

Students, welcome to Year 1 of the English College in Prague.

This is a sentence many of us heard almost 6 years ago. I think no one will disagree when I say that what we experienced during our time here, is not even close to what we expected while walking through the blue door for the first time. Be it amazing friendships, extraordinary experiences, unique teachers and learning or the tough times we had to fight through together as a year group.

Dear parents, teachers, distinguished guests, governors and my fellow classmates, let me briefly take you down the memory lane of what has been a crazy yet unforgettable rollercoaster ride to adulthood.

Let's admit, in the first year of ECP we were all still children... And yes, even you Kryštof and Jan, don't forget I was once taller than you. We were a bit noisy and rebellious, nevertheless we did sign our planners... well sometimes... and we did come on time... at least once a week... . All in all we were all very ambitious and bright individuals, those who spent 4 hours doing their masterpiece experience books and those who wrote them ON the deadline day IN registration, using YOUR pen! What a great way to make friends.

Talking about friendship, I think that that is something ECP is very unique in. From the first day, we had many chances to get to know not only our year group, but the whole school community. This was by joining the awesome student council, participating in all the house sport competitions, or the queen of them all, the Cultural Olympiad. And trust me, that was the time you really got to know who your true friends are. It was also very motivating to see teachers participate, and using this speech I would like to sincerely thank them for that and also say I'm sorry for what you had to go through.

You know, our teachers are honestly just the most hardworking, passionate and warm-hearted people. They are also courageous. You want to know why? They agree to go on trips with us. The two longer trips I remember the most, were the Moravia trip organised by the ultimate culture master Mrs Švejdová and the Year 4 CCC trip with the legendary Mr and Mrs Gavríněv. On the first we visited Kroměříž, Velehrad and Olomouc which enriched our minds with the history of our wonderful country. I remember walking on a nice, warm summer evening, when we just finished a historical movie in the small Kroměříž cinema... and then

one of my classmates coming and asking a teacher: Can we please order pizza from Dáme jídlo? I really wonder why the student was so surprised by a definitive no! ...

And the CCC trip, which toughened us for years ahead. As I mentioned, the trip was organised by Mr and Mrs Gavriněv, which automatically means brilliant sporting experience. We did everything from canoeing, cycling to inline skating. And trust me there is nothing that can beat Mr Gavriněv taking the time to set up a speaker playing Vltava from Smetana on a table in the Vltava river, just so he can say: "People, we are listening to Vltava in Vltava!" Imagine that...

From the bottom of my heart I would like to thank all of the teachers, and of course parents for allowing us to experience the first 4 years of ECP with enormous amounts of fun, support, which extended our carefree childhood. I am forever grateful.

After all of these wonderful experiences, we were facing what we most dreaded. The IB. We started year 5 and was everything ok? No, everything was not ok... We had to start being responsible adults. Wow, what a scary phrase... But again, we had our teachers and parents who already mastered the "Responsible adult" so they did everything they could to be there for us. Looking back, the IB time really did make mature people out of all of us. We managed to finish our CAS, Extended Essay and IAs all before writing the IB exams. Which we actually never wrote. The coronavirus pandemic did affect the last years of our studies at ECP, be it positively by training our self control of persisting not to open that facebook message on another tab, or ofcourse negatively. But I do not want that minor disruption making us forget the awesome things we have experienced together and the fun we have had at ECP. And for those of you who did not read their email for the past year or so, no, we did not have a year long holiday.

Let me just finish by thanking all of our teachers, the ones who are sitting next to us here and the ones who have already left ECP for making our journey an unforgettable one. I think I will not be wrong if I say for all of the Y6 that we will remember you for many years to come and are so grateful for having teachers who can see us as colleagues, rather than small children. I would also like to thank Mrs Rankin, Mr Hill, Mr Hudson for being the best support during the IB, especially towards its end. Thank you Mr Paterson for spending your free time helping us with CAS. Thank you Mrs Švejdová for all the extracurricular activities we could be part of and which truly made the school community come together.

Thank you Dr Brown for being a supportive, listening headmaster, who wants only the best for every single student in this school. Let me just personally thank Mr Tognini for guiding our Aqua tutor group throughout the whole 6 years. It has truly been an honor. My mornings will never be the same without your football updates (although I never knew what you were talking about). And also Mrs Pávková who was, not only for me, a sun lighting all of the dark days. Thank you so much again.

I would also like to thank Mrs Barbara Day for her speech, Mrs Kopicová and all of the governors for their work, Mrs Kopicová for being here today, Mrs Hatinová for preparing all of the music performances, and Mrs McLeod for the IB art presentation.

I cannot forget our loving parents and families, without which any of this would have been possible. We are all grateful for you. Děkujeme Vám moc, naši milovaní rodiče a rodino.

And of course, You, my fellow classmates. You all have been the people I was meeting almost every day for the past 6 years. You are the largest part of what has made my school life so unique. Thank you for that. And now that we are all the Responsible adults I was talking about, the, once cute little boys are now taller than me and the small girls are all women, we can begin our separate journeys and make the world a wonderful place with our contributions. I hope we will have the chance to meet in the future and share how much more we have grown (for some of us I hope not literally).

So guys, It is what it is, even the weather and the capacity restrictions had to remind us, so lets make the best out of it!

Marieta Kyselá