



Director's Newsletter - September 2016

Dear Parents

On behalf of all the staff at DIS, I would like to extend a warm welcome to all our students and parents and especially all new members of our school community. We are very proud of our successes last year and the number of new and returning students reflects this. The school continues to grow and we are pleased with the excellent progress being made on our building project to complete the Phase 2 build at DIS.

DIS Staffing

I am happy to report we now have a full complement of teaching staff. In August we welcomed 32 new teachers into the school. Our new teachers have done remarkably well settling into life in Dubai and learning about our school procedures during the Staff Induction Week. Together with all other teachers they have also attended our in-service training week in preparation for our staggered start from 28th August.

All new parents and students have had the opportunity to visit the school for a welcome session and our IB1 students (Year 12) have taken part in a two-day induction programme aimed at settling them onto their new courses.

External Examinations Results: IBDP/IBCC (Year 13) and IGCSE (Year 11)

External examination results are impressive and yet again well above world averages. I would like to congratulate our students and teachers on examination successes. Examination success at the senior end of the school has enabled us to double the size of our IB cohort in Year 12 (IB1) and Year 13 (IB2) from 90 students to over 150.



Our International Baccalaureate Diploma students achieved a 94% pass rate, well above the world average of 79% which has strengthened our reputation as an IB school. Congratulations to Tarek Bandali who was our highest scoring student with 42 points; he will be starting his studies at Stanford University (USA) in September. The IB students achieved an average student grade of 5.3 points and an average point score of 32.



At IGCSE, Year 11 students achieved impressive examination results. The overall A*- C grade pass rate, based on 828 examination entries, was 88% (compared to the UK average of 68%); the number of students gaining 5 or more A* - C grades was also 88%. These are remarkable results considering our inclusive policy which embraces students with all levels of ability and English Language learning difficulties. The proportion of A*/A grades was 36% and 62% of all grades were A* to B.

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These results have been achieved due to the hard work of the subject teachers, tutor teams and Heads of Year, who monitored and mentored all our senior school students. The intervention strategies employed in the Secondary School have had a dramatic effect on IB and IGCSE performance.

Our Mathematics Department entered 29 high achieving students for their IGCSE examination one year earlier than normal. The Year 10 class achieved 7A* grades, 11A grades, 9B grades and 12C grades. Some of these students will go on to study the Additional Mathematics course in Year 11.

It is important that we acknowledge the contribution of specialist teachers and support staff across the whole school. The scaffolding of learning that takes place in every year of a child's life contributes significantly to the end result, and accordingly all staff share in the credit of our students' successes.

In the Primary School the results show how we continue to move from strength to strength. The Year 6 results over the last three years have been the highest ever, one contributing factor to this dramatic improvement in performance is the unique hybrid transition arrangements we put in place three years ago and of course the excellent teaching in all Year Groups of Primary School. All Primary School students' end-of-year results improved in Maths, Spoken Language, Science, Reading and Writing.



At the moment we are going through our results analysis and evaluation process as part of our school improvement planning cycle. High expectations and achievement will continue to be characteristics of our school which nurtures the individual and recognises each student's unique potential.

VLE Learning Platform



The VLE learning platform is in place and there has been a tremendous amount of work completed to improve its functionality. Parents can use this web-based platform to look at the curriculum materials provided for your child, receive announcements/reminders and to communicate directly with the teachers. All homework will be placed on your child's VLE platform. Parents will be invited to attend training sessions on how to best use the VLE. Bassel Deiry, our Educational Technology Coordinator, will be offering weekly after-school drop-in sessions for students and parents who would like to receive training and guidance on how to use the VLE.

The IB students will be using the ManageBac learning platform which is specifically designed for post 16 IB students and is used globally to monitor and track progress.

DIS website

Under the curriculum section you will find a useful document called DIS Curriculum Mapping and Links, which tells you what the students will learn, our teaching methods and types of assessments used.

This is an informative and useful source of curriculum information for parents.



http://www.disdubai.ae/uploaded/Assessment_Descriptions/DIS_Curriculum_Plan_and_Integration_reviewed_Dec_2015.pdf

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IMPORTANT: Parent - School Contract

The KHDA and the Ministry of Education have directed all private schools to ensure a Parent School Contract is signed by all parents by the end of September. As directed by KHDA, it is obligatory for all parents to sign the contract. Parents must sign an electronic version of the contract for each child in school. All private schools have been instructed not to accept students if parents do not sign the contract by **30th September 2016**. Once parents and students Emirates ID cards are scanned in school, the KHDA will send a link to download an App so that you can sign the contract electronically on your personal devices. This is a KHDA directive that we must comply with.



Students' classes for September 2016

The placement of students in classes for 2016 – 2017 is a school decision, after consideration of a number of factors in order to provide 'balanced classes'. We believe it is in the best interests of our students to provide the opportunity for them to socialise and make new friends and experience different groupings from year to year; time must be given for children to adjust to their new classes. It would be an impossible task to satisfy every child's and parent's wishes and we ask that parents do not request class or teacher changes.

