

from the desk of the
Head of Academy

7 August 2026



Meet the Student Representative Council 2026-27!

The Senior School Student Representative Council is ready to listen, lead, collaborate and represent the student voice across the Academy. Leadership lies at the heart of our educational vision. As parents of students at the Academy, understanding the importance of leadership in an Academy education can provide valuable insights into how your child's Academy experience prepares them for success in the interconnected world of the 21st century. Wishing our student leaders a meaningful year of learning and positive impact!

Dear Parents,

Three weeks into the term, the campus has an unmistakable sense of energy and purpose. For those who are new to the Academy, the opening weeks bring a flood of names, places, routines and expectations. Joining a new school takes courage, and settling in takes time. However, this is a welcoming place, and I hope that our newcomers are already experiencing the warmth and kindness that make it special.

At the start of this new school year, I'd like to share three important aspects of the Academy. These are principles that shape the education we seek to provide for every student.

Our Guiding Vision: The vision of His Late Highness Aga Khan IV for the Aga Khan Academies is ambitious and inspiring. It brings together two equally important aims: high academic achievement and the development of the qualities of character young people need to thrive in the world. The goal is to develop leaders with a strong sense of ethics and a commitment to improving their communities and the wider world. This vision has been a transformative influence on many young lives and is the inspiration for all our work here.

Learning Beyond the Classroom: The classroom is not the only place where learning happens. We believe everything has the potential to teach. Our approach to pastoral care, advisor groups, the residential programme, internships, service activities, enrichment opportunities and student leadership programmes are all, in their different ways, classrooms. Sport, the arts and community life also offer powerful opportunities for growth. In fact, we never know which of a young person's many interests and activities might one day become a great passion in life.

It's worth keeping in mind that some aspects of our programme include structured challenges that may feel uncomfortable or unfamiliar. Students participate in experiences that involve periods of difficulty or hardship, work on projects in environments that can be physically or personally demanding and contribute enthusiastically to campus life even when this requires putting the needs of the wider community ahead of their own preferences. They are also expected to engage positively with a diverse community of fellow students whose cultures, beliefs, backgrounds, social circumstances and perspectives may be very different from their own.

Young people grow when they are supported to move beyond what is easy and familiar. In doing so, they develop initiative, courage, adaptability and self-discipline — and often discover that there is far more within them than they had imagined.

Seeing the Whole Person: Our goal is to nurture young men and women of character: resilient global citizens with broad perspectives, a deep respect for pluralism and the confidence to think independently. We want our students to challenge assumptions, take real responsibility and become agents of positive change in the world.

If we can help our students become adults who possess an inner steadiness and who know how to live with balance and calm, we will have given them something precious. This is the education to which we are committed: an education that values academic success but reaches beyond it; that recognises the whole person; and that prepares young people not simply to succeed, but to live meaningful lives filled with purpose.

Best wishes,



Dr Jonathan Long

THIS WEEK'S NEWS



FESTIVALS AND SCHOOL HOLIDAYS

The festival of *Bonalu* is being celebrated on Monday, 10 August. However, this will remain a regular school day at the Academy.

When deciding which festivals to observe as school holidays, we try to balance a range of needs and priorities. This is challenging in a school serving both day and residential families. Day families understandably value opportunities to spend festival time together, while residential families prefer fewer interruptions during term in favour of longer winter and summer breaks.

We must also ensure that the Academy provides at least 182 days of regular teaching each year. With statutory holidays and a number of religious and festival holidays celebrated in Telangana, it is unfortunately not possible to declare a school holiday for every occasion.

Our approach is to observe all statutory holidays that fall during term time, while also making the best possible provision for major festivals including *Diwali*, *Dussehra*, *Holi*, *Ugadi*, *Sankranti* and at least one *Eid*. On occasion, we also grant holidays not included in the published calendar, such as for Ganesh Immersion.

We recognise the cultural and religious importance of *Bonalu* to many families and respect the traditions associated with it. However, after considering the overall balance of the academic calendar, the Academy will remain open on Monday, 10 August. Thank you for your understanding as we continue to seek a fair and sensible balance for our diverse community.



LEARNING BEYOND THE CLASSROOM: RESIDENTIAL INTERNSHIP PROGRAMME

This week, we begin a new series highlighting the contributions and experiences of our student interns through the Academy's Internship Programme. Designed for DP 1 students, the programme provides opportunities to gain hands-on experience across different functions at the Academy while developing leadership skills and professional competencies. The internships encourage students to step beyond the classroom and take on meaningful responsibilities, helping them become more confident and workplace-ready. This valuable extracurricular experience contributes to their holistic development while also providing meaningful experiences that can strengthen their college applications.

Our first spotlight is on the **Residential Internship Programme**, where students work closely with the Student Life Department to support the day-to-day residential experience. Residential Interns help foster an inclusive and engaging environment while supporting events and activities such as cultural celebrations, Community Café, tuckshop, social nights and other community-building initiatives. Students develop skills in communication, teamwork, leadership, event coordination, problem-solving and residential operations. Having successfully completed their tenure, this cohort is now ready to hand over the baton to the next group of interns.



MISSION IN ACTION!

Grade 5A students explored the Academy's Mission Statement through a thoughtful reflection engagement designed to deepen their understanding of our values. They identified words and

phrases that resonated with them, reflected on the qualities they hope to develop as learners and leaders and discussed what these values look like in their everyday lives at school. To bring their learning to life, students created logos and visual representations that captured the essence of the mission using meaningful symbols, colours and imagery. This activity encouraged them to think critically about how they can become reflective, compassionate, adventurous and creative individuals who contribute positively to their community. It was a wonderful opportunity for students to connect the Academy's vision with their own aspirations and recognise that living the mission begins with the choices they make each day.



THE ART OF PORTRAIT DRAWING

Grade 10 Visual Arts students explored portrait drawing using charcoal, experimenting with light, shadow, texture and tone. Through close observation, they developed their understanding of facial proportions, depth and emotion while refining their blending and mark-making techniques. Beyond creating accurate portraits, students challenged themselves to capture the unique character and personality of their subjects. As they exchanged ideas, offered constructive feedback and learned

from one another, the classroom became an inspiring space for imagination, creativity and artistic growth.



LEARNING NUMBERS THROUGH PLAY

This week, Grade 2 students explored mathematical concepts through play-based learning, making their learning experiences engaging, hands-on and meaningful. The focus this week was on place value, counting, and number patterns. Using base-ten blocks, place value mats and number cards, students represented and built numbers in a variety of ways, strengthening their understanding of number concepts. They also enjoyed practising skip-counting through interactive games and hopscotch activities, fostering confidence, collaboration and a deeper understanding of mathematical patterns in a fun and active learning environment. This approach reflects the philosophy of the IB Primary Years Programme, which recognises play, inquiry and active exploration as powerful ways for children to construct understanding. Rather than simply learning mathematical procedures, students are encouraged to make connections, test ideas and develop confidence as independent and curious learners.



AFTER-SCHOOL SPORTS FOR DAY STUDENTS

Our Senior School Day students are making the most of their evenings by staying back on campus to participate in after-school sports alongside their residential peers. With around 124 day scholars currently taking part, the programme provides an opportunity for students to stay active, build friendships and enjoy the benefits of regular physical activity beyond the classroom. Students take part in a range of sports, including football, cricket, mountain biking, swimming, volleyball, tennis and basketball. Grades 6-8 participate on Mondays and Thursdays, while Grades 9-12 participate on Tuesdays and Fridays. The initiative has been introduced to give day students greater access to the Academy's sporting facilities and programmes, while promoting fitness, teamwork, discipline and overall well-being. It also strengthens the sense of community by bringing day and residential students together through shared sporting experiences.



