

## ***How a Bal du Bac can be organised***

***(23 September 2024)***

Dear S7 class representatives and parents,

**The “Bac Ball” (Bal du Bac)** marks the final days of school for students before they embark on further academic or professional journeys. To honour the strong bonds formed during these years, the school prepares “Bac jumpers” and “Bac books,” cherished mementos that will keep memories alive for years to come. However, the Bal du Bac itself remains the most memorable event, celebrating the end of secondary school life.

Since 2016, both the School and the APEEE (Association des Parents d’Élèves) have supported the organisation of these events. The S7 Educational Adviser, (Conseiller) along with the President, Treasurer, and staff of the APEEE, assist and guide an Organising Committee when needed. APEEE’s involvement ensures transparency, financial accountability, and helps mitigate legal risks associated with contracts with service providers.

For the Bal du Bac to take place, an Organising Committee composed of S7 parents and students is essential. While the S7 Adviser and APEEE provide guidance, the majority of the work must be undertaken by the parents and students themselves. It is recommended to have at least 1 parent from each language section on the committee.

In December APEEE/ S7 Adviser invite S7 parents and students to nominate themselves interested in joining the Organising Committee by contacting the S7 Conseiller. Unless decided otherwise by the committee, APEEE manages all financial and IT aspects, including the collection of parental contributions and disbursement of expenditures through its student accounts.

The first meeting, held at the beginning of January, brings together volunteers to formally establish the Bal du Bac Committee, that consist of the President (from the parents and students’ side, hereafter: Student Committee), their back-ups (if possible) and the members of the Bal du Bac (hereafter BdB) committee.

The **First** Bal du Bac committee meeting (pupils and parents) is expected to:

- **Confirm Venue Details:**

Confirm with the APEEE President that the date and venue (Palais d’Afrique in Tervuren) are reserved and that the deposit has been paid.

- **Review Date Suitability:**

- Invite parents to reflect on whether the chosen date is the most suitable for students.
- Consider key dates such as exam retake periods and proclamation day to ensure minimal conflicts.

- **Adjust Event Date if Needed:**

- Be prepared to discuss potential date changes with Palais d’Afrique if the selected date proves unsuitable.
- **Explore Alternative Venues** (already in Autumn of the previous year!):  
Consider other venue options due to the high costs and monopoly of Palais d’Afrique.
- **Organize an Initial Visit to Palais d’Afrique:**
  - The president of the committee should organise an initial visit to the Palais d’Afrique.
  - The president should be accompanied by parents responsible for Food & Decoration and DJ arrangements.
- Prepare a list of questions in advance covering topics such as:
  - Menu options (e.g., vegetarian, halal).
  - Decoration possibilities.
  - Security arrangements.
  - (Open) bar details.
  - DJ equipment and setup.

#### Questions to Consider (Based on 2024 Experience):

- Number of served appetisers (e.g., 5 pieces per person in 2024).
  - Availability of vegetarian and halal menu options.
  - Decision on having an open bar (‘yes’ in 2024).
  - DJ equipment availability (provided by Palais in 2024).
  - Confirm event start and end times (e.g., 17:00 to 4:00 a.m. in 2024).
  - Number of security guards provided by the venue.
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- **Create Working Groups to Share Tasks:**
    - Form working groups to divide responsibilities among committee members.
    - Suggested working groups include:
      - **Food & Drinks & Deco:** Menu selection, bar management, dietary requirements as well as Venue decoration, table settings.
      - **Communication:** communication strategy; timeline and ways
      - **Music & Entertainment:** DJ selection, sound system.
      - **Security & Safety:** Security arrangements, guest safety protocols.
      - **Finance & Budgeting:** Managing funds, tracking expenses, financial reporting.
      - **Photographer:** Hire a photographer to capture key moments during the event.
      - **Transport:** Organise transportation options for students, such as shuttles or buses.
      - **First aid:** Arrange for a designated first aid station or presence of first aid responders at the event.
      - **Tickets:** Order and distribute bracelets (tickets)
  - The Student President is responsible for creating and managing an Instagram account to promote the event and keep the community engaged.

