



16th September 2017

Dear Parents,

The last three weeks have been very busy for us; one can hardly believe that we are at the end of the fifth week. The students have settled into the routine of school, and demands of academic rigor are now evident with homework, assignments or assessment.

On Friday 9th September, we hosted a Music concert to celebrate the success of our students who participated in the Kenya Music festival competition over the summer break. It was a fantastic show which happened for the first time in school. It was also an opportunity to showcase our choral programme and encourage more students to participate in it. We know you will encourage them too.

A settling-in report for all new students (Year 6, DP1 and new students in other year groups) will be released through ManageBac on Monday 26th September. This will outline how they are adjusting to all their subjects and mentor groups.

There are two main events on the calendar that are coming up soon. First, the ISA tests are taking place on Tuesday 27th and Wednesday 29th September for Years 6 to 10. Information will be sent to students informing them of the requirements for this. Just like the previous years, these tests do not require any prior revision since they are skills-focused. However, the Mathematics and English departments will share sample questions with the students.

The second event is the Parent-Teacher Conference taking place on Thursday 6th and Friday 7th October, the invitation letter for which is attached to this newsletter. This is followed immediately by the October break. It is important for parents to meet with the teachers who teach their children and know how they are settling in the new academic year. The students will be making appointments on behalf of their parents on either the 6th or the 7th, or on both days depending on the available slots.

Parents of residential students are encouraged to inform their children early enough when they will be coming between the two days, so that they can get appropriate appointments. Before leaving for the October break, there is an elaborate process to ensure that students see all their teachers and mentors. Once they see all their teachers and mentor, they can leave for the break.

Student Life

Every day we witness intellectual, physical and interpersonal changes in the lives of your children. Studies have shown that when students start a new school year or are in a new school, they experience a decline in all of these competencies. In a new school or new year level, the subjects are different and there is a decline in a student's confidence due to the new material. The interpersonal skills are also put to the test by the introduction of all the new faces of the new school year. We are proud to note that it has taken a short time to develop these competencies among our student and that each student has a firm foundation on which to build.



Leadership

The last two weeks has witnessed students campaigning and getting elected for the different SRC leadership positions. We congratulate both those who did not make it and those who succeeded. We encourage all students to find a group or area they are interested in and seek a way to plug into it and grow. In the same breath, we also ask those in leadership that leadership is not about the position, it is about action. Whether or not they are successful in attaining the position, true leadership rests in the hands of those who are making things happen. In this philosophy of leadership, we strive to teach service beyond self, even if a position is not attained.

Residences

One of key successes is having engaging programmes in the residences that develops a whole person. Collaborating and learning from peers and student leaders offers a great insight and richness to our own programmes.



In addition, having frequent meetings with the dorm captains has ensured that student's needs are met, and feedback shared is used to improve the quality of residential activities. On 1st October, 2016, the residential students will be showcasing their talents during our Talent Night.

Important points to Note

- October break starts immediately after parent teacher conferences with an expectation that all residential students will have departed by 8th Oct 2016 in the morning and will return on the Sunday 23rd Oct 2016. As the Head of Academy had communicated earlier, no one will remain in school during the break.
- For residential students, transport details will shared via the Travel details Survey by next week.

Enrichment

Students have signed up for the different enrichment activities and we hope you are able to have conversations with them. Some enrichment activities may require some external support, thus resulting in some payments to support them. We will be communicating with you if your child signed up for any paid enrichment activity.



Diploma Programme

Back from the Camp Kasigau adventure, the DP1 cohort is more bonded and unified now, which augurs well for their DP journey hereafter, since collaboration and peer support is a key to a smooth passage through the demanding and rigorous programme.

The students are very excited about their next collaborative whole cohort venture, which is the DP1 play. They are scheduled to zero in on a script during their next year level core time, and then sign up for a domain of their choice in the production – be it acting, direction, stage management, music, light and sound, costume and make up, marketing, sets and props. We will keep you posted on that front.

