



21<sup>st</sup> February 2019

Dear Parents,

The last seven weeks have been packed with activities in all areas of school life and the February break is a welcome breather before continuing with semester two. We would like to share with you some of the achievements or events that happened before the February break.

With semester one coming to an end on 24th January 2018, one of the key events that happened thereafter was the Academic awards ceremony which took place on 7th February 2018. We congratulate all students who received honours certificates. It is encouraging to see the number of award recipients increasing every year. A total of 150 honours certificates were awarded compared to a total of 144 at the same time last year. We always remind our students that they have an equal opportunity to join the honours list and therefore they should continue to work consistently towards this goal.

The renovation of the amphitheatre was completed by the end of January and it was wonderful to resume our assemblies in it. The DP1 play was the first production to be staged there.



During the December break, **Sanaa Theater Awards** took place in Nairobi, in Kenya National Theatre.

Our student, Diya Gohil, Year 8, was nominated in 3 categories for these awards:

- Best Production in Child Rights & Protection
- Best Live Music Performance (A Daniel Pearl Award)
- Best Primary School Production - Aga Khan Academy Mombasa.

She won 2 Awards:

- Best Production in Child Rights & Protection
- Best Live Music Performance



Azmat Amarshi year 8 student, who got a distinction for in the ABRSM examinations in singing, was invited to perform at the ABRSM high scorers' concert in Nairobi. She passed with merit at this level and she was awarded a grade 1 singing certificate.

## Diploma Programme

### DP1

All the toil and sweat over the last 2 months finally culminated in a brilliant all round show on the evening of 15<sup>th</sup> February in the newly renovated school amphitheater. "Memphis the Musical – the DP1 Annual Production was staged, and the effort and commitment and the obvious talent of the students were on full display, and they took the night away. An education of another kind it certainly was. One grows in subtle and imperceptible ways through such an experience. Books and subjects in the classroom can only give one so much. Much more of life is learnt outside. Like the process of putting up this production. Balance, coordination, teamwork, resilience, patience – and a true understanding of one's own strengths and the strengths of others – these are the life skills every

student imbibed. Included is also an abiding memory to forever look back to with fondness and pride!

On the academic front, their Extended Essay journey is now finally on the road. Each student has chosen the subject they will be doing their EE in, and also the topic and tentative research question. Each of them has been allotted a supervisor who will now help them firm up and polish their research question and generally guide them through the process. A very exciting academic journey this, and the most valuable prep for university – because research, investigation and analysis is the way.

Many of them have also just attended a rigorous two day SAT prep on the weekend of 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> February 2019.

## **DP2**

The final lap of their DP journey has kicked off in earnest. All roads are now academic, and life for them right now very tightly packed. Syllabus completion, IA (Internal Assessment) and EA (External Assessment) final submissions, including TOK and CAS, are now underway. And as they head for the short half term break, they go with the knowledge and responsibility that immediately upon commencement of school on the 25<sup>th</sup> of February, they start their Mock exams. Hence their time now is totally geared towards preparation for this. University decisions and responses continue to come in, and this makes it an even more sensitive and strenuous time for them. We request all parents and guardians to be very patient and supportive at this time. It is exciting, demanding, full of visions for the future – but concurrently can also be stressful. We wish them all the very best. Teachers are doing their all right now to make this passage as smooth for them as possible.

## **Student Life**

The New Year has been busy with several activities taking place at the Academy. The Year 6 group had their first year level trip in 2019. This was an opportunity to bring the students and their mentors together in a different setting for bonding. The MSMUN achievement during the trip to Nairobi was remarkable. The semester 1 reports were released on the 1st of February 2019 showing your child's progress against the learning goals which we made at the beginning of the academic year. It is from this report that as stakeholders, we identify areas for students next learning steps together and areas for further development. Our support and commitment to the candidates is crucial at this time as they prepare for the mocks and final examination. Checking with them, having constant communication and sharing words of encouragement, is what they need at this crunch time.

## **House Events**

The house competitions provided our students with the opportunity to showcase their talent and the leadership skills. We have so far organized the following house competitions; quiz, math & science quiz, swimming, and fashion show. Lip sync and athletics are the events lined up for before the April break.

## **February Mid-Term Break**

February break will be from 21<sup>st</sup> - 24<sup>th</sup> 2019. This break will be optional for residential students to travel home with the exception of Year 6's & Year 7's participating in the Taita expedition. The Taita expedition is one experience that all grade 6 & 7 residential students participate at least once while at the academy. The expedition takes the students outside their comfort zones allowing them to interact with others in a new environment while learning new skills like such as map reading, navigation, cooking, leadership, conflict resolution, and teamwork. This year's expedition was challenging but also memorable.

During the mid-term break, a sports festival has been organized with other schools participating in the hockey, basketball, badminton, and football tournaments.



