



Message from Secondary Principal



Gary Crumbie
Secondary Principal

Dear SBS International School Bangkok Families,

Firstly I would like to say a huge welcome to our Year 6 parents who join the mailing list for the Secondary School newsletter this week for the very first time. Your sons and daughters have started their 7 year journey with us this week and they have been phenomenal.

SBS Bangkok's first residential trip has been an absolute triumph. I truly believe every single student is returning home having grown, matured, and learned something valuable.

Throughout the week, our students dived deep into some incredibly important global and local issues, including:

- **Environmental & Wildlife Conservation:** Exploring the harmful impacts of ocean plastics and examining the real-world conflict between elephants and local farmers.
- **Thai Culture & Economics:** Understanding the vital importance of a diversified economy for rural Thailand, and experiencing firsthand the unique challenges faced by students and teachers in rural state schools.
- **Life Skills:** Rolling up their sleeves to learn how to cook!

Beyond the academic side, the personal and physical growth we witnessed was just as powerful. Our students truly stepped into nature by throwing themselves into outdoor physical challenges like trekking, embracing the elements, and getting up close with the local bugs and wildlife.

For many, this trip was a masterclass in stepping out of their comfort zone. They embraced a device-free week, mastered the art of rooming with peers, practiced daily independence, and discovered new depths to how they approach and manage personal challenges.

As you know, the students were split into two groups for the week. To make sure you get a complete picture of everything they experienced, this newsletter is structured around the specific activities they took part in, rather than a traditional day-by-day diary.

We hope you enjoy looking through these wonderful, captured moments as much as we enjoyed experiencing them.



What a week it's been!

Team Games

A range of games were planned for the students throughout our stay.

Beach Games included a series of energetic challenges involving running, teamwork, strategy, and quick decision-making. Students showed great enthusiasm and sportsmanship throughout. In addition to this, Team Building Challenges, which were creative group tasks designed to encourage collaboration, communication, problem-solving, and leadership skills.

Evening activities included a series of high-energy reaction activities that were as entertaining as they were challenging. These included a pole-grab game where teams had to react the moment their name was called, a cup-snatching relay requiring sharp reflexes and split-second coordination, and a name-calling activity that kept everyone on their toes. The games were loud, fast, and filled with laughter, every student left with a smile.

Other games included

- **Reaction and Strategy Games** – including an escort-the-treasure challenge requiring teams to coordinate movement, communicate effectively, and work together under pressure.
- **Opposite Instructions Challenge** – a fast-paced game where students had to do the opposite of the instruction given, testing concentration, mental flexibility, and self-control.
- **Team Mathematics Relay** – a competitive challenge in which teams solved mathematical problems before racing to locate and mark the correct numbers on a large activity sheet. The game combined calculation skills, quick thinking, physical movement, and teamwork, resulting in exceptionally high levels of engagement from all participants.





[Click here to view more photos.](#)



Thai cooking class

Students took part in a traditional Thai cooking class, learning to prepare two dishes: Tom Kha Gai (the classic Thai coconut chicken soup) and Pad Thai, Thailand's iconic stir-fried noodle dish.

The session began with a demonstration by the instructor, during which students were fully engaged, some taking careful notes, others asking questions throughout. Then came the moment to cook for themselves.

What followed was a pleasure to watch. Some students worked methodically through their notes, following each step with great care. Others took a more exploratory approach, tasting as they went and checking in with the instructor along the way. A few went entirely freestyle. Whichever approach they chose, every student was fully immersed and every student produced a dish they could be proud of.

Once the cooking was done, students presented their dishes and gave a short introduction to what they had made, with both accompanying teachers serving as tasters and judges. The clean-up that followed drew an unexpected highlight of the morning: the restaurant instructor sought us out specifically to show us the pots, pans, and utensils the students had washed and told us she had not expected them to be cleaned so thoroughly. It was a small moment, but it said a great deal.

