

from the desk of the
Head of Academy

16 January 2026



Dear Parents,

Greetings from the Academy, and warm wishes to you and your family for a very Happy New Year. May 2026 be a year of good health, happiness and purpose for us all.

I would also like to extend festive greetings to those of you celebrating Sankranti at the moment. At this time of year, harvest festivals are celebrated across India in wonderfully diverse ways: as Lohri in Punjab, Pongal in Tamil Nadu and Makar Sankranti in many other regions. While the names and customs vary, the shared spirit is one of thanksgiving. For our students, this offers a powerful example of pluralism: unity expressed through rich cultural diversity. It is also a moment that invites reflection on renewal and fresh beginnings - fitting themes as we step into a new calendar year together.

School resumes on **Monday, 19 January**, and we look forward to rediscovering the rhythm of school life after the Winter Break. We are also delighted to welcome our exchange students from Mombasa and Maputo, who bring fresh perspectives and add a further international dimension to our learning community.

This seems an appropriate moment to share one of my favourite stories:

Early one morning, a mother went in to wake up her son.

"Wake up son, it's time to go to school!"

"But why, Mum? I don't want to go."

"Oh, come on dear, give me two reasons why you don't want to go," replied the mother.

"Well, firstly, the children don't like me, and secondly, the teachers don't like me either!"

"That's no reason not to go to school," said the mother, "Come on, get out of bed and get dressed right away. Hurry up or you will be late!"

"But I really don't want to," said the son, "Can you give me two reasons why I should go to school?"

"Well, for one, you're 52 years old. And for another, you're the Principal!"

Fortunately, I have no difficulty waking up for school! I love what I do, and I remain deeply grateful for the remarkable community of students and staff I am privileged to live and work alongside each day. That said, the start of a new term can sometimes feel a little like coaxing an old motorcycle engine into life on a cold morning. Having owned a few Royal Enfield motorcycles over the years, I know that some engines need patience and a gentle hand before they find their rhythm.

The same is true for children. It can take time to settle back into routines and rebuild momentum after a break. In my experience, by the end of the second full week of term, most students are fully back in stride. So if your son or daughter seems slow to warm up in these first few days, please don't despair - this is entirely normal!

It can also be very helpful for us to hear from you if you have noticed anything during the Winter Break that might support your child's return to school. Some parents hesitate to share observations or concerns, worrying they might be seen as interfering. Please be assured that nothing could be further from the truth. Thoughtful communication between

home and school is one of the strongest foundations for student wellbeing and success.

Our regular Friday newsletters will resume next week. In the meantime, I wish you and your children a positive and energising start to the year, and a term filled with learning and growth!

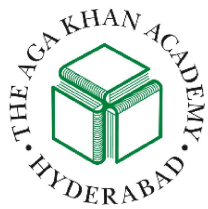
Best wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jonathan Long". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name and last name clearly distinguishable.

Dr Jonathan Long



THE AGA KHAN ACADEMY
HYDERABAD



from the desk of the
Head of Academy

23 January 2026



Dear Parents,

Greetings from the Academy at the end of the first week of a new term – and welcome back to these weekly newsletters! It's been wonderful to see the campus come alive again with the return of our students. There are many things that make this a uniquely special place - the atmosphere of happy purposefulness, the determination to succeed, to enjoy life, to enjoy each other's company and, most importantly, to discover that there is far more in each of us than we think!

With Republic Day celebrations taking place on Monday, school resumes next week on Tuesday, 27 January. This provides a relaxed start to Week 2 of what will be a busy term.

2026 in the Chinese calendar is the *Year of the Horse*. Culturally, Horse years are seen as dynamic and sometimes turbulent. These are times when systems shift and old structures struggle to hold. In traditional thinking, Horse energy can feel exhilarating but also unsettling. It brings momentum, but also instability. This is why Horse years are often interpreted as periods of transformation.