## Year Level Trips

In our effort to promote teamwork and the appreciation of Kenya's natural diversity, the school purposed to have year level trips organized. Year 8 trip will be going to Tsavo from the 25<sup>th</sup> to 28<sup>th</sup> February 2019. The Year 9 will go to Nairobi and Sagana between 7<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> April 2019. We hope to maintain the tradition of Year Level trips in the coming academic year.

## Other Events

SRC basketball fixtures have been the most heated, most watched and most popular this year. The yearly basketball country games has begun. The stakes are normally very high for our teams having made to regional and national levels in the past years. We wish our teams every success in this season's competitions. The SRC/Tuck shop planned and held a non-uniform day and other appreciation activities on 14<sup>th</sup> February 2019.

## Sports update

Please see attached.

## Middle Years Programme

### Year 10

The highlight was the successful exhibition of their Personal Projects, which is a culmination of a year's journey. They displayed their final products or outcome of their project to students from our school and invited schools from Mombasa County. We congratulate year 10 students for completing a significant part of the MYP programme.



### Year 6

#### Annual Trip: The Camp Muhaka Experience!



As part of the school program, each year every year level goes for a bonding/academic trip and this year grade 6 were not left behind. The year 6 trip to Camp Muhaka in the South Coast area began on the 24<sup>th</sup> day of January and ended on 26<sup>th</sup> January 2019. 49 out of 50 students attended under the supervision of their mentors and year level leader. For grade 6 this was their first trip in the senior school and their experiences were diverse.

The first day was a visit to the local schools where they were able to play games with the local community children as well as bond with them. Later in the afternoon students went to learn from the local community how harvesting of coconut is done and how to weave using palm leaves. This was a great learning opportunity as many of the students learnt a new skill of weaving. One of the students said that she felt that she learnt a lot from the local community and she was able to develop further as an open-minded and pluralistic student. She feels that getting to know other people who are different from them in many aspects was a great way to open the world more to her. Students were able to identify service opportunities and are now looking forward to organizing a service activity to support the learning of the children in the area.



The second day was even more involving as the students did service at the nomad beach. They did beach clean-up and collected a total of 968 waste items in just 30 minutes! These are waste items that end up polluting the aquatic ecosystems if they are not properly disposed. They then learnt about sea creatures such as turtles and the learning activities were amazing. In the afternoon students used their artistic skills to craft models out of waste flip-flops. This was a recycling activity that saw students showcase their strengths in art. It was amazing to see how creative our students are in communicating their ideas.

The day seemed very successful for many of the students as they culminated with having fun at the beach. It was from this beach clean-up activity that one student, Deesha Rathod, developed interest into marine environment conservation and developed a website to spread awareness on impact of pollution on aquatic ecosystems. The link to the website has been shared to all the students on ManageBac.

The trip was very successful despite a few challenges of students being unwell. Generally, the students got to bond more with each other, improved their collaboration skills and even learnt new skills. The objectives of the trip were well met. Find below some of the photos from the trip:



## YEAR 8

To celebrate the end of Unit “**What happens when East meets the West**” at times referred to as the Silk Road unit in Humanities, students hosted the annual Inventor’s fair. Students investigated and presented various inventions made along the Silk Road.



### Video conference

Each year, the year 8s go through a program during which we build students’ ability to use dialogue as a way to build strong working relationships with people who might be different from them in different ways. We use resources from a project called ‘Global Generations’ in the Physical Social and Health Education curriculum taught during core time in preparation for the video conferences.

‘Global Generations’ is an innovative schools program for 12-17 year olds, which is active in 19 countries and growing. We were their first school in sub-Saharan Africa. As part of this, our students engaged in video-conferences at the end of January with schools from North Africa-Egypt, Israel, Middle East, Russia, Mexico and many others. The conferences took place on

Monday, 28 <sup>th</sup> January	3:00pm-4:30pm
Wednesday, 30 <sup>th</sup> January	12:30pm-2:00pm
Wednesday, 30 <sup>th</sup> January	3:00pm-4:30pm

Due to students who missed the earlier conferences because of Model United Nations engagement where our year level was represented by 7 students, another video conference was scheduled on 12<sup>th</sup> February 2019.

Students gave their reflections from the video conference embracing the idea of a pluralistic disposition as being key to collaborating and working with people who might be different from them in many aspects. It was encouraging to the mentors to see their mentees apply some of the dialogue skills e.g asking response questions during the conferences!

## Year 9

As part of strengthening the unity among the students, the SRC in conjunction with the Year Level Leader and Vice Principal Student Life allow the students to engage in bonding activities and events that are students' initiated but approved by the Year Level Leader and The VP Student Life. The Year 9 held their first bonding event on Friday 8th February 2019 from 6 pm up to 9 pm. The Year 9 SRC executives with guidance from the Year Level Leader planned for the event where the events were suggested, the budget drawn and the information shared with parents.

This Year the students through the SRC executives opted to have a pool party with snacks. This was a great opportunity for the mentors to spend time with their mentees outside the classroom setting that they always have during registration and Leadership lessons.