Beyond learning new recipes, students were developing practical life skills following instructions, adapting when things did not go exactly to plan, and taking responsibility for both the cooking process and the clean-up afterwards.



[Click here to view more photos.](#)



Teaching English to local primary school students

The night before our planned visits to the local primary school, students had time to focus on preparing for their activity, during which they will be teaching English to local school students. They worked together to develop lesson plans and practised delivering their lessons with confidence and enthusiasm.

Students visited a nearby local primary school to carry out their community engagement project: teaching English to students.

This was not an activity that came together overnight. Preparation began in Bangkok six weeks ago where students designed and created their own flashcards and teaching materials, held multiple team lesson-planning sessions, and conducted practice runs together before the trip. The level of care and effort they put in was evident from the start.

On the drive over, the nerves were palpable. But within minutes of arriving, something shifted. Students stepped into their roles with confidence and warmth, organising their classes and leading their activities with a naturalness that was genuinely impressive.

The programme they delivered was rich and varied:

Simon Says - a classic listening and action game to warm up the group

Act and Guess - students acting out vocabulary for others to identify

Whisper Challenge - a telephone-style game testing listening and memory

Card Matching Race - English words, Thai translations, and pictures placed around the room; students ran to collect and match the correct sets

Animal Freeze Switch - a circle game where one student calls out an animal sentence and classmates must move to new positions before freezing when the sentence ends; anyone still moving takes the centre

Scenario Roleplay and Guessing - situational acting to practise vocabulary in context

Cocktail Party Mixer - a structured social activity encouraging students to introduce themselves and interact in English

The response from the local students was wonderful. Our students came away with a genuine sense of achievement having not just taught vocabulary, but created real connection and joy in the room.

After the teaching session, students and their new friends gathered for photographs before heading outside together for informal sports: tug-of-war, skipping rope, and football. In the space of an afternoon, something genuinely rare had taken shape, friendships formed across language and culture, built entirely through play, laughter, and the simple act of showing up for each other.





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Kuri Buri Elephant Day

The longest day of the expedition was our time spent in Kuri Buri National Park. Upon arrival, students embarked on a guided 2-kilometre nature trail, learning about the ecology, behaviour, and conservation of Asian elephants. The session covered a wide range of topics, including elephant habitats, feeding habits, social behaviour, and the impact of human activity on wildlife populations.

Along the trail, our guide shared many fascinating insights that genuinely captured the students' attention, for example, how elephants protect their skin from the sun, how they instinctively select certain plants to support digestion, and how people can interact safely and respectfully with wildlife. The walk also offered a vivid sense of the sheer scale of the surrounding protected forests.

One moment that made a particular impression: at the top of the trail, our guide pointed out a fork in the path and noted that taking the wrong turn would lead directly across the border into Myanmar (albeit 15-20km away). It was a striking reminder of just how vast and wild this landscape truly is.

Midday: Elephant Dung Papermaking and Art

Following the nature trail, students enjoyed lunch cooked by locals in the village and a short rest before participating in one of the most unique activities of the expedition: elephant dung papermaking and art.

Under the guidance of conservation specialists, students learned how processed elephant dung (rich in natural plant fibres) can be recycled into paper and transformed into artwork and craft products. The activity highlighted how creativity, sustainability, and environmental responsibility can work together in entirely practical ways. What initially sounded unusual quickly became one of the most memorable and engaging experiences of the day.





Afternoon: Pineapple Farm Visit

Our next destination was a local pineapple farm, where students explored the relationship between agriculture and wildlife conservation. Since pineapple is one of the favourite foods of wild elephants, protecting the crop is a constant priority for local farmers. Students were introduced to several non-harmful methods used to deter elephants from entering the farmland: perimeter alert systems, an elevated observation platform for monitoring movement, and a homemade chilli bomber, a simple but effective deterrent that discourages elephants without causing them any harm.

Walking through the fields, students observed young pineapple plants, developing fruit, and farmers at work among the rows. The visit brought to life the very real and ongoing negotiation between human livelihoods and wildlife conservation.

