



Dear Parents,

I hope this newsletter finds you and your family well as we come to the end of the term. This is the final newsletter for the term and is hence a little longer than usual.

Recently we had had a KHDA review of our SEN Dept and in particular the provision and pathways we provide for our Students of Determination (SOD). It's another delightful moment for us as the review was not expected to provide explicit feedback, however the team did share some of their findings with us during our post visit meeting. The inspectors were impressed with the School's Teams and their 'efficiency, ethics and purpose'. They found the team of teachers and leaders to be 'great and committed'. Teachers provided quality feedback and expressed with absolute clarity. They knew that catering to the SOD needs was not just modification or adaptation in the classroom, but the bigger need continued outside the classrooms and they were impressed by how developed our alternative pathways are and the continued focus our team has on improving and enhancing our offerings.

For me as the Principal, these comments alone have made my year as we work hard at creating teams that are cross functional and have trust in each other and in the team's purpose. As we have with you, this Team is essential, for alone we will accomplish nothing. Together we will be stronger and be able to achieve the incredible.

This concept of team expands not only to staff and parents, but to the students as well. I discuss this with you and staff that our perceptions of potential, and how our biasness as a community can stifle our children's potential and ability to embrace life to the fullest and be the best they can be. Our HPL journey clearly articulates that everyone can be a high achiever if challenged. This is essential for all of us to embrace; students, staff and parents. We just need to believe it!

Continually unifying the sense of collective purpose and the individual and group capacity to make improvements is essential to collective and individual success. The ability to see the big picture, yet at the same time understand the details and their interconnectedness and hidden patterns operating, allow us to connect with each other. Connection of teachers with students provides the student with the bond that engages them and their actions to success. This joint determination does entail adaptations and our mindsets need to make continual adjustments in order to make sure our paradigms continue to evolve and we appreciate that key to our success is all of us as #onefamily#oneplanet. An example of this is that at the end of each day, it is expected that all technology is turned off and students and teachers just talk. No agenda, just talk and hear each other's voices and lives, connect. When these forces are present, students work longer, harder and with more joy.

Our teams and connections continue to be recognised as we had our first interim review for the OPTIMIUS EDUCATION Well Being Award (WAS Award) that is based on the Ofsted criteria. Feedback given to us indicates that we are certainly on track. This process normally takes 18 months to achieve and we are on target to complete it within 12 months. During these times, health and safety of students, staff and parents, along with well-being is a high priority for all of us.

At school, our Health and Safety standards are on high alert at all times. There is constant cleaning, constant sanitising and constant reminders on social distancing. School is safe. Our biggest drawback, our biggest risk, our biggest exposure is parents who send their children to school who are not well. We had two incidents in the last week where parents sent their child to school even though they were waiting for a PCR test result. This is really disappointing as it is putting our school and school community at risk. Community transmission is at home, not at school and we ask you again to help us keep our whole school safe.

This is even more important as we move into Term 2. As we now prepare to enter a new term, Parents were given the opportunity to reconsider their position of choosing Distance Learning (DL) or Face to Face (F2F). We began this with a survey to parents and staff regarding their option of F2F or DL. As a result, the large majority of parents opted for F2F learning.

Therefore, taking this student number into account and to comply with the DHA health and safety regulations, CIS had to review the educational provision on offer. We then again sought the opinion of the parents and staff through a second survey, requesting their preference of either One Day F2F and One Day DL (alternate days) or One Week F2F and One Week DL (alternate weeks).

The result of this survey saw the majority of parents opting for One Day F2F and One Day DL (alternate days). So what does this look like;

ALTERNATE DAYS: F2F students are divided into Group A and Group B – In Week 1 (Jan 2021), Group A would attend school on Sunday, Tuesday and Thursday. On Monday and Wednesday, Group A would be Distance Learners, attending online lessons from home. Group B would attend school on Monday and Wednesday in Week 1 and would be Distance Learners on Sunday, Tuesday and Thursday. In Week 2, Group A would attend school on Monday and Wednesday and would be DL on Sunday, Tuesday and Thursday. Group B would attend school on Sunday, Tuesday and Thursday in Week 2 and would be DL on Monday and Wednesday. This pattern would continue throughout the term.

Therefore, the decision made by parents and staff is that the school will offer this mode of delivery for Term 2. We are informing you now to provide you time over the Winter Break to make any necessary arrangements regarding childcare and transport to/from school, ensuring your child is ready to resume their learning in January 2021.

Please note, siblings will be attending school on the same day. In our provision, we will provide the option for frontline workers (Teachers, Police, Medical Staff) and Students of Determination to be at school 100% of the time. Of course if parents wish to opt back to Distance Learning at any time this will also be available. Our Distance Learners will not be affected and will continue to access their daily lessons from home. Further details of these groups will be sent out soon.

Recently, we had a walk-through fire evacuation procedure without the alarms to evaluate the flow of students through the new campus. This allowed us to review our processes that followed with a full fire evacuation this week using the school alarm system.

Last week we saw a fantastic time of the year where we celebrate the bringing together of a nation through UAE National Day. People dressing up in UAE national flag colours, homes decorated, workplaces, cars and streets decorated with lights from the colours of the flag. It's the unification of all the emirates to be as one, act as one and support each other as it forged its way into a new era and new country.

National day celebrations strengthen unity amongst the individuals of a country and empowers the country to act as one and take pride in their national identity and connection with the country we live in. National day also acknowledges also those that have sacrificed and gone before us to allow us the liberties we have today.

We also acknowledged Commemoration Day with a short, but powerful ceremony that included many of our Emirati families and raising of the UAE flag.

Finally, we would like to wish you and your family a restful break and that the holiday brings all you have planned. Take time to spend with your family, family time is an essential factor that helps to create strong bonds, love, connections, and relationships.

We wish all the community a prosperous New Year.

Sincerely,



Lachlan MacKinnon
CEO/Principal