Absence of students

We are always concerned by the number of students who are being taken out of school during term time to go on family holidays, extended weekend breaks and for non-urgent medical appointments. Any absence has an impact on the learning process and, of course, on external examination success. If students are taken out of school for holidays during study period you should not expect your child's teachers to provide catch up work. We appreciate your cooperation.

Payment of school fees with the AI Futtaim credit card



You may already be aware that all DIS parents can apply for a NBAD AI Futtaim credit card that will give you 4% cash back on your school fees and 12 months interest free credit.

Representatives from the AI Futtaim Finance will be stationed in the school administration building for the next two weeks. Please approach them directly if you would like to collect an application form or make enquiries. Please read the attachment to my newsletter for more detailed information.

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Road Traffic Authority (RTA) Rules

Our school bus service must strictly follow all RTA rules. One rule that has been brought to our attention by the authorities is that female students must sit at the rear of the school bus and male students at the front of the bus. The seating must not be mixed. Please see this scan from the regulations handbook and note **bullet point 5**.

Responsibilities of the Schools and Operators

In order to improve and develop the school transport service in the Emirate of Dubai and make it distinguished, the following liabilities shall be borne by the Principal of any school located within the boundaries of the Emirate, who shall ensure their application:

- ▶ A qualified person shall be appointed as Senior Transport Officer and his/her name and telephone number shall be provided to the Agency and the parents. He/she shall be trained in the field of school transport.
- ▶ The bus routes shall be specified by the Senior Transport Officer, provided they are approved by the school Principal.
- ▶ The students' seats shall be determined at the beginning of the academic year and the Senior Transport Officer shall, in cooperation with the school Principal and the driver, verify that each student has a seat for the full academic year.
- ▶ There shall be a means of communication between the driver and the Senior Transport Officer throughout any bus trip.
- ▶ The rear seats shall be allocated for female students and the front seats for male students. They shall not be randomly mixed in the same bus and it is preferred to transport them in separate buses if possible.
- ▶ A female attendant shall be appointed in each bus for all the academic levels, except the bus transporting male students only, from the 6th grade to high school, and two attendants for the buses with 3x2 seated buses.



UNIFORM



ID CARD



TELEPHONE



BUS ROUTES



ATTENDANT

Dropping off and collecting children at school

Long term we have plans to improve parking and traffic flow at DIS. After the Spring Break in April, there will be a new road linking Entrance 1 and Entrance 3, so parents will be able to enter the main car park through the Entrance 1, drive around the back of the Primary School building and leave via the Entrance 3. We will also have more parking spaces for parents and staff. This will drastically improve traffic flow around the school facilities. At present, however, we still have construction work which is on-going. This has reduced the number of total parking spaces at the school. To improve the situation during the construction phase, I have asked teachers to park outside the school and on part of the school field. We have inconvenienced the teachers, so as not to inconvenience the parents.

Please note all Primary School children should be dropped off via Entrance 1 (main gate). New pedestrian walkways have been provided, so that children and parents can cross the car park safely. We have also opened a new entrance to the Primary School building for Early Years 2 parents. Please park at the far end of the car park outside the Primary School building and enter via the entrance on the front right hand side of the building.

All Secondary School students should be dropped off at the back of the Secondary School building using Entrance 2 (the middle gate). Older Secondary students can be dropped off on the road outside the school, they are certainly old enough to walk a short distance and it will save parents time waiting in traffic. **Please arrive to school on time!**

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Director's Coffee meeting

All parents are invited to the next Director's Coffee meeting, which will be held on Sunday **30th October, at 8:00 am**, and repeated on **Monday 31st October, at 6:00 pm**. We run duplicate meetings to accommodate parents who have a preference for mornings or evenings depending on their work commitments. All parents are invited to listen to a short presentation about our development plans for the school, to ask strategic questions or simply meet me and say "hello". Both meetings will be held in the Secondary School Cafeteria. Please make a note in your diaries.

Please also note the following important dates on our school calendar:

Term 1 (August 2016 – December 2016)

10 – 13 September	*Eid Al Adha holidays
2 October	*Islamic New Year
1 November	Mid-Term holiday
2 - 3 November	Inset programme for teachers (no students)
30 November	Martyrs' Day
2 December	UAE National Day
12 December	*Prophet's Birthday
15 December	Term 1 ends

Starting a new school year

Making it
a success



Term 2 (January 2017 – March 2017)

2 January	Term 2 starts
4 February	International Day
7 – 9 February	Inset programme for teachers (no students)
23 March	Term 2 ends



Term 3 (April 2017 – June 2017)

9 April	Term 3 starts
24 April	*Al Isra Wal Miraj Day
27 – 28 May	*Ramadan starts (<i>all students leave at 1:30 pm</i>)
22 June	End of school year for students
26 – 28 June	*Eid Al Fitr



Copy of the calendar is attached and can be also found on our website.

Please be sure to check www.disdubai.ae frequently for our recent news, events and the newsletters.

We look forward to an exciting year ahead.

Yours sincerely,

Jeff Smith
Director

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