The students gathered around the swimming pool and the programme started at around 6.30 pm. Students danced, swam and had fun as the event progressed. Snacks were served at 8.30 pm. Students then cleared the area and dispersed.

The event brought many of the students together and freely shared and had fun with both their peers and their mentors.

## Student Support

### Working with Stress

Be it conversations in the school staffroom, or social settings, there is a common theme running through at present, and perhaps for time to come. The economy is bad, and people are struggling. Everyone is talking about financial constraints. People are stressed. I think it's fair to say that we are going through a crisis.

But we have a choice. We can either give in put our head down and hands up and surrender, or have our heads up and hands down and keep on trying. In today's situation, you are now the role models to your children in how you cope with stress, and the pressures of life at large. They are getting first-hand experience on learning how best to cope with stress.

In a student's world, the stress children deal with at school, in their social groups, and on a personal level, can also be overwhelming. And then there are teacher and parental expectations. When children are stressed, as mature adults, we often step in, in a bid to ease their anxieties. Children are vulnerable, we think. We must intervene, we think. Naturally, as parents we want what's best for our children. Seeing them struggle is not easy. Seeing them fail can be even more difficult. But what we must recognise is that our children need to experience the dips at times, so they can learn what works for them when they are picking themselves up again. Riding this wave will make them more resilient and independent – qualities that they will need as they grow up, just as you need them now. Having a bank of coping mechanisms, knowing what the triggers to stress are, identifying the right support structures – these are areas where the adults around them can help with.

Evolutionary theorists, such as Darwin, emphasized the role of stress for successful survival. 'Survival of the fittest' is still a term we hear often, *fittest* being used for one who has managed to survive and develop despite all the barriers along the way. However, it is the level of stress we need to be mindful of. A recent article in Psychology Today states, "it (too much stress) impedes perhaps not the capacity to learn, but even the choice to do so."

As adults, our role is not to stop and take away the stress from our children. It is to equip them. It is for them to know that you are there, no matter what. Here is how you can play a role:

1. I cannot emphasize enough how important conversations are. Conversations about school, life, weekends, nature, family, food, or anything else you might want to engage in. Regular



conversations will always give you a glimpse of how your children are developing, and what they are thinking.

2. As children grow older, they have a tendency to keep a few things to themselves. For the most part, this is not because they do not trust you anymore, but because they do not want to stress you out more. Talking about and showing how you are dealing with your own stressors might help them in knowing that you cannot keep stress silent and expect it to go away. Your strategies will help them build their own. They may need to explore what works best for them – a run, writing a diary, talking to a family member, a sport, art, or anything that will help them first to relax, and then to organise their thoughts and plan for the next steps.
3. Everyone has expectations. We do. Our children do also. What we need to remember is to keep them realistic. Every child has their own potential, and to be compared with peers can put them on a very unfair platform. I am not suggesting that parents do this all the time. Children do it to themselves sometimes. They need guidance on how to recognise their own strengths, set their own goals, and work towards these. They will need help with the ‘how to get there’ as well as the ‘where to.’
4. Celebrate! Like every workout in the gym must end with a stretch to avoid muscle injury, every goal attempted (successful or not), needs to be recognised and celebrated. Your message here is that your child has tried their best, and their efforts have been recognised. This goes a long way in getting them to pick themselves up and start the journey again. (Reference: Shrand, J. (2012) [www.psychologytoday.com](http://www.psychologytoday.com))

## Upcoming events

- February Mid-Term break – 21<sup>st</sup> to 24<sup>th</sup> February 2019
- Taita Expedition – 20<sup>th</sup> to 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2019.
- Year 8 Tsavo Trip – 25<sup>th</sup> to 28<sup>th</sup> February 2019
- DP2 Mock Examinations – 25<sup>th</sup> February to 6<sup>th</sup> March 2019
- Book fair – 28<sup>th</sup> February to 1<sup>st</sup> March 2019
- Year 10 Onscreen Mock Examinations – 28<sup>th</sup> February to 4<sup>th</sup> March 2019
- Year 9 Parents meeting – 7<sup>th</sup> March 2019
- Inter-house Athletic – 8<sup>th</sup> March 2019
- President’s Award (PA) practice Journey – 10<sup>th</sup> to 11<sup>th</sup> March 2019
- Year 8 parents meeting – 12<sup>th</sup> March 2019
- Peace Summit – 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> March 2019
- Year 10 parents meeting – 14<sup>th</sup> March 2019
- DP2 Parents meeting & PTC – 15<sup>th</sup> March 2019
- DP1 Geography/ESS Watamu trip – 16<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> March 2019
- Francophonie week – 18<sup>th</sup> to 22<sup>nd</sup> March
- Year 6 parents meeting – 21<sup>st</sup> March 2019
- Year 7 parents meeting – 28<sup>th</sup> March 2019
- Tedx Youth AKA Mombasa Chapter – 16<sup>th</sup> March 2019
- MAD night – 30<sup>th</sup> March 2019, 7- 9 pm





Kind regards,



**Francis Kariuki**  
**Principal, Senior School**

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