### **President's Responsibilities:**

- Monitor the progress of the various working groups and coordinate activities.
- Organise and lead committee meetings at least once a month to keep the planning on track.
- Serve as the main point of contact for communication with Palais d'Afrique, APEEE, and the school administration (S7 Conseiller)
- Create a WhatsApp group (together with Student president) to facilitate communication among committee members and share important updates quickly.
- Set up shared documents accessible to all members for tracking tasks, sharing information, and collaborating efficiently.
- Schedule regular meetings, both online and in-person, to ensure flexibility and accommodate all participants, especially in a large group.
- In-situ meeting logistics can be supported by the S7 Conseiller, who is also a part of the Bal du Bac committee.

### **Important Tips and Recommendations**

#### **1. Choosing Service Providers:**

- As much as possible, use reputable companies with proven experience, such as school security services for event security.
- Ensure all payments made by the Parents Association (APEEE) are supported by official invoices. **All invoices must be in the name of APEEE Ixelles.** Cash payments are not allowed.
- If cash payments or transfers are necessary (e.g., for the school nurse without an official company), you will need to advance the payment and be reimbursed by the APEEE. This process must be clearly communicated to avoid misunderstandings.

#### **2. Ticket Sales and Distribution:**

- Sell tickets and distribute bracelets before the BAC exams to avoid last-minute issues. Distributing them too late, as happened in 2023, caused logistical problems.
- Involve a parent in overseeing bracelet distribution to prevent theft or unauthorized sales, which have been problematic at other schools.
- Ensure that tickets cannot be reproduced easily (e.g. take unusual colours or logos)

#### **3. Parent Volunteers:**

- Ensure parents are present at the event in shifts. It was necessary to have permanence of parents in 2024
- An adult presence is essential to prevent issues such as students sneaking into restricted areas or theft. S6 volunteers also need guidance and a bit of oversight.

### **Potential Complaints and How to Prevent Them**

#### **1. Guest Access Restrictions:**

- Guests can attend the Cocktail Party or the after-dinner party but cannot join the dinner seating as space is reserved for students only.
  - Strictly enforce this rule, as previous incidents involved guests occupying student seating, causing disruptions.
- 2. Table Seating Arrangements:**
- Allow students to request seating preferences with a group (organised by Students' committee). It may not be possible to seat preferred pupils together due to space constraints: organise the tables next to each other
  - Communicate that while every effort is made to accommodate requests, not everyone will be perfectly satisfied. This helps manage expectations and reduce complaints.
- 3. Ensure Compliance with Rules:**
- Parent volunteers must enforce rules calmly and consistently. Some guests may not understand or respect the regulations, so having a visible and authoritative presence helps maintain order.

## **WORKING GROUPS' TASKS AND 2024 EXPERIENCE/ LESSONS LEARNED**

### **Finance/ Budget:**

Collaborate with the APEEE to create a provisional budget for the Bal du Bac.

Once all quotes are collected, hold a meeting to finalise the ticket prices.

Ensure that the budget is reviewed carefully to avoid deficits—this is a critical point, as students often prefer the lowest possible ticket price.

Verify that all quoted prices include VAT; this is often excluded, particularly in venue quotes like the Palais d'Afrique. Set the ticket price based on the budget, ensuring that the event is fully self-financing and does not incur any deficits.

### **DJ, Light, and Music:**

Research and obtain offers from different DJs. In 2024, students chose one DJ out of three options, resulting in a highly successful performance.

Two months before the event, use Instagram to survey S7 students on their music preferences. Discuss these preferences with the selected DJ to tailor the playlist to the students' choices.

### **Decoration:**

Plan the decoration of the event according to the chosen theme, aligning it with the logo and invitation design created by the Students' Committee.

Keep the decoration minimalistic but consistent with the logo and invitation colors for a cohesive look.

### **Communication:**

The Students' Committee is responsible for creating the event logo and designing invitations.

Distribute information to students via Instagram and through school channels with the assistance of the S7 Conseiller.