MYP 3 SCIENCE FIELD VISIT: SOLAR PARK

As part of their MYP 3 Science unit on Energy, students visited the Academy's Solar Park to explore first-hand how radiant energy from the Sun is transformed into electrical energy through photovoltaic solar panels. They examined key components of the system, including solar panels, inverters and monitoring equipment, and learned how renewable energy is being used to power the Academy. The visit provided a valuable real-world context for their classroom learning, helping students develop a deeper understanding of energy transformation, the advantages of renewable energy over fossil fuels, and the importance of energy conservation in reducing our environmental impact.

The learning is particularly relevant as the Academy continues to strengthen its own commitment to sustainability through a major 1-megawatt solar power project. Solar panels are being installed across school rooftops, an open-ground site, the swimming pool roof and the amphitheatre, using advanced bifacial Mono PERC photovoltaic technology. Once fully operational, the system is expected to offset approximately 80% of the Academy's operational electricity load and reduce greenhouse-gas emissions by an estimated 1,410 metric tonnes each year. The project is part of the wider Aga Khan Development Network's commitment to achieving net-zero carbon emissions by 2030. For our students, it offers a powerful example of how the scientific concepts they study in the classroom connect directly with the choices institutions and communities can make to build a more sustainable future.



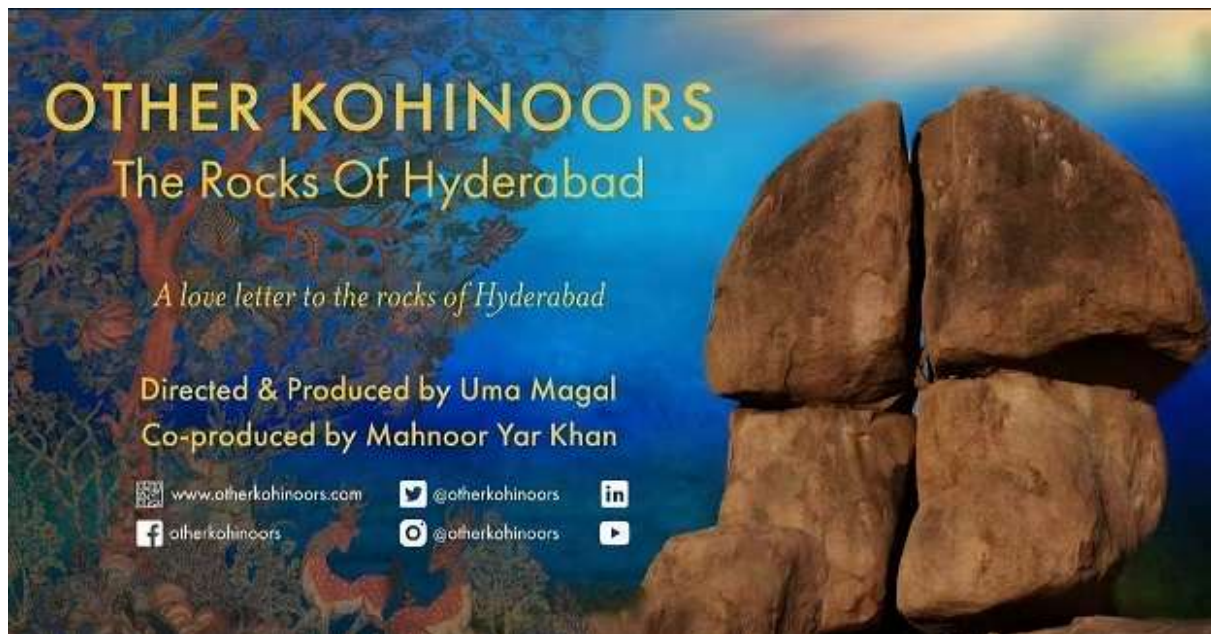
DP 1 RETREAT

DP 1 students set off on a two-day retreat to Hidden Castle on Thursday, accompanied by their DP teachers. The retreat has become an annual tradition at the beginning of the academic year. It is designed to help students better understand and prepare for meeting the high standards and expectations that apply to the two-year programme in grades 11 and 12. The retreat provided an immersive, off-campus experience that includes an in-depth academic orientation, fundamental learning opportunities about academic studies in Grades 11 and 12, familiarisation activities and team building, and outdoor education components. The retreat is led by Mr Christian (Senior School Principal) and a team of Senior School teachers. More highlights and reflections from their trip will be shared in the next edition of the newsletter.



WELCOMING AASHNA BACK TO THE ACADEMY

It was a pleasure to welcome Aashna Lakhani, Class of 2023, back to the Academy on Thursday. Aashna has just completed her third year at McGill University, where she is studying Anatomy and Cell Biology. She hopes to pursue medicine or postgraduate study in experimental medicine and medical technology. Alongside her academic work, she is involved in student organisations and research at the McGill University Health Centre, with publications underway. She also contributes to SWAM, a community programme through which she teaches swimming to children with autism. Having spent twelve years at the Academy, Aashna spoke warmly about how its values of pluralism, community and lifelong learning continue to shape her outlook. Her long-term ambition is to help make healthcare in India more accessible – particularly for underserved communities and people with disabilities through the thoughtful use of technology and more inclusive models of care. It was lovely to welcome Aashna home and to see her carrying the values of the Academy into the next stage of her life with such purpose, compassion and intellectual curiosity.



OTHER KOHINOORS: A REFLECTION ON HYDERABAD'S ANCIENT ROCKS

Last Saturday, Senior School parents were able to watch a special screening of Other Kohinoors: Rocks of Hyderabad, a 2022 documentary film by Uma Magal that celebrates Hyderabad's ancient granite rock formations and highlights the need to protect them. Formed more than 2.5 billion years ago, these remarkable landscapes are older than the Himalayas and are home to unique ecosystems, native flora and fauna, as well as deep cultural traditions. The screening was followed by an enriching discussion with biotechnology expert Dr Leela and urban designer Professor Aasia, which explored the value of preserving Hyderabad's distinctive natural heritage and helping younger generations understand what is at risk of being lost. Several parents suggested that Other Kohinoors would also provide a valuable learning experience for our students.



NEW STAFF SPOTLIGHT!

Mr Irie Ange Cyrille

This week, we continue our staff spotlight series with the introduction of Mr Irie Ange Cyrille, better known as Mr Cyrille, our new French Facilitator and Head of the Foreign Languages Department. Originally from Côte d'Ivoire, West Africa, Mr. Cyrille brings 16 years of experience teaching French across CBSE, Cambridge IGCSE, IB MYP and IB Diploma programmes in international schools in Hyderabad. He has served as Head of the Foreign Languages Department for nine years and has been an IB Examiner for French B since 2015. Mr Cyrille holds a bachelor's degree in French, a master's degree in psychology and recently earned the DALF C2, the highest level of French language proficiency. As a certified mind education specialist, he hopes to draw on his experience in language education and psychology to nurture students' confidence, resilience and well-being alongside their linguistic skills. We warmly welcome Mr Cyrille to the Academy community!

**Ms Swetha Emandi**

Our second staff spotlight this week introduces Ms Swetha Emandi, who has joined the Junior School as a Grade 2 co-teacher. With over 12 years of teaching experience across various curricula, Ms Emandi is passionate about creating inclusive, inquiry-driven learning experiences. She holds degrees in Bachelor of Education, Master of Computer Applications and Postgraduate Diploma in Special Educational Needs. She is also a certified mentor in the International Baccalaureate Educator Certificate Category 1. Ms Emandi believes in creating a caring environment where every child feels valued and empowered to grow. Drawing on her experience in differentiated learning, she looks forward to nurturing curiosity, empathy and respect while helping students become confident, compassionate and globally minded learners.

