

Al Sahwa Schools



Al Sahwa Schools Newsletter No1

16 September 2009

From the Principal

Dear parents,

Welcome to the 2009-10 school year and let me begin by extending a very warm welcome to all the newcomers to the Al Sahwa Schools. I trust you all had an enjoyable and refreshing holiday.

We have had a very positive start to the year and all our senior students have settled in extremely well. The measures we introduced to minimize the spread of the H1N1 virus have worked smoothly and I would like to thank parents and students for their support and cooperation. It is essential to remain vigilant and parents are reminded not to send their children to school if they exhibit any flu-like symptoms (fever, headache, lethargy, lack of appetite, coughing, nausea, vomiting). Parents are urged to check our website and click on 'news' for any further updates on H1N1.

Following Eid, we will stagger the start of all students. The first day for students in Grades 7-12 will be Sunday 27 September. Grades 5-6 starts 28th September, Grades 3-4 starts 29th September, Grades 1-2 starts on 30th September and Kindergarten starts on 3rd October.

At the start of this academic year the faculty and staff reflected on our fundamental aims and what it means to be an educated person. We re-visited our values and discussed the role of education in helping to shape a sense of duty to others. We asked the question what *is* understanding and *how* can we determine whether understanding has been achieved? Howard Gardner defines understanding as the capacity (knowledge, skills, concepts, and facts) learned in one context and used in a new context, in a place where you haven't been forewarned that you should make use of that knowledge. Our teaching methodologies and our assessment practices will focus on developing a deep understanding and encourage students to make links between what they learn in class and other parts of their lives. The Heads of department and coordinators also examined how to place greater emphasis on skills rather than content so that our graduates are better equipped to deal with a world in flux.

I am pleased to announce that the International Baccalaureate Organisation has awarded Al Sahwa Schools "candidate status" to start the trial phase of the PYP (Primary Years Programme). Our new PYP co-ordinator, Ms Wendy Francis, has been running extensive PYP workshops for all teachers in kindergarten and elementary and there has been much planning and preparation for the new programme. We are pursuing authorization as an IB World School, these schools share a common philosophy – a commitment to high



quality, challenging, international education that Al Sahwa Schools believe is important for our students.

Results: I am pleased to report that our students performed extremely well in their public examinations. Our graduates from Grade 12 achieved 100% pass rate with an average of over 80%. Many of these graduates were awarded scholarships to universities in different parts of the world. At IGCSE, we saw a record number of students take these examinations with nearly 60% of all papers graded at A*-C, an improvement from last year's result.

In order to improve communication and efficiency, the school has recently purchased a new **Management Information System**. It is essential that the data we have is up-to-date and accurate. Accordingly, we will be sending you a Student Information Form to check and update to ensure we have both correct spelling of names (as on passport) and correct contact details. The new system will also allow parents to log on to a password protected website to view details about their own children. More information about this will be sent to you soon.

Staffing: This year we have restructured our management system to include 5 key co-ordinator positions, two extra learning support teachers and a new student guidance counsellor. We welcome the following teachers and administrators and support staff to Al Sahwa Schools:

Neil Bunting (Head of Boys School)

Wendy Francis (PYP Coordinator)

Rebecca Udowiczenko (English Teacher)

Myra Mir (Art Teacher)

Jennylyn Green (Elementary Teacher)

Balqees Al Hasni (Science Teacher)

Leena Al Shaha (P.E. Teacher)

Angela Stevens (Head of Music & Art)

Assult Al Sarmi (Islamic Teacher)

Samia Al Bahri (Arabic Teacher)

Salome Coetsee (English Learning Support)

Maryam Al Meqbali (Lab Technician)

Nora Al Mamari (Guidance Counsellor)

Nada Mufid (Executive Assistant to Principal)

Huda Al Saadi (Assistant to Head of Girls')

Badriya Al Wuhaibi (Arabic Learning Support)

These appointments bring a wealth of experience and skills and I am confident they will make a significant contribution to Al Sahwa Schools.

Finally, can I wish you all an Eid Mubarak and a rewarding and successful school year.

Mr. Simon Head
Principal



From the Head of Boys' School

Dear Parents of Al Sahwa,

I am writing to introduce myself to you as the new Head of Boys' School, 2009/ 10.