We often hear the modern world described as “VUCA”: *volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous*. This captures something deeply real about the times we are living in. The pace of change is relentless. Certainties feel fragile. Things that once seemed predictable now feel fluid. As Canadian Prime Minister, Mark Carney said in his speech at the *World Economic Forum* in Davos this week, “*We are in the midst of a rupture, not a transition.*” Even for adults, this can be unsettling. For young people, it can feel overwhelming.



2026 demands something deeper from education than content and credentials alone. It calls for young people who can think clearly in complex situations and act ethically when answers are not obvious. This is where the vision of His Late Highness Aga Khan IV continues to speak so

powerfully to our work as an Academy community. His understanding of education was never narrow. It was never simply about academic success or economic mobility. It was about the formation of the whole person. It was about nurturing intellect, character and purpose alongside each other. It was about an education that was not just about making a living, but about living a life.

As His Late Highness Aga Khan IV puts it:

In a world of rapid change, an agile and adaptable mind, a pragmatic and cooperative temperament, a strong ethical orientation - these are increasingly the keys to effective leadership. And I would add to this list a capacity for intellectual humility which keeps one's mind constantly open to a variety of viewpoints and which welcomes pluralistic exchange. (His Late Highness Aga Khan IV, Annual meeting of the International Baccalaureate, Atlanta, Georgia, USA, 18 April 2008)

We set out to develop young people who are secure enough in themselves to live with uncertainty, and anchored in values that hold firm when the world feels unstable. Young people whose self-awareness expresses itself as respect for others, whose convictions are held without intolerance, whose confidence is carried without arrogance, and whose success is lived without pride.

This is why education here is not transactional. It is formative. It is not just about what students know, but about who they are becoming. It is shaped as much by the quality of relationships here and the ethos as it is by the curriculum. It is developed in classrooms, in the residences, on playing fields, through service programmes, in friendships and in both conflict and failure.

As parents and educators, our shared task is not to insulate children from uncertainty, but to prepare them to meet it well. Our task is to give our children a reliable moral compass in an increasingly complex and uncertain world. That, for me, is the deeper purpose of an Academy education. And it is the enduring legacy of the vision that continues to guide us.

Best wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Jonathan Long". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name and last name clearly distinguishable.

Dr Jonathan Long

THIS WEEK'S NEWS



A MESSAGE FROM THE JUNIOR SCHOOL PRINCIPAL MS ARCHNA GERA

A very happy New Year to you all!

I hope you had a relaxing and fun-filled holiday season. Your children have been sharing exciting stories of travel and extraordinary experiences, which they clearly feel grateful to have had.

Monday morning was a grand welcome back for all children and staff. The Junior School invited a friendly clown and a juggler to help us feel even more excited about returning to school. We played

some fun music on our massive new Party Box and children spontaneously danced in groups during breakfast and morning break. The juggler performed tricks with his colourful equipment and even taught some to the children. What a fabulous first day back!

We are also excited to share that we now have new play equipment in our sand pit: two new pairs of swings and one seesaw. Students have been thoroughly enjoying these new additions during playtimes.

We would like to invite all parents to join us for a community run on 4 February from 8:30 to 9:30 am. This event was published as a part of our calendar, and the Invitations will be shared via ManageBac early next week.

Additionally, we are delighted to announce that the Junior School will be performing its very first Broadway production, *Peter Pan Jr.*, at 6:00 pm on 12 March. As we will be using a specialised vendor for costumes this year, we kindly request parents not to purchase costumes independently, as may have been done in previous years. All Junior School students will be participating in this musical, and all Junior School parents will be invited.

To allow for dedicated rehearsal time, we will be making some minor schedule adjustments. Starting next week, the morning meeting, DEAR time, and closing circle will be combined to create an extended lesson from 10:15 to 11:00 am. These changes will not impact arrival or dismissal times. Teachers will be discussing these changes with students in class today.

Another important upcoming event is the parent-teacher conferences on Saturday, 28 February. This round of conferences will be held online, and the booking schedule will be shared closer to the date.