“The students at this institution will be distinguished not only for their academic capacity, but for their character and their commitment to citizenship.”

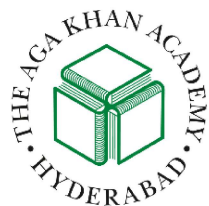
His Late Highness Aga Khan IV

Groundbreaking of the International Academic Centre of Excellence, Tanzania, 17 March 2005



THE AGA KHAN ACADEMY

HYDERABAD



from the desk of the
Head of Academy

14 August 2026



Dear Parents,

One of the humbling things about being a parent is that children quickly become experts on your shortcomings. My daughters could immediately tell when I wasn't really paying attention to what they were saying. I might have been looking in their direction, nodding appropriately and occasionally offering an encouraging "Yes" or "I see," but they knew perfectly well when my mind was elsewhere!

They taught me an important lesson. Children don't simply need us to be in the same room. They need to feel that they have our full attention. Looking back, I suspect that some of the conversations that seemed fairly ordinary to me mattered much more to them. To be listened to is also to feel valued.

Over the years, I've often asked myself, "What do children need to flourish?" When we think about that question, we usually come up with answers such as a good education, enriching experiences and encouragement to aim high. All of these matter. Yet one of the greatest influences on a young person's development is something much more ordinary: the quality of their everyday interactions with the adults around them.

Children are continually learning from these encounters. They notice whether we are really listening, whether we remain calm when they make a mistake, whether our affection depends upon their success and whether they can turn to us when life becomes difficult. Over time, these experiences don't only shape how children see the adults in their lives, but also how they understand themselves.

The renowned psychiatrist and author Dr Dan Siegel and the psychotherapist Dr Tina Payne Bryson have described four essential experiences that children need from the adults around them: feeling seen, safe, soothed and secure. These four words offer a simple but powerful framework for parenting and education.

To be **seen** is to feel that someone is genuinely interested in who you are, not simply in your behaviour or achievements. A child may appear uncooperative when they are anxious, or angry when they are disappointed in themselves. Dr Siegel and Dr Bryson tell us that really "seeing a child" means looking beyond the immediate behaviour and becoming curious about what may lie beneath it. This does not mean excusing poor choices. It means responding with understanding as well as appropriate expectations.

Children also need to feel **safe**. Physical safety is crucial, but emotional safety matters too. A child needs to know, for instance, that mistakes will not lead to humiliation. When children feel emotionally safe, they are more willing to take intellectual risks and attempt something at which they may initially fail. Enabling children to feel safe does not mean removing challenge or discomfort. It means giving them the confidence to embrace challenge and, sometimes, to endure discomfort.

To be **soothed** means having someone who helps us manage feelings that are temporarily too

difficult to manage alone. Children are not born knowing how to respond calmly to disappointment or frustration. They need to learn how to do so, partly through the experience of having a calm and reliable adult alongside them. Sometimes this involves offering advice, but often it begins simply with listening, acknowledging the feeling and resisting the temptation to solve the problem immediately. Over time, children internalise this calm support and become better able to regulate their own emotions.

When children are repeatedly seen, safe and soothed, they begin to feel **secure**. They develop an inner confidence that they are valued, that support is available when needed and that difficulties can be overcome. This security does not make children overly dependent. On the contrary, it provides the foundation from which they can become more independent and resilient.

None of this requires us to be perfect. As parents and teachers, we sometimes misread situations or say the wrong thing. What matters is the overall pattern of the relationship and our willingness to repair things when an interaction has gone badly.

The most important message in the work of Dr Siegel and Dr Bryson is that children are shaped through relationships. The conversations in the car, our response to a disappointing result, the moment we pause to listen and the way we react when something has gone wrong may seem small at the time. But over the years, these experiences can gradually help children develop the emotional strength they will need to flourish.

Best wishes,

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

Dr Jonathan Long

THIS WEEK'S NEWS



MESSAGE FROM THE JUNIOR SCHOOL PRINCIPAL MS ARCHNA GERA

As a reflective school committed to continuous growth and improvement, we greatly value and welcome ongoing feedback from our parent community. During the Culture Circle event a couple of weeks ago, several parents shared valuable suggestions, some of which have already been put into action. Here is a summary:

- **Changing rooms:** We are building new stalls and repurposing some cabins to provide students with private spaces to change into or out of their physical exercise kits.
- **Protein-rich breakfast options:** The Academy's kitchen has introduced new protein-rich options to students' meals. This week, students were served ragi pancakes and *chillas*.
- **Early bus snack:** We have explored the option of serving an early snack, which has proved to be more logistically challenging than anticipated. As an interim solution, we will begin serving lemonade at the end of the day, making the bus snack more filling and hydrating. To minimise waste and litter from paper cups, students are requested to bring their own cups for the lemonade.
- **Bus timings/buses:** During our Senior Leadership meetings, parent feedback was discussed and possible solutions are being explored. However, the school timings will remain unchanged due to the Senior School schedule.
- **Washroom hygiene:** All necessary repairs in the student washrooms have been completed and the housekeeping team has increased the frequency of cleaning. Chemical-free air fresheners have also been procured. The introduction of changing rooms will further help reduce pressure on the washrooms, particularly at the end of the school day.
- **Seesaw and homework:** We addressed several parent questions regarding the functionality of our digital learning platform and homework procedures. Please continue to check parent

announcements on Seesaw and reach out to your child's teachers if you have any questions or require further clarification.

We look forward to seeing you all at the Goal-Setting Conferences next Friday. During the conference, students will share their academic and personal goals for the year, along with ways in which you can support them in achieving these goals.

Appointment booking details for the conferences are being shared through the weekly announcements on Seesaw.



CONGRATULATING STUDENTS FOR ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE!

The Academy is proud to celebrate this year's MYP and Diploma Programme examination results, which reflect both the commitment of our students and the dedication of the teachers who have supported them.

In the MYP eAssessments, our highest-performing student achieved an exceptional 53 out of 56 points. Among students awarded the MYP Certificate, the average score was 43 points, well above the global average of 36.4, with nine students achieving 50 points or more. The Academy's average exceeded the corresponding global average in 13 of the 17 subject groups. Particularly noteworthy was the performance in the Personal Project, where our students achieved an average of 5.93, compared with the global average of 3.99.

Our Diploma Programme students also achieved some impressive outcomes. The highest score was 43 points, with seven students achieving 40 points or more and nine achieving at least 38 points. Sixteen students earned the Bilingual Diploma, reflecting the international and multilingual character of our community. Among students awarded the Diploma, the average score was 32.31,

compared with a global average of 30.88. Encouragingly, the Academy's three highest average Diploma scores of the past decade have all been recorded in the last three years, reflecting a sustained upward trend in student performance.

As important as these results are, they represent only one part of our students' wider educational journey. Our graduates are now preparing for the next chapter of their lives, with university destinations spanning the United Kingdom, United States, Canada, Australia, Singapore, Hong Kong, Europe, China and the UAE. Their destinations include 14 universities ranked among the QS World Top 100, including Imperial College London, University College London, Nanyang Technological University, the University of Melbourne, McGill University, the University of Toronto, King's College London, and the University of Edinburgh.

We congratulate all our students on their achievements and wish our graduates every success as they take the experiences and learning of their time at the Academy into the wider world.



