



from the desk of the
Head of Academy

25 July 2025

Dear Parents,

There's a sense of excitement in the air today! In a few days' time, the new school year gets underway. This year, we welcome over 750 students to the Academy. They join us from across India and around the world. This wonderfully diverse group of young people will shape the unique spirit and energy of this special school community.

As I write, we are preparing to welcome our new students and their families to our *New Parent Orientation Programme*. Organised by our dynamic Admissions Team and a fabulous group of student volunteers, it promises to be a warm and welcoming introduction to life at the Academy.

The energy and distinctiveness of this place lie in a vision of education that inspires us. We believe that young people should enjoy their school experience. We want them to be curious, challenged and engaged in their learning. When children are encouraged to explore their potential in a safe and supportive environment, they grow.

Schools which take these things seriously are places where the needs of children come first; where they learn how to learn, rather than only what to learn; where they learn that it is often better to be wise than it is to be clever; where they learn that by learning to serve they learn to lead; where they learn that kindness is a sign of strength and not a weakness and where they learn that it can be just as important to colour outside the lines.

As many of you know, each Friday, I write a short newsletter to keep you updated on life at the Academy and to share reflections on parenting, learning, and the wider world our children are growing up in. You'll receive the first of these next Friday, with highlights from the opening week of term. I look forward to staying connected with you through these weekly messages.

Behind the scenes, the Academy has been a busy place these past few weeks. Our staff have returned early for meetings, training sessions and planning, and we've welcomed a number of outstanding new teachers who are settling in quickly. Over the coming weeks, I'll be introducing them to you more fully in our newsletters.

Key Information for the Start of Term

- Our [Student Handbook](#) is now online. It's an important reference for students and families, especially in Senior School, outlining key policies and expectations.
- Our [2025/26 Academic Calendar](#) provides an overview of key dates for the year.
- A reminder that the school day begins promptly at 8:10 am. For students using their own transport, please ensure they arrive on time.
- For bus-related queries, please contact our Transport Supervisor, Mr Vijay Suryavanshi: suryavanshi.vijay@agakhanacademies.org

To all our returning families – welcome back. And to those joining us for the first time – welcome to the Academy community. If this is the beginning of a new chapter in your child's learning journey, please know how delighted we are to have you with us. We deeply value the partnership between school and home, and we are committed to working closely with you to support your child's growth and well-being in every way.

Wishing you and your family a joyful and successful year ahead!

Best wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jonathan Long". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Dr Jonathan Long



Dear Parents and Guardians,

It gives me great pleasure to join the Academy as the new Junior School Principal. For me, this is both a return and a renewal. I was part of the founding team in 2011 and served as the PYP Coordinator until 2016. Since then, my journey has taken me to Singapore, Germany, and most recently to Oberoi International School in Mumbai. It feels truly special to return to a place so close to both my heart and my purpose.

This past week, our teachers and leadership team have been engaged in rich professional learning to prepare for the year ahead. As each day passes, the classrooms are going through a very quick phase of change: from being completely unused during the summer break, to being ready for learning to happen once again. I always say that schools are the only places that have the privilege of hitting the reset button every year, and I am currently witnessing that button being gracefully pressed here in the Junior School.

Our focus this year remains on strengthening foundational skills in reading, writing, and mathematics, while nurturing a love for learning, student agency, critical thinking, and the Academy's core values of service, stewardship, and leadership. Through the course of the coming days and weeks, I will be seeking feedback from parents, students and teachers through surveys and one-on-one conversations, with the purpose of making informed, meaningful plans as the new Junior School Principal. You will hear more about it soon via emails and this newsletter. I thank you in advance for sharing your thoughts and opinions with me as we together build an excellent learning environment for your children.

As we do every year, a **Culture Circle** is scheduled for all Junior School parents on **Saturday, August 2**, from **9:30 to 11:30 am**. This day will be an opportunity for families to meet their child's teachers and get to know some basic routines of the school and the classroom. Please also make note that the first round of parent-teacher meetings is scheduled for the first Saturday in September. More details about that day will be shared soon.

I am truly looking forward to seeing all new families this weekend and welcoming all our students by 8 am on Tuesday, 29 July.

I hope the year ahead brings joyful learning, meaningful growth and strong partnerships between home and school.