It ended on a perfect note. The farm owner had prepared chilled, freshly cut pineapple and 100% pure pineapple juice for the group. After a long day on their feet, the sweetness of the fruit, which was enjoyed outdoors, surrounded by the quiet of the farmland left a lasting impression on everyone.





Late Afternoon: Elephant Watching and Conservation Activity at Kaeng Krachan Forest

The final destination of the day was a protected forest area, where students boarded open-topped vehicles and set off into the landscape. A few light showers passed through during the drive, making the air noticeably fresher and the surroundings feel even more alive.

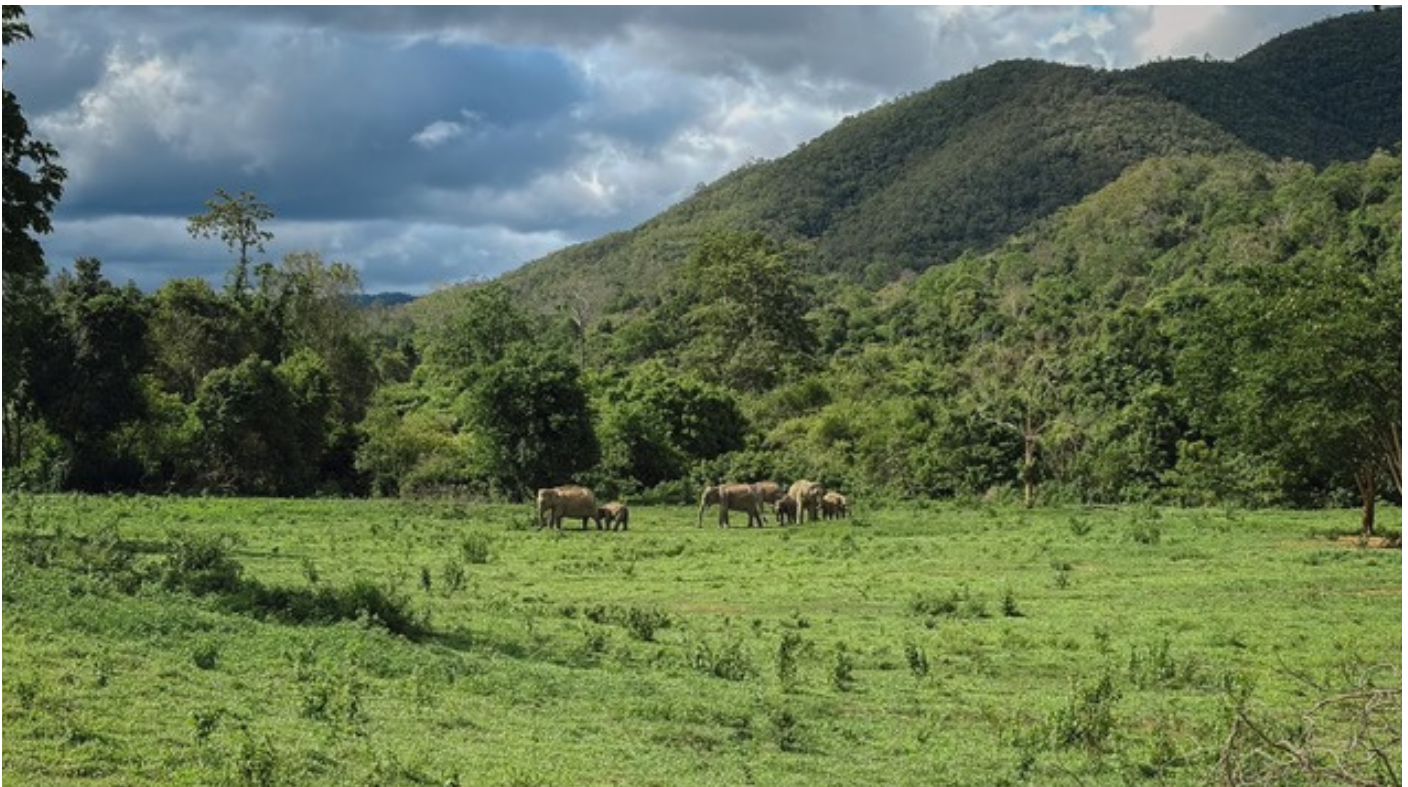
Before the elephant watching began, students took part in a collective conservation effort: digging holes into the ground and filling them with mineral salts and supplements to create mineral lick stations. These stations support elephants' natural foraging behaviour, as wild elephants instinctively seek out mineral-rich soil to supplement their nutrients, particularly during seasons when vegetation alone is not sufficient. Every student took a turn with a shovel, and there was something quietly meaningful about contributing, however small, to the wellbeing of the animals they had come to observe.