INTRODUCING OUR JUNIOR SCHOOL STUDENT COUNCIL 2026-2027

We are delighted to announce that the Junior School Student Council for the academic year 2026-2027 has been elected. Through this meaningful process, students demonstrated agency, leadership, communication and principled decision-making. Our student leaders will be empowered to represent the voices, ideas and concerns of their peers, work collaboratively, and take meaningful action to contribute positively to our school community. As ethical leaders, they will be encouraged

to lead with integrity, empathy, fairness and respect, ensuring that every student feels heard, valued and included. Aligned with the Aga Khan Strand of Stewardship, the Student Council will play an active role in fostering a positive, respectful and safe school environment. Through listening, dialogue and collaboration, our young leaders will work towards understanding and addressing challenges faced by students and finding constructive solutions to their concerns. We look forward to seeing them grow as caring, reflective, knowledgeable, and principled leaders, taking ownership of their responsibilities and making a meaningful difference in our school community.



BEYOND BOUNDARIES: THE DP 1 RETREAT

Last weekend our DP 1 students returned from their retreat at The Hidden Castle, a castle-themed resort on the outskirts of Hyderabad. This immersive off-campus experience combined academic orientation with physically challenging outdoor activities. Through focused sessions on academic communication, research skills, reflection and effective learning strategies, students developed a deeper understanding of the Diploma Programme and the skills needed to navigate its demands successfully. The retreat also provided opportunities to develop key IB Learner Profile attributes and Approaches to Learning skills, including self-management, effective communication, critical thinking

and persistent inquisitiveness. Students learned to set goals, work collaboratively, manage challenges and take greater ownership of their learning. Following two days of intensive academic sessions, students and their advisors embarked on a trek through scenic hills and villages. Besides the beyond-classroom learning, the experience also fostered camaraderie, trust, teamwork and mutual support as they navigated the terrain together.



CRAFTING CREATIVITY: THE POTTERY EXPERIENCE

This week, MYP and DP students explored the art of pottery through an engaging workshop that introduced them to the tactile experience of working with clay and creating functional and artistic forms. Students experimented with textures, techniques and shapes while learning the basic skills involved in pottery and three-dimensional art. Working with clay encouraged students to learn through experimentation, while also developing fine motor skills, hand-eye coordination and spatial awareness. The process strengthened their technical and artistic abilities, allowing them to build on their individual talents and express ideas through 3D artworks. The experience supported the development of IB Learner Profile attributes and Approaches to Learning skills, while nurturing curiosity, confidence and an appreciation for the creative process.



GRADE 3 EXPLORES HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

As part of their unit of inquiry on “Health and Well-being”, Grade 3 students had the opportunity to learn from three inspiring guest speakers who brought their learning to life through engaging and interactive sessions. Their first guest Dr Swetha, a radiologist, helped students understand the importance of caring for their bodies and the different systems that support our health. Mr Subhakar, entrepreneur, and health and fitness advocate, highlighted the importance of physical fitness, sports and exercise, while encouraging students to make mindful and healthy food choices. Sirailiu, a dietician and nutritionist, introduced students to the importance of a balanced and nutritious diet. Through meaningful discussions and thoughtful questions, students made connections between classroom learning and their everyday lives. They demonstrated the IB Learner Profile attributes of being inquirers, knowledgeable and reflective, as they explored how their choices and habits can

contribute to lifelong health and well-being. A heartfelt gratitude to our wonderful guest speakers for sharing their expertise and inspiring our Grade 3 learners to make informed choices and take greater ownership of their well-being.



SERVICE AND ACTION: ENERGY CONSERVATION

Recently, MYP 3 Integrated Science students undertook a Service and Action initiative focused on energy conservation. As part of their project, students researched the importance of conserving energy, the environmental impact of excessive energy consumption, and practical ways to reduce energy use. They then presented their findings to the whole school, raising awareness about responsible energy consumption. Students highlighted simple actions such as switching off lights and appliances when not in use, using energy-efficient devices, reducing unnecessary electricity consumption and promoting renewable energy sources. This initiative enabled students to use their scientific understanding to encourage the school community to adopt more sustainable energy practices to help build an environmentally friendly community.



UNDERSTANDING OUR EMOTIONS

This week, Grade 4 students attended a workshop on self-awareness and emotions, led by our student counsellor Ms Shagun. Through discussions, activities and a reading from Adar Ohri's *Your Mind, Your Superpower*, students explored how emotions shape their choices and actions. Students reflected on emotions they experience in different situations and learned how recognising their feelings can help them pause, make thoughtful choices and respond rather than react. They also practised simple mindfulness strategies to notice their thoughts and bodily responses. The session encouraged students to see self-awareness as a valuable tool for well-being and to understand how they can train and use their minds as a superpower to support themselves and others.

THIS WEEK'S SPOTLIGHTS



CELEBRATING SUCCESS THROUGH YOGA

The Academy has long recognised the importance of physical and mental well-being in supporting the holistic development of our students. Through sport, fitness and a wide range of physical activities, students are encouraged to develop healthy habits, resilience and a balanced approach to life. Our students often provide the best examples of these qualities in action. One such example is Grade 4 student Swetcha, who achieved an impressive second place in the Backbending Yogasana category and fourth place in Traditional Yogasana at the 20th Inter-School Yogasana Sports Championship 2026, held on 7 August. Yoga develops far more than physical strength, flexibility, balance and coordination. It also calls for concentration, discipline, mindfulness and perseverance – qualities that are valuable well beyond the practice itself. Swetcha's achievement is a wonderful example of how commitment and consistent practice can build both confidence and excellence.



NEW STAFF SPOTLIGHT

In this week's new staff spotlight, we introduce **Mr Kapil Salunkhe**, who has joined the Academy as a Theatre and Arts teacher. With more than 12 years of teaching and theatre experience, including work across the PYP, MYP and Diploma Programme, Kapil brings considerable expertise, creativity and enthusiasm to his new role.

Kapil holds a postgraduate diploma in Theatre and Acting from the Shri Ram Centre for Performing Arts and is currently pursuing a Master of Education in Leadership and Management at Christ University. Over the course of his career, he has directed and produced a wide range of performances, from major productions such as Lord of the Flies and 12 Angry Men to street theatre addressing social and contemporary issues.

Kapil was drawn to the Academy by its holistic approach to education, commitment to student-centred learning and celebration of diversity. Through drama and theatre, he hopes to create a safe and supportive space in which students can explore their creativity, build confidence, develop empathy and strengthen their ability to communicate and collaborate.

Kapil looks forward to directing purposeful productions, developing interdisciplinary learning experiences and encouraging students to play an active part in the creative life of the school. Above all, he is passionate about helping young people find their voice, express themselves with confidence and learn to appreciate perspectives different from their own.



We also warmly welcome **Ms Juhi Ramnani**, who has joined the Junior School as a co-teacher in Grade 4. Juhi holds a master's degree in applied psychology from St. Francis College for Women, Hyderabad, following an undergraduate degree combining Psychology, English Literature and Journalism.

Before joining the Academy, Juhi worked as a remedial educator and behaviour therapist, including two years with Total Solutions Rehabilitation Society. In these roles, she supported children with a wide range of learning and developmental needs through individualised interventions designed to strengthen literacy, numeracy, comprehension, attention and executive functioning. She also worked closely with families, developing individualised education plans and helping to ensure continuity between the support children received and their experiences at home.

This experience has given Juhi a particularly strong appreciation of the importance of understanding each child as an individual. She is passionate about creating inclusive, student-centred environments in which children feel secure, understood and able to develop both academically and emotionally. Her experience in areas such as emotional regulation, social skills and individualised learning support will bring an additional dimension to her work within the Grade 4 team.