### **Ticketing and IT Coordination:**

In 2024, the Bal du Bac Committee, in collaboration with APEEE IT Manager Mr. Lucas Tasho, developed an automated system for ticketing, bracelets, and other logistics.

Based on feedback from 2024, minor improvements to the system should be communicated to the IT team via the APEEE President at the start of the 2024-25 school year.

*Ticket Allocation Per Family:*

- Initially limit ticket sales to eight per family, but be prepared to adjust based on demand and availability. Exceptions can be made if space permits.
- Be transparent about the potential to increase capacity and adjust the budget accordingly if additional guests are accommodated.

### **Photography:**

Hire one professional photographer with experience in event photography. In 2024, the selected photographer performed excellently but required assistance from parents' committee for red carpet photos at the entrance.

Schedule the photographer's arrival and departure times (e.g., arrived at 17:15 and left at 23:00 in 2024).

Create a team of S6 pupils willing to assist with taking additional photos during the event, organised by the Students' Committee.

Photobooth was organised as well

### **Ticketing:**

Organise the sale and distribution of tickets promptly using the APEEE IT tool.

Select **unique** colors for S7 student tickets to prevent counterfeiting and ensure only authorised attendees are admitted.

### **Security:**

Ensure at least one security guard is provided by Palais d'Afrique, as required.

It is recommended to hire **four** additional guards from an external security company to ensure comprehensive coverage and safety. Bear in mind that not only the entry needs to be supervised but also the garden is open to the park of Tervuren and needs to be closed and supervised all night. Don't believe that you as parent can deal with some unknown guests arriving at the entrance.

#### **Nurse / First Aid Station:**

Collaborate with APEEE to review the policy on hiring and paying for a nurse or first aid responder. If separate payment is not feasible, consider partnering with the Red Cross as done in 2024.

Note that while the Red Cross provides volunteers for free, only costs associated with an ambulance and potential transport must be covered.

Ensure all agreements with the Red Cross are thoroughly documented (on paper!) and followed up on. Dutch knowledge is necessary.

Provide dinner and midnight snacks to Red Cross workers, adhering to the terms of their standard contract.

#### **Cloakroom/Toilet Attendants:**

The Students' Committee should organise the cloakroom at least one month in advance.

- Select at least six responsible students to manage the cloakroom, working in shifts.
- Parents should supervise the cloakroom area to ensure student safety and proper handling of belongings.
- Provide snacks and midnight snacks for students working in the cloakroom.

The toilet attendant is employed by Palais d'Afrique.

#### **First Aid and Safety:**

Due to incidents of students becoming intoxicated, first aid assistance was frequently needed. Do not compromise on security, nurse, or toilet attendants, as the safety of students is paramount. The presence of responsible adults and professional staff can greatly reduce the risk of incidents.

#### **Transport:**

Organise buses to transport students to a designated pick-up point at the end of the event, with the assistance of the APEEE transport office.

- Montgomery is recommended as a primary drop-off location.

In 2024, the last bus was delayed by 30 minutes; this issue should be clarified, and a realistic timetable should be set.

## Services provided by Palais

In 20a24 we choose some services that Palais has offered, however, there were some deficiencies:

- 'Madam pipi' - haven't been seen around a lot.
- Clear agreement on time of the event (see above).
- Food for the dinner: not sure how much you can negotiate, but according to some students the portions were 'chic' but too small for the appetite of the teens. Instead of chic, a pasta dish would maybe be the better option.
- Previous year there was a complaint that the cocktail was not served to all. In 2024 we didn't have this complaint from anyone, we were very pleased with experienced and polite service.

Typically, a ramp for individuals with mobility disabled is included in the equipment provided. However, confirm its availability, and it may be helpful to mention this in your communication

All **minutes of the 2024BdB committee meeting** are available here:

[https://drive.google.com/drive/u/0/folders/1mO78wJ1A6\\_zFg4i4ikCDwhT1ihm0S3dw](https://drive.google.com/drive/u/0/folders/1mO78wJ1A6_zFg4i4ikCDwhT1ihm0S3dw)