The DP1 students have settled down to their final subject choices and levels after the 3 week ‘floater’ period which accorded them the opportunity to check out their comfort level in different subjects. This means that the process of changing subject and levels is over. The cohort has begun to find their feet in the programme and its rigorous requirements. After the initial easy warm up, teachers are now introducing students to the actual rigour of the Diploma Programme, and this can be initially overwhelming for some. Keeping this in mind, we have a system going where the mentors, dorm parents, year level leaders, subject teachers and the learning support team work in unison to scaffold learning needs and support the students both academically and pastorally.

They have also done their CEM test, which is a predictive cognitive ability test. When the results arrive in a month, we will have an idea as to where they stand as a cohort and as individuals in terms of their DP scoring probabilities.

Currently, the DP2 students are being registered with the IB for their respective subject and level for final exams. This means any change in subject or level (inclusive of Extended Essay) after this will incur added individual expenses for students. This is not likely to occur, but it is good for all to know.

Extended Essay first drafts are in, and feedback has been provided. Now the onus is on the students to make use of this comprehensive feedback diagnostically and use it to polish their final drafts well on time.

Weekly tests are going on as planned with the aim of ensuring that they are consistently revising and they are getting accustomed to being in an examination environment. We recognize that this has put a bit of pressure on them but this is helping them to plan their time well.

TOK is coming to a crest now, with both the Presentation and the Essay being the prime focus from now till the end of January, when we find closure for both.

CAS involvements for students are winding down now, and only the polishing of reflections, forms, interviews and other evidence that enriches the CAS portfolio is being attended to in phases. This too should conclude by February 2017.

On Friday 9th September, eight DP2 students went for the Malaysia University Fair, where they were able to gain insights into what is expected of them and opportunities they have in the Malaysia.

In spite of the rigorous programme, on September 3rd the DP students still found a way to unwind and bond at the DP Barbeque. They gathered at the poolside, where every DP2 student was paired up with DP1 students as mentors and buddies. The larger aim of this exercise was to help the juniors imbibe skills and strategies from their seniors and form lasting and productive relationships. In essence, all is well. They really had a wonderful time dancing, swimming and generally enjoying the company of their buddies.

Middle Years Programme

The students have now settled well into the programme and are getting into the rigor of it. The new students have started attending orientation sessions with Mrs. Nondi. These sessions are geared towards helping them have a smooth transition into the programme and settle in even faster. Students were taken through global contexts, Related and Key Concepts and how criterion referenced assessment is carried out. Students were also given a chance to ask questions related to the programme. The sessions continue until the end of September.

The Year 10 students handed in their Criterion C (Taking Action) of the Personal Project between August 29 and September 2 2016. They are in the process of meeting their supervisors to show evidence of their products or outcomes, as well as to get feedback on their reports on criterion C. Students have started on certain summative assessments, especially in the Arts, Design, Individuals and Societies and Mathematics. The Year 7 and 9 students also successfully completed the CEM tests (Centre for Evaluation and Monitoring). These are tests that enable the school to understand an individual student's ability and potential, as well as monitor performance and measure progress at both subject and school level, throughout secondary and to external examinations. CEM assessments help teachers by providing trackable details of pupil's performance and development and an overview of class performance.

Finally, the Year 6 students have integrated into the Senior School very well and are now able to move around the various classes. We wish them all the very best in their journey through the MYP.

Upcoming events

24th September - SRC retreat

26th September – Settling in reports for all new students are released

27th and 28th September – ISA tests for year 6 to 10

1st October - Residential Talent night

6th and 7th October - Parent Teacher Conferences (PTC)

6th October during PTC – Blood drive by a CAS group in conjunction with the Red Cross

8th – 23rd October – Half-term break

Have an enjoyable weekend!



Kind regards,
Francis Kariuki
Principal, Senior School