We look forward to seeing some of you on the 4th!

Thank you in advance for your continued support and encouragement as we move into another semester with an enhanced Junior School.



BACK TO SCHOOL!

The Junior School arrived back this week in fine spirits. Friends reconnected with smiles and laughter, full of news about their winter break. The children were overjoyed to find new equipment in their playground and took every opportunity to jump on the bright new seesaws and swings. A surprise was in store at the roundabout, where clowns welcomed everyone back for the new term. Everybody is now fully in the swing of lessons and working hard to discover and learn new things. The classrooms are a hive of activity. We can't wait to see what amazing things happen in 2026!



CELEBRATING INQUIRY AND INNOVATION

The Personal Project is a significant body of work produced over an extended period in MYP 5. It is an opportunity for students to participate in a sustained, self-directed inquiry within a global context. It holds a special place in the Middle Years Programme (MYP) programme as it allows students to choose a topic which they are passionate about and demonstrate their subject-specific knowledge as well as approaches to learning skills. This week, Grade 10 students hosted their MYP Personal Project Exhibition 2026 to showcase their learning journey. Over the past few months, students have been busy transforming their ideas into meaningful outcomes. Each project reflected careful planning and genuine engagement, with students confidently articulating their learning. The exhibition showcased a wide range of ideas across multiple disciplines, highlighting real-world relevance. The senior school courtyard buzzed with excitement and positive energy, reflecting the extraordinary creativity of our students. Our student achievements stand as a testament to the dedicated guidance and support of their mentors and teachers.



FROM A SIMPLE CONVERSATION TO MEANINGFUL ACTION

A journey of service often begins with a simple thought and grows into meaningful action. In the Junior School, this spirit came alive when the traditional Secret Santa celebration was transformed into an opportunity to serve those in need. The idea was warmly embraced, and the entire

community came together with generosity and purpose.

Krushi Foundation, home to 105 boys from Grade 2 to college level, supports children through shelter, nutrition and education. Stationery items were thoughtfully chosen as donations and teachers lovingly prepared gift bags in the true spirit of the Joy of Giving. Junior School students added a special touch by creating handwritten cards, learning firsthand the value of empathy and kindness.

Teachers personally distributed the gifts at the foundation, where the children's joy, especially among the younger boys, was heart-warming. This meaningful initiative not only brought smiles but also marked the beginning of a lasting bond, reminding us that true happiness lies in gratitude, compassion and service. As the children showed us through their smiles: *"Choti choti baaton mein sachchi khushiyaan chhupi hoti hain."*



THE ADVENTURE OF CHINNARI

One of the clearest expressions of our values of service and ethical leadership is seen when young people choose to use their gifts in the service of others. This week, *Adventures of Chinnari*, a theatre project developed as part of an MYP Personal Project through a 10-day workshop with children at risk took place on campus. Adapted from a play by Dr Chandrashekhar Indla, the production was shaped collaboratively by the children themselves, whose voices and experiences were woven into the story. What made the project so powerful was not simply the performance itself, but the dignity it affirmed and the sense of belonging it created. The production was conceived and curated by Grade 10 student Zinya, who guided the process with humility and care. It was a living example of education that forms character and leadership that is rooted in responsibility to others.

THIS WEEK'S STAFF SPOTLIGHT



STORIES FROM THE PALANI HILLS

On 24 January, our Senior School English teacher Ms Priyadarshini will be hosting a workshop at the Hyderabad Literary Fest. Through images, sounds and stories from the Palani Hills, she will explore the region's rich ecological and cultural heritage, drawing on her ongoing research and children's storytelling. The session highlights how folklore and imagination can nurture a deeper awareness of conservation and encourage participants to form personal connections with their own landscapes. Part of the Climate Conversations stream curated by EkoGalaxy, the workshop reflects the festival's commitment to meaningful dialogue on climate, biodiversity and sustainability, bringing leading voices in environmental thought to a wider audience.

