

**2026 Francescutti Scholarship of Excellence:
'The Beautiful Game: Together Beyond Borders'**



Kids playing soccer

Accademia dei Ragazzi is pleased to present to its students the fifth **Francescutti Scholarship of Excellence**, valued up to \$2,000. It entails **four scholarships dedicated to children and teens who have distinguished themselves in their studies** at Accademia in 2026. This year, our students will work on a project titled **'The Beautiful Game: Together Beyond Borders'**, in celebration of the 2026 FIFA World Cup, hosted by Canada, the United States, and Mexico. The World Cup is more than a sporting event, it is a global celebration of unity, culture, diversity, perseverance, and teamwork. Through this project, **students are invited to reflect on how sport brings people together across languages, nations, and cultures**. Students are asked to explore the theme of soccer as a symbol of unity and produce a written essay in Italian, choosing from different writing options based on their interests and age group.

The 2026 Francescutti Scholarship of Excellence, valued up to \$2,000, will be divided into four age groups:

- 1) **Primary Division (ages 6-8): \$350** scholarship value
- 2) **Junior Division (ages 9-11): \$450** scholarship value
- 3) **Intermediate Division (ages 12-13): \$550** scholarship value
- 4) **High School (ages 14-17): \$650** scholarship value

Primary & Junior Divisions:

The FIFA World Cup is known as 'Il Campionato del Mondo' in Italian. It represents passion, teamwork, dreams, and the joy of playing together. Soccer teaches us that even when we speak different languages, we can still understand each other through play.

a) Primary Division (6-8 years)

Choose one of the following options:

1. **Have you ever played soccer? Where do you play and with whom? What do you enjoy most about the game?** Describe your experience with a drawing and a written essay (30–60 words in Italian). The artwork must be in colour on A4 or A3 paper and may be submitted on a Bristol board.

2. **Imagine you are playing in the 2026 World Cup. Which country are you representing? What position do you play? How do you feel before scoring a goal?** Describe your dream match with a drawing and a written essay (30–60 words in Italian). The artwork must be in colour on A4 or A3 paper and may be submitted on a Bristol board.

b) Junior Division (9-11 years)

Choose one of the following options:

1. The World Cup brings together players and fans from all over the world. **Why do you think soccer unites people?** Write about teamwork, friendship, and respect in a 60–90 word essay in Italian, accompanied by a drawing in colour on A4 or A3 paper. The project may be submitted on a Bristol board.

2. Imagine you are attending a World Cup game in Toronto, Mexico City, or New York. **Describe the atmosphere, the crowd, the flags, and the emotions.** Write a 60–90 word essay in Italian, accompanied by a drawing in colour on A4 or A3 paper. The project may be submitted on a Bristol board.

Intermediate Division & High School:

Read the following reflection:

'Il calcio non è solo uno sport. È passione, è sogno, è identità. Quando la palla rotola sul campo, il mondo si ferma per un momento. Persone diverse per lingua, cultura e storia si uniscono sotto gli stessi colori. Ma cosa rende davvero questo sport il gioco più bello?'

c) Intermediate Division (12-13 years)

Choose one of the following options:

1. In your opinion, **how does sport unite people from different cultures?** Reflect on the 2026 World Cup and explain why it is an important global event. Write an essay of approximately 100 words in Italian, which may be accompanied by a colour drawing on A4 or A3 paper.

2. **Describe a memorable soccer experience, either real or imagined.** What values did you learn from that experience? Write an essay of approximately 100 words in Italian, which may be accompanied by a colour drawing on A4 or A3 paper.

d) High School (14-17 years)

Choose one of the following options:

1. The 2026 World Cup will be hosted by three nations: Canada, the United States, and Mexico. **Discuss the significance of this collaboration and how sport can promote inclusion, diversity, and peace.** Write an essay of approximately 140 words in Italian, which may be accompanied by a colour drawing on A4 or A3 paper.

2. **'The true victory is not only winning, but participating'. Reflect on this statement in the context of the World Cup and modern society.** Write an essay of approximately 140 words in Italian, which may be accompanied by a colour drawing on A4 or A3 paper.

Participation Criteria:

In order to win the Francescutti Scholarship of Excellence, students must **be enrolled in one of Accademia's Italian courses** in the current 2025/2026 school year.

**Accademia dei Ragazzi reserves the right to keep the entries in its school archive.*

Selection Criteria:

Accademia will appoint an **independent jury** who will evaluate the entries. Selection criteria are:

- The entry's **quality of the art / clarity and depth of the content**;
- The **student's freedom of thought and error** (without any adult's 'interference');
- The **creativity** shown by our children and youth.

Submission Date:

The **submission date** for the culminating project titled 'The Beautiful Game: Together Beyond Borders' is **Saturday, May 30, 2026**. Entries must be sent in **digital format** via email to mattia.bello@accademiadeiragazzi.ca or they must be submitted in **paper format** in class to a teacher. Our Executive Director Mattia Bello will collect the projects and present them to an **independent jury**.

Student Scholarship Ceremony:

In celebration of student success, the four scholarships tied to the Francescutti Scholarship of Excellence will be presented during Accademia's **Graduation Day and Scholarship Ceremony** on **Sunday, June 14, 2026** (*tentative date*). All students who submit this project will receive a Certificate of Participation.

Should you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact Accademia's Executive Director, Mattia Bello at mattia.bello@accademiadeiragazzi.ca.

Accademia dei Ragazzi would like to thank Carlo Francescutti and his company *Halloween and Hobby* for this fantastic partnership. We are proud to celebrate global unity through language, culture, and the beautiful game.

Happy learning, and forza ragazzi!

Best wishes,
Accademia dei Ragazzi