I have recently arrived in Muscat with my family and I am very excited about living in Oman and working for Al Sahwa Schools. Oman is a beautiful country and my family are enjoying immensely all it has to offer.

I believe I am joining the school at a key stage in the school's development and I am looking forward to getting to know all the parents and students, as well as working with such enthusiastic and dedicated team of teachers and staff.

To give you a little background knowledge about myself, I am from the UK where I taught for 11 years, and recently I have been working internationally for a number of years; most recently as Assistant Principal at ACG International School, Jakarta., Indonesia.

I love the challenge of living and working in different parts of the world and I hope to make a significant contribution to the further development of Al Sahwa Schools.

I look forward to getting to know you during my stay in Oman.

Best Regards,

As Head of Boys' School I expect all students to come to school with a positive attitude to study and to seek to make progress in all subjects. I expect students to be polite, courteous and tolerant; to abide by the school rules and to achieve their highest possible standards in academic studies. I believe punctuality, attendance, organisation, personal discipline and homework are essential in making students successful. I trust I have your complete support in this matter and I look forward to getting to know you during my stay in Oman.

Neil Bunting
Head of Boys' School



From the Head of Girls' School

Dear Parents,

It is my pleasure to send warm regards to you all and all Al Sahwa Schools' students and congratulate you on the start of the new academic year 2009-2010.

I would also like to welcome all new parents and students and I wish them an exciting and successful year in their new school.

With the starting of my second year as a head of girls' school, I will continue working hard with the parents and the members of administration and teaching staff to create an academic atmosphere that will make students our focus in the education process, and that will achieve an active communication between school and families. Noting that it is very important that students and teachers feel happy and appreciated when they come back to the schools, as well as parents feel that they are always welcome.

One important tool is to work as one team, which will push the school forward by creating a challenging environment that allows students to learn and acquire the best levels in education, as well as becoming responsible citizens toward their society.

We have a lot to be proud of as work teams in Al Sahwa Schools, some of our accomplishments are:

The great results of our students in:

General Education Diploma for Bilingual School, as 22.9% of grade 12 students got higher than 90% and 27% got higher than 80%.

Although the summer break is a time for relaxation and enjoying time with family and friends, but Al Sahwa Schools' staff was working like bees in a hive to accomplish many enhancements to the school, like:

- Installing a Data Base program to reinforce the communication between teachers themselves and between teachers and school administration and parents.
- Building 6 new classrooms in girls' school and another 6 in boys' school.
- Painting the whole school.

The development in the school building helps in raising individuals' level of attainment, as well as teachers in the school who have greater impact on students' academic attainment. We welcome the new experienced teachers who joined Al Sahwa Schools this year.

Finally I would like to clarify a simple way to build a generation who has the ability to take the responsibility on the following:

- Start to give your child simple tasks and routine work to do and work on increasing their responsibilities as they grow up.



- Be committed to the behavior that you want your child to imitate, and know that if there is any contradiction between your actions and sayings, your child will imitate your actions, not your sayings.
- Have a dialogue with your child about responsible behavior and praise him/her when he/she takes responsibility for their actions and when he/she behaves in a responsible manner.
- Give them your trust and show them that you trust them because they are responsible people.

Nadia Jabr
Head of Girls' School

From the Student welfare officer

Dear Parents,

Students leaving school during school time:

please inform the school when any previous plan is made for your child leaving school during school time; students may leave school for hospital appointment or any other reason measured by the parents. Moreover, please send a letter with the student to Homeroom teacher or Students Welfare Officer; Muna Al Sulaimi that include your request to allow the student to leave the school. You can also directly contact Students Welfare Office on the following school extension numbers: 232- 208 before one day of the scheduled appointment or on the same day in earlier time, so we inform the student prior your arrival to be prepared to leave.

Students' Absence for the reason of sickness or any other reason:

Please inform Students Welfare Office if your child is absent because of sickness or any other reason, and for how many days he/she will be absent from the school. This will give the school easier communication tool with student during their absence and to prepare their learning worksheets.

We wish you Ramadan Kareem, and congratulate you for Blessing Eid Al Fitter.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Muna Suleimi
Student Welfare Officer