The elephant observation itself was conducted with great care and respect. Students maintained a significant distance from the herd, took turns using binoculars, and remained quiet and attentive throughout. We were proud of the maturity they demonstrated and their understanding that observing wildlife responsibly is itself an important form of conservation.

As the journey continued through the forest, students had the opportunity to experience different habitats and appreciate the beauty and tranquillity of the natural environment. Throughout the day, nature served as a living classroom — providing lessons that could not be replicated within four walls.

Through observing wildlife, learning from conservation specialists, visiting local communities, and contributing to conservation efforts themselves, students gained a richer understanding of elephant ecology, environmental stewardship, and the delicate balance between human livelihoods and the natural world.

Perhaps most importantly, they began to recognise that conservation is not simply about protecting animals or preserving landscapes. It is about understanding our relationship with the world around us and the responsibilities that come with it.





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Phraya Nakhon Caves / Trek

The route took students across two mountain peaks on their way to the Phraya Nakhon Caves, a 5-kilometre trail with an elevation gain of approximately 170 metres, completed over the course of three hours.

For many students, this was their first experience of a hike of this nature. The route was physically demanding and required perseverance, particularly in the heat. Along the way, students demonstrated remarkable resilience, encouraging one another, waiting for teammates when needed, and offering support throughout the journey.

Time spent in the cave was memorable, students were gathered in one area of the cave where they sat in silence for 5 minutes. A time for them to reflect on their trek to the cave but also to appreciate the stillness of the cave and the sounds of nature, the insects in the distance or the birds flying in and out of the cave.

We are incredibly proud that every student successfully completed the hike, another memorable moment came at the end of the expedition. Without any prompting, students spontaneously broke into applause, celebrating one another's efforts, recognising their own achievement, and showing appreciation for the guides who had supported them throughout the journey. It was a simple but powerful reflection of the positive community spirit developing within the group.





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Beach Clean Up



Students started with an environmental awareness session focusing on the impact of plastic pollution on marine ecosystems. Students explored how plastic waste affects wildlife, damages habitats, and ultimately impacts human communities. They engaged thoughtfully with the discussion and asked a number of insightful questions.

Students then took part in a hands-on beach clean-up activity. Equipped with gloves and collection bags, they worked together to remove plastic waste from the shoreline.

For many students, seeing the issue firsthand transformed an abstract environmental topic into a tangible reality. The experience encouraged them to consider the role each individual can play in protecting and preserving the natural environment.



[Click here to view more photos.](#)



Time at the Resort / Travel / Other

Following scheduled activities, students had the option to enjoy supervised free time in the swimming pool. Safety remained our highest priority, and all swimming sessions were conducted under clear instructions and close staff supervision. The students had a wonderful time cooling off and relaxing during these times.



[Click here to view more photos.](#)



To conclude...

Over the course of this expedition, we have watched a group of students grow in ways that are difficult to fully capture in words.

The journey began with students learning to trust one another, finding their footing as a team, building friendships, and discovering what it means to support someone who is struggling beside you.