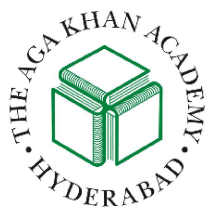
“The students at this institution will be distinguished not only for their academic capacity, but for their character and their commitment to citizenship.”

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

30 January 2026



Dear Parents,

Being a grandparent to three young children under the age of eight has opened my eyes to a whole new world of toys. This Christmas was no exception. I was fascinated by the extraordinary range of technology-based toys now designed for very young children. The level of creativity, the technical sophistication and the immersive experiences they offer even to toddlers is genuinely remarkable. These are not just toys in the traditional sense, but carefully crafted digital experiences that invite children into rich, colourful and engaging worlds from a very early age. What once felt like “toys” now often resemble miniature digital ecosystems, carefully engineered to captivate attention and sustain engagement.

I'm intrigued by what technology can do. But I often ask myself, “What kind of world are our children being carried into?” Some years ago, I read Adam Alter's fascinating book *Irresistible: The Rise of Addictive Technology and the Business of Keeping Us Hooked*. Adam Alter is a social psychologist and professor at NYU's Stern School of Business. He explores the psychological impact of a digital world deliberately designed to capture attention. His central message is clear: if we struggle to put our phones down, it is not simply a failure of willpower. Many of the technologies we use every day are intentionally designed to be hard to resist.

Adam Alter wrote his book after hearing about an unusual school in the San Francisco Bay Area that bans almost all technology. Surprisingly, 75% of the parents are executives in the technology industry, including the chief technology officer of eBay and employees of Google, Apple, Yahoo and Hewlett-Packard. So, what do these parents know that makes them cautious about technology?

These families are not anti-technology. They understand it better than most, but they also know how persuasive modern digital systems have become. We usually associate addiction with substances. But Alter shows that certain behaviours can become compulsive in similar ways by reshaping our emotional responses. These habits then become extremely hard to change, especially when they are woven into everyday life through the devices we carry.

Alter explains that digital platforms are not addictive by accident. They share common design features: endless goals that always feel just out of reach, constant feedback, social validation and systems that keep us in a loop of “just one more”. None of these features is inherently harmful. In healthy contexts, they can be very positive forms of motivation. The problem arises when they are delivered through technology that is always available.

Behavioural addictions don't only entertain us; they can soothe our discomfort. When people feel bored or anxious, a screen offers immediate relief. Over time, the brain begins to associate emotional discomfort with the reflex to reach for a device. Gradually, what begins as a choice becomes a habit, and a habit becomes dependence.

We notice teenagers glued to social media, but many adults recognise the same pull with email and constant connectivity. The deeper concern is not only time spent on screens, but what screentime quietly displaces: sleep, attention, conversation, reflection, physical

movement and the capacity to stay with difficulty without instant reward.

So how should we respond as parents and educators? The most effective responses are often the simplest: creating tech-free times and spaces, protecting sleep and being intentional about when and how devices are used. Just as importantly, children need real alternatives, time outdoors, sport, music, conversation, reading, play and unstructured time with friends.

This is not about children missing out, or being left behind in a digital world, but about ensuring they meet that world with discernment and agency. As one parent at the school in San Francisco put it: *“At Google and all these places, we make technology as brain-dead easy to use as possible. It’s super easy. It’s like learning to use toothpaste. There’s no reason kids can’t figure it out when they get older.”*

Reclaiming agency in a world where many products are designed to capture attention is challenging. Perhaps the better question is not simply “How much screen time is too much?” but “What is screen time replacing?” If it is crowding out sleep, focus, relationships or reflection, then it deserves our attention. After all, childhood is brief, and some of the most important human capacities need space, silence and time to grow.

Best wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jonathan Long". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name and last name clearly distinguishable.

