comprendre_les_consignes_en_histoire_justine_rouillier.pdf

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Management and Administrative School Staff : Mr. Hussenet, Mr. Yapo, Ms. Loh

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