From there, they were challenged physically and mentally in ways many had never experienced before. They found reserves of resilience they did not know they had. They pushed through discomfort, encouraged each other, and came out the other side having achieved more than they believed they could.

As the expedition continued, their perspective widened. They began to see themselves not only as individuals or as a team, but as part of something larger, connected to the natural world, to local communities, and to the responsibility each of us carries to care for both.

And in the final chapter of the journey, they gave. They brought what they had learned, prepared, and practised, then shared it with students they had never met before. In doing so, they discovered that growth becomes truly meaningful when it is shared with others.

Together, these experiences tell a larger story: of young people learning not only how to work together, but how to challenge themselves, care for the world around them, and contribute positively to the lives of others.

These are lessons that extend far beyond any classroom, and we hope they will remain with our students long after the expedition has ended.

We are incredibly proud of every student who took part in this journey. Throughout the week, they represented themselves, their families, and SBS International Bangkok School with maturity, enthusiasm, and compassion.

We look forward to bringing them home and for them to share with you their personal stories of their week away.



Time to Reflect

Navigating the Journey: A Reflection on Our School Year

It is hard to believe how quickly time flies. As we look back on the beginning of this school year and reflect on how far we have come, the transformation is nothing short of remarkable.

Above all, this year has been defined by resilience. We strived to rise above all odds, navigating challenges and turning potential setbacks into stepping stones. A school is, at its core, an environment dedicated to learning, but the true magic happens when we realise that the knowledge we harness here isn't just for passing the next exam—it is built for long-term purposes, shaping who we become in the future.



Celebrating Our Growth

Looking back across the terms, an incredible amount of meaningful learning has taken place. We have seen our students master complex scientific concepts, engage in vibrant debates, and tackle challenging projects with growing independence.

Now, the long-awaited holidays are finally here. This break provides the perfect, well-deserved window for students to pause and look back on the successes and hurdles of the past year, while beginning to picture what the new school year will look like.

A Few Words of Educational Advice

While resting is absolutely essential, the mind functions best when it stays subtly engaged. As you step away from the structured classroom, here are a few ways to keep your intellectual spark alive:

- **Read Broadly:** Dive into books, articles, or journals that challenge your current perspective or introduce you to a completely new topic.
- **Stay Curious and Current:** Don't forget to keep yourselves up-to-date with current trends in the learning process and global events. The world is evolving rapidly, and staying informed keeps you ahead of the curve.
- **Reflect and Plan:** Dedicate a small amount of time toward the end of the break to mentally and organisationally prepare for the new school year ahead in August.

Enjoy your well-earned relaxation, recharge your batteries, and spend quality time with loved ones. Keep exploring, stay curious, and remember:

School may be closed, but learning never stops...



Next Week

- Wednesday 17th June - Year 2-8: House Reward Experience runs in the morning
- Friday 19th June - End of School Year - students finish at 12:00PM

Looking Ahead

- Monday 24th August - First Day of School

Reminders

Academic Year 2026/27 Calendar Reminder

		SAT	SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN						
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Colour Code

First day of term	Weekend
School Day	New Staff Induction Day
School Holiday	Staff Inset Day

School Term Breaks & Holidays

- Term 1 - Mid Term Break - 9th to 18th October
- Term 1 - Holiday - 12th December to 3rd January
- Term 2 - Mid Term Break - 13th to 22nd February
- Term 2 - Holiday - 3rd April to 18th April

Contact Us

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Closing Note

Please join me in extending a heartfelt thank you to the staff who accompanied your children this week. They spent their days and nights guiding, encouraging, and keeping everyone safe. While school trips are a wonderful highlight of the teaching profession, they also require our educators to be away from their own loved ones. A huge thank you to Mr. Bob, Ms. Aimee, Ms. Elis, and Mr. Kaveer for their dedication. I wish them, and all of our families, a wonderful weekend ahead. See you on Monday for our final week of the school year!"

Warm regards,
Gary Crumbe
Secondary Principal



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Admissions

Monday - Friday
8.30am - 4.30pm

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