Warm regards,

Archna

Junior School Principal



Dear Students, Parents and Guardians,

A heartfelt **Welcome** from everyone at the Senior School! We very much look forward to having returning and new students at the Academy on Tuesday, July 29. With this newsletter, I want to share **key dates** and events with you. Please mark your calendars:

Monday, July 28: Residential students arrive at the Academy

Tuesday, July 29: First Day of school

Saturday, August 2: Parent-Teacher Meet-and-Greet, 11 am-1 pm. The entire Senior School team will be meeting **new and returning** parents/guardians for introductions and informal conversation over tea/coffee and snacks.

Friday, August 22 and Saturday, August 23: academic retreat for all DP1 students. This two-day (one-night) off-campus retreat will help new grade 11 students settle into the Diploma Programme and provide an in-depth orientation for the successful completion of the two-year course.

Friday, September 26: last day of term 1

Saturday, September 27 to Sunday, October 12: mid-term break

Monday, October 13: first day of term 2

October 20 & 21: Diwali holidays

Friday, October 31 (all day) and Saturday, November 1 (half day): Senior School Parent-Student-Teacher conferences.

Friday, December 19: last day of semester 1

Monday, January 19: first day of semester 2

Grade Level Parent Meetings

For the start of the new academic year, online/face-to-face parent meetings for each grade level and training sessions for Managebac are planned. Dates and times will be shared soon.

Additional Calendar Dates

Information about

- the timetable,
- class trips,
- the Experiential Learning Programme,
- events such as MUN,
- sports competitions and
- cultural events

will be published at the start of the term.

Updates from the Senior School

For the 2025/2026 academic year, we are enhancing the daily timetable, the use of spaces and the provision of support for students. This includes that

- students will no longer need to walk long distances between the Senior School and the Annex (former Nursery Building) for individual lessons. Instead, students in Grades 6 and 7 will be based in the Annex for the majority of their lessons and only have blocked Science and Arts lessons in the respective specialist rooms.
- students in Grades 6 to 10 will have more time for Physical Education (PE), and the PE team has been expanded to support varied student needs and interests more effectively.
- an additional faculty member joins the Diverse Learning Needs department to support students with the acquisition of English.

- morning snacks will be served in the Senior School and Annex to help students make good use of their time at school.
- more learning time is allocated to Mathematics and language acquisition for MYP students.
- Higher Level (HL) Diploma students will have on average 4.5 hours of contact time with their teachers per week. Consequently, requirements of the Diploma Programme can be met more easily, and students and teachers are enabled to cover the demanding Higher Level courses more successfully. In practice, this means that HL students will have 4 lessons in one week and 5 lessons in the following week. We call these weeks “**Week A**” and “**Week B**”. The two-week schedule applies to Grade 8 to 10 also and enables us to distribute learning time more effectively across subjects.
- dedicated, 4-hour workshops are scheduled regularly across the academic year and will explore Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) and leadership themes in greater depth and through more student engagement.
- the government-mandated compulsory Telugu programme has been integrated into the weekly timetable without taking time away from other subjects.
- Students in Grades 9 and 10 will benefit from a new programme called **Academic Literacy** that addresses a gap we have identified and links the Reading programme in Grades 6 to 8 with studies in the upper grade levels. **Academic Literacy** will support students as they work on the Personal Project research and reflections and will help them prepare for their work on non-examination components in the Diploma Programme, namely the Extended Essay, Theory of Knowledge and the research and academic writing that count towards the students’ final Diploma grades.

There are numerous developments happening in the Senior School that will benefit our students.

After-school Sports

As of August, **after-school sports** are available for day students who can **arrange their own transportation home**. Basketball, cricket, fitness (gym), football, MTB cycling, squash, swimming, volleyball are offered from 4 pm to 5:15 pm on the following days:

Students in Grades 6,7 & 8: Monday and Thursday

Students in Grades 9, 10, 11 & 12: Tuesday and Friday

Day students need to arrange their own transport home and **leave** the Academy by **5:30 pm**, after which supervision is no longer available. Students interested in joining after-school sports are asked to **see Mr Ravi to sign up**.

Sincerely,

Christian Schmelz

Senior School Principal



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HYDERABAD