Juhi was drawn to the Academy by its commitment to holistic education, inclusion and the development of responsible, confident young people. She looks forward to contributing to a positive and nurturing classroom environment in which every student feels respected, supported and encouraged to reach their potential.



VISITORS TO THE ACADEMY

This week, we were delighted to welcome Fatema and Nageeb Sumar to the Academy during their visit to Hyderabad.

Fatema is Executive Director of the Harvard Center for International Development and an Adjunct Lecturer in Public Policy at Harvard Kennedy School. Her career has included senior roles in international development and US public service, and she is the author of *The Development Diplomat*, which draws on her experience to explore the intersection of diplomacy, public policy and international development, and the importance of building partnerships to address complex global challenges. We are also very grateful to Fatema for donating a copy of the book to our Senior School Library, where we hope it will inspire further reflection and discussion among our students.

Nageeb is Chair of the Aga Khan Foundation USA National Committee and President of the Liberty Mutual Foundation, bringing more than two decades of experience in philanthropy, social impact and global development.

Their visit provided a valuable opportunity to share something of life and learning at the Academy and to exchange perspectives on international development, philanthropy and the importance of preparing young people not simply for future success, but to contribute meaningfully to their communities and to the wider world.

We are very grateful to Fatema and Nageeb for spending time with us and for their warm interest in the work and aspirations of the Academy.

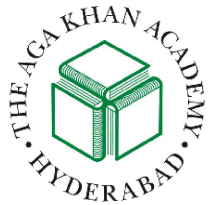
“The students at this institution will be distinguished not only for their academic capacity, but for their character and their commitment to citizenship.”

His Late Highness Aga Khan IV

Groundbreaking of the International Academic Centre of Excellence, Tanzania, 17 March 2005



THE AGA KHAN ACADEMY
HYDERABAD



from the desk of the
Head of Academy

21 August 2026



MCs at today's Model United Nations opening ceremony, Riya Medi and Srihan Dittakavi, led an enthusiastic start to this special 3-day event"

Dear Parents,

“Ladies and gentlemen, welcome aboard. This is your captain speaking. We may experience some turbulence during the flight, so please remain seated and fasten your seatbelts.” I have always found announcements like this reassuring when I fly. A warning that there may be a few bumps along the way makes them much less unsettling when they arrive!

Having worked in residential schools for almost 40 years, I have noticed that certain themes tend to emerge about four or five weeks into a term. The novelty of the new school year has worn off, routines are established, and the realities of living and learning together are beginning to surface.

Here are a few of the issues that can create a little “turbulence” for students - and sometimes for parents too. Although they may cause concern, they are also a normal part of life in a busy and thriving school community.

Food is one of the most common topics of conversation in any residential school. It is central to our lives, our cultures and our daily routines. With students joining us from across India and around the world, satisfying everyone’s individual tastes and preferences is simply impossible.

Preparing food for a large community is very different from cooking at home. Sodexo, one of the world’s leading providers of catering and facilities management, provides our catering services. We have a committed catering team, and students are involved in reviewing menus and suggesting improvements. The team works hard to provide nutritious, balanced meals. Nevertheless, the menu will not suit every student every day - and learning to accept this is itself part of communal living.

Rules can sometimes feel restrictive, particularly to young people beginning to seek greater independence. Rules designed for a large community also leave less room for individual flexibility than may be possible within a family home.

Sooner or later, almost every student will feel frustrated by a particular rule, or by the way in which it has, or has not, been enforced. Some students could manage successfully with very few rules; others need a clearer framework and firmer boundaries. A school must create expectations that are fair, understandable and workable for everyone.

One benefit of living and learning in a community like ours is that young people gradually learn that personal freedom comes with responsibility. Sometimes we must place reasonable limits on our own preferences for the wellbeing of others. This is an important life lesson and an essential part of becoming a responsible member of any community.

Too little free time: Like all good schools, the Academy provides structure. During a typical weekday, relatively little student time is entirely unscheduled. This is true in both the Junior and Senior Schools.

For students who are fully engaged and making the most of the opportunities available to them, life

at the Academy can feel very busy. Our students learn to work hard, participate enthusiastically and contribute to the wider life of the school. Many of the issues around free time come down to poor choices, bad time management or not enough sleep – all of which can be solved with a little help from parents or staff.

Not enough to do: Curiously, complaints about having too little free time can coexist with the classic teenage complaint that there is “nothing to do.” In reality, there are nearly always opportunities available, although some days will naturally be more exciting than others. Much depends on a student’s willingness to try something new, attend an event or join an activity even when close friends are not interested in doing the same.

We believe in maintaining a sensible balance between organised activities and unstructured time. In a world in which children can lose their childhood all too quickly, we value experiences that are easily overlooked amid constant internet access and the intrusion of social media: opportunities to walk rather than rush, time to become bored and use the imagination, time to talk with friends, meaningful hobbies and sports, fresh air, and some freedom from the relentless pace of modern urban life.

“Nothing to do” can occasionally be a valuable experience. It gives children the opportunity to discover new interests and learn to enjoy their own company.

Roommates: Despite our best efforts to make sensible arrangements in the student residences, roommates will sometimes struggle to get along. When this happens, it is worth remembering that growing up at the Academy involves making a genuine effort before giving up. Sharing a room requires patience, compromise, honest communication and consideration for someone whose habits and preferences may be very different from one’s own.

Children also occasionally fall out with one another. This is perfectly normal, and most disagreements are temporary - much like the quarrels that occur between siblings at home. Our role is not always to remove the difficulty immediately, but to help students develop the skills and confidence to resolve it constructively.

The residential programme is as much a part of an Academy education as anything that happens in the classroom. The lessons learned through living with others can be challenging, but they can also be transformative. We therefore ask for patience when residential issues occasionally bubble to the surface.

Lost and missing belongings: In every school, belongings will sometimes be misplaced, borrowed without permission or, in some cases, taken. Because items are often lost rather than stolen, it is important not to jump to conclusions. The first step should always be to check carefully and establish whether an item is genuinely missing.

We strongly encourage students not to bring unnecessary valuables to school. The Academy is not a place for displays of wealth, and expensive gadgets, clothing and accessories can easily become a source of comparison or distraction. Simplicity helps young people focus on relationships, experiences and the many pleasures that do not depend upon possessions.

If any of these themes arise in a conversation with your child, the most helpful first response is usually to listen carefully and calmly. Children need to know that their concerns have been heard and taken seriously. Once reassured, they can often return to the situation with a clearer perspective and work out what they need to do next.

There will, of course, be times when parents and the Academy need to work together more directly, particularly when a concern is persistent or affects a child's wellbeing. Most children can cope remarkably well with the ordinary bumps of school life when they know that they are loved, supported and trusted. A little turbulence does not mean that the journey is going wrong. Very often, it is simply part of the normal journey of growing up.

Best wishes,

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

Dr Jonathan Long

Onam Ashamsakal! Wishing all our families celebrating next week a very happy and prosperous Onam. May the festival bring joy, peace and togetherness to your homes.

THIS WEEK'S NEWS



CELEBRATING INDEPENDENCE DAY

On 15 August, students and staff gathered in the Amphitheatre to celebrate India's Independence Day. The National Anthem brought the community together in a shared expression of respect and belonging. Dance and musical performances added energy and colour to the occasion.

The programme also invited us to reflect on the responsibilities that accompany freedom. India's remarkable diversity gives Independence Day particular meaning at the Academy. Our commitment to pluralism calls us to value different identities and perspectives. It also asks us to build unity through mutual respect.

