

Thursday 28th January 2010

Dear Parents,

As our skiers arrive home and settle back into the rhythm of school, our linguist and historians get ready to leave. AAESS is very fortunate in having teachers who are willing to give so generously of their time so that our students can have these wonderful experiences. Please check our website for lots of photos of these and the many other events and activities in which we encourage your sons and daughters to engage.

While we do encourage students to take advantage of school planned trips, we discourage parents from taking their children out for holidays during school time as it is disruptive to the continuity of their studies. If this cannot be avoided then it is the responsibility of the student to make sure that they have a record of all work missed and that they make up this work. It is very much a part of their training that they feel responsibility for this themselves.

Because we encourage self reliance we also expect students who have doctors or dentist appointments to come down to reception at the time when they are to be picked up. Because we expect students to be responsible for this, we do not have a system in place to collect students from classrooms. I would very much appreciate if parents would send a letter of explanation in with their sons and daughters as well as reminding them to come down to reception at the appointed time. If students are away from school for some unforeseen reason, I would appreciate if parents would send in an explanatory letter when their son or daughter returns to school.

Congratulations to all those who have just received the results of their October resits. I saw some very happy faces around in the corridors as year 12 and 13 students saw the improvement achieved in their resits.

There have also been some very worried faces as students received the results of their mocks. Year 12 and 13 students are not allowed to drop subjects as they will only be carrying 3 to 5 subjects in any case. Year 11 students may drop 2 I/GCSE examination subjects as a consequence of these mocks results. However there is a procedure in place before they can do this.

In the first place they must make an appointment for their parents to meet with myself and the subject teacher. Secondly, they will need parental permission and the approval of the subject teacher. Should they satisfy all of these conditions, they will not be entered for the examination in this subject. However, they must still attend the subject class and will be able to study at the back of the room. You will appreciate that as a small school, which offers such a wide range of subjects, teachers are very busy teaching examination classes and I do not have the staff to monitor a study room for students who have dropped classes.

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We have two highly qualified and very experienced teachers joining us in mid-February. You will be very pleased with both the English and the Science teacher who are joining the AAESS team and I look forward to welcoming them to Al Ain. I would like to thank all our current team for their stalwart efforts and very professional attitude in ensuring the best for your sons and daughters even though we have not had a full compliment of teachers. The Heads of both Science and English have been monitoring the situation and will continue to monitor student progress to ensure that no one will be disadvantaged by the unforeseen departure of two teachers last term.

Could parents please make an appointment if you wish to see a member of staff. Teachers have very full timetables and Mr. Evans and I have very full schedules seeing parents who have made appointments. While we are delighted to see you, we do not wish you to be frustrated or disappointed because we are already engaged when you arrive in school.

In response to the many requests from parents for information regarding the International Baccalaureate Programme and its feasibility for students here at AAESS, we will hold a meeting for parents on Tuesday 16th February at 7.00 pm to discuss this topic.

We will hold several events in March to inform parents and students of choices for I/GCSE, AS and A2 courses next year. There will be plenty of opportunities to speak with teachers about these options and clear information packages will be given out for you to peruse at home.

If you see our Duke of Edinburgh International Award candidates selling wares and services around the school, please support them. They are raising funds to take with them to Chiang Mai in April to contribute to a community project where they will be helping to build a nursery. This is a very worthwhile cause and all contributions will go directly into the project to buy materials which our students will be using. I would be grateful if anyone who is interested in supporting this group would get in touch with me.

I hope to see a big turn out for our play on Tuesday 22nd and Wednesday 23rd February. Based on the intensity and high standard of practices I can assure you that you will not be disappointed.

May I wish you a calm and peaceful weekend.

Mareve Kilbride-Newman
Head of Secondary.