Dr Jonathan Long

THIS WEEK'S NEWS



INDIA'S REPUBLIC DAY CELEBRATIONS

The 77th Republic Day of India was celebrated on 26 January, marking the historic occasion when the Constitution of India came into force in 1950 and the nation became a sovereign republic. To commemorate this important day, our residential students gathered for a flag-hoisting ceremony at the AB steps. Several music and dance performances were presented by students, making for an enjoyable celebration. The event reflected a strong sense of pride and cultural appreciation. Continuing a much-loved tradition, the morning concluded with a delightful community breakfast in the Commons, bringing everyone together to share in the spirit of togetherness and national pride.





VOICES ON A GLOBAL STAGE

Two of our DP 1 students, Anirudh Duddilla and Nihal Reddy, have been selected to represent India at the Oxford Schools Final Day, one of the most well known debating competitions in the world, to be held at the historic Oxford Union in the UK on 14 March 2026. The event is part of the Oxford Schools' Debating Competition – a prestigious inter-school debating tournament bringing together students from across the globe to engage in rigorous debate. More than a competition, it is an intellectual forum that cultivates confidence and ethical reasoning in future leaders. From hundreds of students from across the country, Anirudh and Nihal stood out for the quality of their thinking and the clarity of

their arguments. The Oxford Union is a place where generations of thinkers, leaders and changemakers have learned to test their ideas in public. To stand at that lectern is to participate in a global tradition of debate and intellectual exchange. We congratulate Anirudh and Nihal, and we wish them courage and confidence as they prepare to step onto a truly global stage!



BLOOD DONATION CAMP FOR COMMUNITY WELL-BEING

As part of their Creativity, Activity and Service (CAS) project, DP 1 students Srinika and Samhita organised a Blood Donation Camp in their community complex in collaboration with Sangam Blood Bank. This special service initiative, developed over nearly three months, reflected strong planning and effective teamwork. The students demonstrated key CAS learning outcomes by identifying their strengths, undertaking challenges, initiating and planning a meaningful experience and working collaboratively with others. During the camp, they ensured donor safety, comfort, and ethical responsibility, resulting in more than 40 voluntary blood donations. Closely aligned with India's Sustainable Development Goal 3 – Good Health and Well-Being – the project highlights the power of student-led action and stands as an inspiring example of compassionate, community-focused service.



YOUNG EXPLORERS CARING FOR OUR PLANET

This week, our Grade 1 students went on a field trip to Gandipet Lake and Manchirevula Lake in Hyderabad to explore the natural environment and understand how human actions impact it. Through firsthand observation, students learned that the Earth is our home and it is our responsibility to care for it. During the visit, they noticed positive actions such as watering plants, caring for animals and keeping areas clean, reinforcing on how humans can protect nature. They also observed litter in and around the lakes, helping them recognise how pollution harms plants, animals and the environment. After the visit, students reflected on their learning and shared ways to be responsible citizens. They expressed their commitment to not littering, saving water, reducing waste, caring for animals and keeping their surroundings clean.



LEARNING THROUGH SERVICE

DP 1 CAS students visited Rainbow Homes for Girls as part of their service-learning initiative, engaging the children through a joyful and interactive play-way teaching approach. The students shared key concepts from Mathematics, English and Science using games, hands-on activities and simple experiments, making learning both meaningful and enjoyable. The sessions fostered a warm, inclusive environment, enabling students to build genuine connections with the Rainbow Homes girls and support their academic growth. Through this experience, students developed empathy and social responsibility, strengthened their communication and leadership skills, learned to adapt their teaching to diverse learning needs, and gained confidence through teamwork and purposeful service. The Academy sincerely appreciates Ms Shagun and Ms Elizabeth for their dedicated guidance and supervision throughout the initiative. Opportunities like this live out His Late Highness Aga Khan IV's vision for the Academies as spaces where education is inseparable from service, where learning is rooted in compassion, pluralism and responsibility to others, and where young people are formed not only as scholars, but as ethical, engaged citizens of the world.