A community breakfast brought the morning to a warm close. It gave students and staff time to enjoy the occasion together.





AKA HYDERABAD MUN 2026 OPENS

The Academy welcomed students from across Hyderabad for the opening of this year's Model United Nations conference. Over three days, delegates will represent countries from around the world as they engage in debate and negotiation. They will also experience the patient work of diplomacy.

The ceremony began with the traditional lighting of the lamp. Dr Long welcomed the participating schools and explored the different meanings of the word "model". He encouraged delegates to see MUN as a smaller representation of the United Nations. He also invited them to model thoughtful leadership and to show up as their best selves.

DP 1 student Rabil provided a reflective musical interlude with a piano performance. The organising committee and committee delegates were then introduced before the Director General formally declared MUN 2026 open.

Through research and debate, students will test their ideas and listen to perspectives different from

their own. In doing so, they will develop the global outlook and intellectual openness that lie at the heart of an Academy education.



PUTTING THE AGA KHAN CURRICULAR STRANDS INTO PRACTICE

Grade 4 students have been exploring the Aga Khan Curricular Strands through the imaginative medium of comic strips. The strands are a distinctive part of an Academy education and enrich the framework provided by the IB programmes.

Students considered Pluralism, Ethics and Culture. They also explored Economics for Development as well as Governance and Civil Society. They then transformed these complex ideas into characters and stories connected with daily life.

The activity required both creativity and careful thought. Students had to decide what each concept might look like in practice and explain it clearly to others. This helped them understand that the strands are more than subjects to study. They offer ways of thinking about our choices and our responsibilities within a community.



URBANISATION IN FOCUS: GRADE 9 EXPLORES SUSTAINABLE CITIES

Grade 9 students welcomed Mr Prasad for a guest session on the challenges and possibilities created by urbanisation. As a consultant to the Indian Green Building Council, he brought professional insight to questions affecting cities across India and beyond.

Students examined the pressures that urban growth places on resources and infrastructure. They also considered how development can protect human wellbeing and the natural environment. Mr Prasad demonstrated how data and intelligent analysis can reveal patterns and guide better decisions.

The session connected classroom learning with the complex choices faced by planners and communities. It also reflected an important Academy purpose. We want young people to use knowledge ethically and to improve the quality of life around them.



GRADE 5 EXPLORES LEADERSHIP AND DECISION MAKING

As part of their current unit of inquiry, Grade 5 students welcomed Junior School Principal Ms Archana and Head of Academy Dr Long. The students asked perceptive questions about leadership styles and the process of making difficult decisions.

The conversation explored the idea that leadership is not confined to a position or title. It begins with the choices people make and the responsibility they accept for those choices. The speakers also discussed how personal values can guide action when the right decision is not immediately clear.

This understanding of leadership is central to the Academy's vision. We seek to develop young people who listen carefully and act with integrity. We also want them to use their abilities in service of others.



GRADE 9 STUDENTS TAKE PART IN THE DOON SCHOOL MUN

Six Grade 9 students represented the Academy at the 19th Doon School Model United Nations conference. The delegation comprised Arunima, Aryan and Jaikrith. Vishrut, Adhrit and Hussein completed the group.

Accompanied by Senior School teachers, the students travelled to Dehradun for their first MUN experience outside Hyderabad. They debated alongside peers from schools across India and encountered new approaches to diplomacy and committee work. The unfamiliar setting required them to adapt quickly and contribute with confidence.

Three of the six delegates received Best Position Paper awards. These awards recognised the quality of their research and the clarity of their communication. They also reflected the care with which the students understood and presented the perspectives of the nations they represented.

We thank The Doon School for its warm welcome and thoughtful organisation. Experiences of this kind allow students to cross boundaries of place and perspective. They also develop the confidence needed to contribute responsibly in a diverse world.



BUILDING RESILIENCE THROUGH PRACTICE

Grade 4 students explored resilience with Ms Jenai Louise Sam, Pastoral Head for the Junior School. An interactive activity using an egg and a ball helped them examine how different objects respond to pressure.

The discussion challenged the idea that resilience is something a person either possesses or lacks. Students learned that it can grow through practice and reflection. It can also develop when we adapt our response to difficulty.

Students identified attitudes and strategies that could help them face future challenges. This focus on purposeful growth supports the Academy's commitment to developing the whole person. Academic learning matters deeply. So too does the ability to meet setbacks with courage and good judgment.



GRADE 8 EXPLORES THE ACADEMY WEATHER STATION

Grade 8 students visited the Facilities Building to learn how the Academy Weather Station gathers and records information. They examined the equipment used to measure temperature and rainfall. They also considered wind conditions and other weather patterns. The visit showed how accurate data can support decisions across the campus. It also provided a practical setting in which students could ask questions and interpret evidence. Our campus is more than the setting for learning. It can become part of the curriculum itself. By investigating the systems around them, students gain a deeper understanding of their environment and learn to become thoughtful stewards of it.

THIS WEEK'S SPOTLIGHTS



VIVAAN ACHIEVES STRONG NATIONAL GOLF RESULT

Grade 8 student Vivaan Pinnapureddy has achieved another strong result on the national golfing circuit. He competed in the IGU National Junior Boys Tournament at Chandigarh Golf Club despite strong winds and waterlogged conditions.

Vivaan recorded a score of 319 in the B Category for players aged 13 to 15. This was his best score in the category to date. His consistent performances have secured an All India national ranking for the third consecutive time.

Success at this level requires discipline and sustained concentration. Vivaan is also managing the demands of the MYP while travelling for tournaments. His example reflects an understanding of excellence that extends beyond a single field. It is built through commitment and the thoughtful use of one's abilities.

We congratulate Vivaan and wish him well in his forthcoming tournaments.



NEW STAFF SPOTLIGHT

Harshita Chauhan, PYP Visual Arts Teacher

Harshita Chauhan has joined the Junior School as a PYP Visual Arts Teacher. She brings experience in art education and studio practice as well as a background in visual design and concept art.

Harshita holds a Master of Fine Arts from the University of Hyderabad, where she graduated with distinction. She also holds a Bachelor of Fine Arts from the College of Art at the University of Delhi.

Her professional experience ranges from teaching drawing and sculpture to creating digital art and storyboards. She has worked with paint, clay and charcoal as well as printmaking. As a designer at IKONZ, she contributed to character design and visual storytelling. She also worked on branding and digital content.

Harshita's approach begins with the individual learner. She adapts the curriculum to each child's age and understanding while also taking temperament into account. She encourages students to experiment with varied materials and to develop confidence in their own creative choices.

Her interests in art history and culture will help students encounter artistic expression through different traditions and perspectives. Harshita was drawn to the Academy by its commitment to holistic learning and diversity. She hopes to create an inclusive studio where students feel able to take creative risks and discover their own voices.



Prashanth Samudrala, Telugu Teacher

Prashanth Samudrala has joined the Telugu Language Department with six years of experience in secondary education. He holds a Master of Arts in Sanskrit and a Bachelor of Arts in Telugu. He also completed his Bachelor of Education in 2021.

This combination of subject knowledge and professional preparation provides a strong foundation for teaching language and literature. Prashanth was drawn to the Academy by its commitment to holistic education and international mindedness.

In his classroom, he hopes to connect Telugu with students' cultures and daily experiences. He also wants learners to appreciate the depth and richness of its literature.

Language gives students access to memory and identity. It can also open a path into the

experiences of others. Prashanth's work will therefore contribute to the Academy's commitment to pluralism and cultural understanding. He looks forward to serving the wider community through collaboration and thoughtful teaching.

As the term progresses, these varied experiences reflect the breadth of learning taking place across the Academy. They also show a community in which knowledge, character and creativity are developed with equal care.

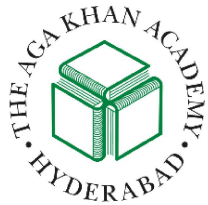
“The students at this institution will be distinguished not only for their academic capacity, but for their character and their commitment to citizenship.”

His Late Highness Aga Khan IV

Groundbreaking of the International Academic Centre of Excellence, Tanzania, 17 March 2005



THE AGA KHAN ACADEMY
HYDERABAD



from the desk of the
Head of Academy

28 August 2026



Dear Parents,

One of the most famous books taught in schools around the world is *Lord of the Flies*. In William Golding's story, a group of schoolboys become stranded on an empty island. Far from adults and civilisation, fear and conflict begin to take over. Golding's message is clear: beneath the surface, people are selfish and cruel.

It is a powerful story. But is it true?

In his book *Humankind: A Hopeful History*, the Dutch historian and author Rutger Bregman tells a remarkable true story that suggests a very different answer.

In 1965, six teenage boys from Tonga ran away from school. They took a small fishing boat and set sail. A storm damaged the boat and left them drifting across the Pacific Ocean. After more than a week at sea, they reached the uninhabited island of 'Ata. They would remain there for fifteen months.

What happened next was extraordinary.

The boys worked together. They shared jobs, built shelters, collected rainwater, grew food and kept a fire burning. They took turns cooking and keeping watch. When they argued, they gave one another time to calm down before talking things through. When one boy broke his leg, the others cared for him until he recovered.

Fifteen months later, they were rescued. They were healthy, strong and still friends.

The contrast with *Lord of the Flies* could hardly be greater.

Bregman is not saying that people are always kind, or that children always make good choices. His point is simpler: cooperation, kindness and responsibility are also natural parts of being human.

That raises an important question for parents and schools. What happens when we believe young people can be trusted?

If we assume that children will always make poor choices, we are likely to create more rules, more checks and more control. But if we believe that young people want to belong, contribute and do well, we are more likely to give them real responsibility and opportunities to lead.

This does not mean having no rules or expectations. Children need clear boundaries and high standards. But there is an important difference between expectations based on trust and expectations based on suspicion. When young people know that adults believe in them, they are often more willing to rise to the challenge.

Here at the Academy, we try to put this idea into practice. Through student leadership, residential life, teamwork, service and outdoor education, we want students to discover what they are capable of. We believe young people grow when they are trusted with

meaningful responsibility and supported by adults who care about them.

The story of the six boys also reminds us that resilience is rarely an individual achievement. They survived because they depended on one another. They brought different strengths, shared burdens and found purpose in working together. Their experience illustrates one of life's most enduring lessons: strong communities help individuals flourish.

Children grow when they feel valued. They gain confidence when they are trusted. They learn kindness when they experience kindness. And they become responsible when we give them real chances to contribute.

Education is about much more than grades and examinations. It is also about helping young people develop character and teaching them how to live and work well with others. The six boys on 'Ata didn't survive because they were resourceful, but because they chose cooperation over conflict, kindness over division and shared purpose over selfishness.

In a world where we often hear stories about division and mistrust, theirs is a hopeful reminder of what people can do when they care for one another. It is also a reminder of something that sits at the heart of good education: when we believe in the goodness and potential of young people, they often surprise us with what they can become.

Best wishes,

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

Dr Jonathan Long

THIS WEEK'S NEWS



SAFEGUARDING AT THE ACADEMY – A MESSAGE FROM DEAN OF STUDENTS MR KARL PESTONJI

Safeguarding is a shared responsibility and an essential part of creating a safe, supportive and caring community. Our Safeguarding Committee takes a proactive approach to student safety and wellbeing, working together to identify concerns early, strengthen our systems and ensure that students feel safe, heard and supported.

The committee brings together colleagues from across the Academy:

- Karl Pestonji, Dean of Students and Designated Safeguarding Lead
- Jeff Doerfler, Deputy Head of Academy and Head of Residential Life
- Jenai Sam, Pastoral Care Lead, Junior School
- Shagun Guha, School Counsellor

Together, the team works closely with staff, students and families to promote a culture where concerns can be raised openly, support is accessible, and every student knows there are trusted adults who will listen and help.



SENIOR SCHOOL ASSEMBLY

On Wednesday, the Senior School held an assembly celebrating the breadth of Academy life. Senior School Principal Mr Christian Schmelz welcomed students before introducing the Student Representative Council for the new academic year. The SRC is an important expression of student voice and leadership within our community.

Grade 10 students, Aazz Ramani and Alishah Alchiya recited poems in Hindi. Students also heard updates from the Safeguarding Team, along with announcements about sports, grade-level trips, and upcoming Telugu celebrations. The assembly included a polished piano performance of Beethoven's "Scherzo" by Grade 9 student Aryan Patel.

These occasions reflect the Academy's commitment to developing the whole person and His Late Highness Aga Khan IV's vision of an education grounded in leadership, service, cultural understanding and respect for others.



EXPLORING UNIVERSITY OPTIONS

Over July and August, our students connected with more than 45 universities from across the world through university fairs, individual presentations and school visits, exploring different countries, higher education systems and pathways.

Organised by the Academy's College Counselling Department, supervised by Ms Pragati Pandey, Head of College Counselling, these interactions encouraged students to look beyond familiar destinations, engage with different perspectives and keep their options open.

The sessions also reinforced an important message: meaningful learning matters more than simply building a list of achievements. Whether through research, internships, passion projects or other experiences, what matters is curiosity, genuine engagement and the questions students choose to explore.

As our students look towards the future, we hope they continue to stay curious, explore meaningfully and discover pathways that are right for them.



WHERE EVERY BOOK OPENS A NEW WORLD

We believe that reading is the foundation of all learning. More than an essential skill, it nurtures curiosity, imagination and a growing understanding of the world.

This week, thoughtfully designed reading corners were introduced in our Grade 1 classrooms, providing warm, inviting and comfortable spaces where children can spend

time with books. These corners encourage students to pause, browse and become absorbed in a story. Teachers also use the spaces to read alongside the children and model the pleasure of reading.

Every book offers something new. Through stories, children encounter memorable characters, discover unfamiliar places, explore challenges and imagine new possibilities. Each page invites them to think, question and grow. Reading is not simply about understanding words on a page; it helps children make sense of the world and deepen their understanding of themselves.



EXPLORING IDENTITY THROUGH ART

In their MYP 4 Art class, students explored identity through self-portraits. Using themselves as the starting point, they looked beyond physical appearance to consider the experiences, cultures and influences that have shaped who they are.

Each portrait was divided into two halves. One represented the student's personal identity,

while the other reflected their cultural identity. Students used symbols, traditions, places, objects, colours, beliefs and significant experiences to communicate what matters to them.

The project showed how art can give visual expression to ideas and experiences that are sometimes difficult to communicate in words. Each artwork offered a distinctive perspective while also celebrating the diversity of cultures and experiences within our community.

Through their artistic choices, students explored both who they are and where they come from. In doing so, they developed a deeper understanding of themselves and a greater appreciation of the stories and identities of others.



WEEKENDS IN MOTION

Weekend sports are an integral part of the Academy's residential programme, giving students opportunities to stay active, develop physical wellness and strengthen their motor skills while enjoying healthy competition and teamwork.