CONNECTING CULTURES ACROSS ACADEMIES

The Academies' international exchange programme enables students to study across countries within a shared curriculum, ensuring seamless academic continuity while immersing them in diverse cultures. Through these cross-Academy exchanges, students develop global awareness, cultural confidence, leadership and ethical judgment. Learning is shaped as much beyond the classroom as within it, forming globally minded, adaptable and socially responsible young people. Running across the Maputo, Mombasa and Hyderabad Academies, the 11-week programme, scheduled from 17 January to 4 April 2026, blends academic classes, school activities, service learning and special exchange experiences. A select group travels to a partner academy for one semester, while others participate from their home campus, culminating in a Capstone research presentation. This week, the Academy welcomed 15 exchange students to Hyderabad, who will also take part in local excursions and a cultural visit to Delhi-Agra, besides immersing themselves in the academic and residential life of the Hyderabad campus. The programme stands as a rich exchange of cultures, traditions and shared knowledge.



SOMETHING SPECIAL COMING YOUR WAY!

The Junior School is getting fired up for a grand production heading your way soon! We are preparing to wow our community with a fabulous musical. We will be acting, singing and dancing our hearts out! Watch this space for more teasers and information!



LEARNING FROM THE LAND

DP 1 CAS students took part in a hands-on organic farming experience that allowed them to engage meaningfully with the land and understand sustainable agricultural practices. Students harvested bananas, prepared the fields for a new crop and watered trees and plants, gaining firsthand insight into the effort involved in nurturing food systems. Through shared physical work, they strengthened collaboration and teamwork while learning the values of responsibility, patience, perseverance and respect for nature. The experience deepened their appreciation for farmers' dedication and encouraged reflection on environmental stewardship and sustainable living. Students expressed enthusiasm for continuing their support alongside the gardeners, recognising that sustained care and commitment are vital to the organic farm's long-term sustainability.



THE JOURNEY TO ACCREDITATION

Over the coming weeks, we will begin our Middle States Association (MSA) accreditation journey in earnest, marking an important milestone in the Academy's ongoing development. In February, we will launch a series of community-wide surveys to gather the feedback and data needed for a rigorous whole-school self-study. Accreditation with Middle States, one of the world's most respected and internationally recognised accrediting bodies, is not simply a compliance process, but a powerful framework for reflection, improvement and accountability, helping schools strengthen quality, coherence and impact over time. It will also enable our students to graduate with a US High School Diploma alongside the IB Diploma, further expanding their global university pathways and opportunities.



STRENGTHENING GOVERNMENT COLLABORATION

The Academy's Centre for Education, Training, Innovation and Research (CERT) met with Dr E. Naveen Nicholas, IAS, Director of School Education, Government of Telangana, to explore a potential partnership aimed at supporting government schools within the Academy's vicinity under the 10-Mile Reach Initiative. The meeting marked an important step towards strengthening collaboration between the Department of School Education and CERT, with a shared vision of creating meaningful and sustained impact in schools. Dr Naveen Nicholas warmly welcomed the team and spoke appreciatively about the various programmes conducted by the CERT Department over the years, recalling their success and positive impact on teachers and schools. He expressed keen interest in the proposed initiative and conveyed his willingness to commence the project at the earliest. The meeting concluded on a highly encouraging note, reinforcing a shared commitment to supporting the evolving needs of government schools and working together to enhance educational practices within the region.

ENHANCED TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT ON CAMPUS

As of this week, the morning drop-off and the afternoon pick-up for private vehicles shifted from the very congested Annex roundabout to the much more spacious car park, as had been communicated to parents, guardians, and drivers last week.

We want to thank all parents and drivers for their cooperation as the new traffic management was trialled this week. We observed that the students' movement and their way to school have – thanks to the traffic-free area outside the Annex – have become much, much safer. Additional adjustments have already been made to the way cars are being checked after pick-up, which has sped up the departure of vehicles to some extent. As we keep observing the flow of the traffic and continue to gather feedback, we may implement further small adjustments in the coming days and weeks.

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