Last weekend, the U-17 Boys Basketball team competed in the Varsity Basketball qualifying matches, securing a 24-15 win against Delhi Public School before narrowly losing 20-22 to Rockwell School in their second match. Meanwhile, the U-14 Girls Football team played a practice match against United Football Academy as preparation for their upcoming inter-school tournament, securing an impressive 5-2 victory.

Beyond the results, these sporting experiences help students build confidence, coordination, resilience and teamwork, while making their weekends active, engaging and purposeful.



TELUGU BHASHA DINOTSAVAM AT THE JUNIOR SCHOOL

The Academy marked *Telugu Bhasha Dinotsavam*, or Telugu Language Day, with a programme celebrating the beauty of the language and its rich cultural heritage. Students presented a Telugu song, dance performances, a skit and a mono act, demonstrating confidence, creativity and strong communication skills.

A special presentation introduced students to Gidugu Venkata Ramamurthy Pantulu, a pioneering linguist who made a significant contribution to the development of modern Telugu. He advocated the use of simple, accessible language in education and literature, helping to ensure that Telugu could be understood and appreciated by everyone.

Beyond the performances, the celebration encouraged students to connect with their linguistic roots and deepen their appreciation for their mother tongue. It also reminded us that language is more than a means of communication. It carries the stories, traditions and memories that help shape our identities and connect us with our communities.

At the Academy, the development of mother tongue is integral to our educational vision. By encouraging students to develop proficiency in more than one language, we strengthen their sense of identity while fostering the cultural understanding and pluralistic outlook that are central to an Academy education.



EXPLORING ETHICS, GENDER AND REPRODUCTIVE JUSTICE

DP 1 English Language and Literature HL students participated in a thought-provoking session with Dr Sheela Suryanarayanan, Associate Professor at the Centre for Women's Studies at the University of Hyderabad. The discussion explored complex issues related to women's reproductive health, including surrogacy, sex selective abortion, maternal health and the emotional dimensions of reproductive choices.

Drawing on her extensive research into gender and reproductive health in South Asia, Dr Suryanarayanan introduced students to a range of philosophical and feminist perspectives. These included Amartya Sen's Capability Approach and John Rawls' ideas about justice. Students were encouraged to consider questions of cultural relativism, human agency, rights and the responsibilities of individuals and society.

Jointly organised by the *Telugu Language and Culture Department* and the *Theory of Knowledge Department*, the session gave students an opportunity to engage directly with the ethical, social and legal dimensions of reproductive choices. Their questions examined the implications of existing laws and the role of civil society, while Dr Sai Krishna Ranga, Head of the Telugu Department, helped facilitate the wider discussion on gender, agency and freedom.

The interaction extended classroom learning into a contemporary social context, encouraging students to approach complex and sensitive issues with curiosity, empathy and critical thought.

THIS WEEK'S SPOTLIGHTS



TANUSH SHINES IN HCA LEAGUE MATCH

Grade 9 student Tanush delivered an impressive all-round performance in the Hyderabad Cricket Association (HCA) official league matches, scoring a commendable 79 runs and taking 3 wickets for 15 runs in 4.5 overs.

His strong performance reflects his dedication, hard work and passion for cricket. The achievement was further celebrated when Tanush was featured in a Deccan Chronicle match report, with both his name and photograph appearing in the coverage.

Balancing competitive sport with academics requires commitment and discipline, and the Academy is proud to support students like Tanush as they pursue their sporting aspirations alongside their academic journeys.

Congratulations to Tanush on this excellent achievement. We wish him continued success on the cricket field and beyond!



CELEBRATING SPORTING EXCELLENCE

We are delighted to celebrate the achievement of Aarav V Atluru, who competed in the South Zone Golf Tournament held at the TNGF Cosmo Golf Club, Nandanam, Chennai. Aarav showcased exceptional skill, determination and sportsmanship, securing First Place in Category D (Ages 9-11). His achievement is a testament to his dedication, perseverance and passion for sport. We congratulate Aarav on this wonderful accomplishment and wish him continued success in his golfing journey!



COMING FULL CIRCLE: FROM STUDENT TO INTERN

Returning to the Academy feels like coming full circle. I am Sathwika Bhashyam, a member of the Graduating Class of 2022, and I spent eight formative years at the Academy. During that time, I learned, grew and developed into much of the person I am today. The Academy played an important role in shaping my values, interests and understanding of the world.

I am currently pursuing an MA in International Relations at the University of Westminster, where I have developed a growing interest in education policy, child development and public education. Returning to the Academy as an intern allows me to explore these interests firsthand while contributing to the Academy's wider vision and purpose. My work with the *Centre for Educational Research, Innovation and Training* is deepening my understanding of how educational research, ideas and policies can be translated into practice within schools and communities.

One area I hope to explore during my internship is strengthening the Academy's outreach work through a sustained partnership with government schools. I am developing the initial concept for a Model School Initiative, which begins with one government school and a careful assessment of the needs of its students and teachers. Possible pilot interventions could support children's education, physical and emotional wellbeing, social and cognitive development, teacher learning and the wider school environment.

We plan to test what works, understand its impact, and refine the approach before considering whether it could support other schools. Although the idea is still at an early

stage, it reflects my interest in developing practical, service-oriented responses to questions of educational access and child development.

It is deeply meaningful to return to the place where I grew up as an alumna. I am grateful for the opportunity to continue learning from the Academy while exploring how I might contribute to the community and its wider educational purposes.



LEADING LEARNING IN AN AI-ENABLED WORLD

On 24 August, the Academy welcomed *Faria Education Group* to host *Faria LEAD 2026*, bringing together school leaders, curriculum coordinators and educators for a day of professional learning, dialogue and collaboration focused on the transformative role of artificial intelligence in education.

Faria Education Group is a leading global provider of educational technology and services,

supporting more than 10,000 schools and four million students across 155 countries. Its platforms, including ManageBac, help schools manage curriculum, assessment, reporting, admissions and other aspects of school life.

Under the theme *Leading Curriculum and Learning in a World Shaped by AI*, the conference considered how artificial intelligence can personalise learning and support informed decision-making. Through keynote presentations, expert discussions and practical workshops, participants reflected on how technology can strengthen teaching and learning while preserving human relationships, professional judgement and sense of purpose at the heart of education.

Hosting an event of this significance reinforces the Academy's role as a centre for educational dialogue and professional learning. It also provides an important opportunity to bring educators from across the region together to exchange ideas, examine emerging practice and contribute collectively to conversations shaping the future of education.



LEARNING GROWING AND SUPPORTING OTHERS

Mrs Janaki Kuncham brings curiosity, dedication and a willingness to learn to every aspect of her work at the Academy. Alongside her responsibilities as a bus attendant, she has continued to develop new skills and now works confidently on the computer to help update student records.

Janaki also supports the Senior School stores, where she is attentive to the needs of

students and works closely with teachers and colleagues. Beyond her professional responsibilities, she is also an accomplished yoga practitioner.

Her journey reminds us that learning is not confined to the classroom. It takes place through everyday experiences, new responsibilities and the willingness to keep growing.

The AKDN mission of improving quality of life is reflected in creating opportunities for people to develop their capabilities, grow in confidence and contribute meaningfully to their communities. Through her commitment to learning and her support for others, Janaki embodies this spirit in her daily work.

“The students at this institution will be distinguished not only for their academic capacity, but for their character and their commitment to citizenship.”

His Late Highness Aga Khan IV

Groundbreaking of the International Academic Centre of Excellence, Tanzania, 17 March 2005

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THE AGA KHAN ACADEMY
HYDERABAD
