

## Headteacher's Newsletter – October 2022

### Quotes of the month

*'We like to think of our champions and idols as superheroes who were born different from us. We don't like to think of them as relatively ordinary people who made themselves extraordinary.....no matter what your ability is, effort is what ignites that ability and turns it into accomplishment.'* - Carol Dwek

*'If you don't know where you're going, you're never going to get there.'* - Dylan Wiliam

Carol Dwek undoubtedly has had a massive influence on the ways we view success and failure. And integral to this is the value and impact of feedback. One of our main areas of interest this academic year at the Senior School is what we term Formative Assessment. This relates to the notion of allowing every student a means to understand *for every piece of work they do*, or the outcome of their response to a question, the components which made it a good assignment and, more importantly, what they specifically are required to do to make it an improved response next time round. There is a myriad of approaches to Formative Assessment but the main thing to note here is how this contributes to a *growth mindset*: The ability to see the obstacles ahead and be fully aware of the means to overcome them. Talent or 'intelligence' are insufficient. Hard work and dedication to improvement will ultimately bring success. All of our staff are dedicated to this effort and the message we consistently aim to give students is that they are fully capable of success in all of their subjects at school as long as *they take on this positive mindset and* are given the necessary tools through effective feedback. In the words of Dylan Wiliam, 'The first fundamental principle of effective classroom feedback is that feedback should be more work for the recipient than the donor.' Thus, feedback must be capitalised on by students to reflect on and direct their learning and further improvement. Every department/faculty in the school is dedicated to this approach, which also incorporates the commitment to knowing the progress of every student in every lesson through, for example, hinge questions: questions that may reveal gaps in learning or methods through which we can gauge the extent of understanding before moving onto the next topic. These and other related approaches will allow every student to raise their own attainment.

The message for both students and parents is then, don't focus solely on the grade or score. It's more about an understanding of what *next steps* need to be taken to do better which will only come through students taking ownership of their learning and getting the clarity they will need for the path ahead through specific and manageable feedback.

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The last month or so has seen a huge amount of activity in school. Much of what is experienced by our students adds value to their education and overall personal and social

development. This is why we place so much emphasis upon **mental wellbeing**. In October, we arranged assemblies on wellbeing, led by Mrs Xenia Papandreou, a counselling psychologist, for Year 7's and 13's, and Dr Karekla, a clinical psychologist, for Year 12's. Dr Karekla also talked about Body image and self-esteem during Year 11's PSHE class. Our hearty thanks to both for their invaluable contribution.



*Dr Karekla on self-image and the impact of social media*

Adolescence can be a challenging period in a child's life and parents or carers have a huge role to play in their development and in supporting them as they encounter the various challenges of growing up. Adolescence on its own also can be a risk factor for mental health. Please see the link below where you can find recommendations on how you can best support your teenager's mental wellbeing. Much appreciation to Ms Theophanous for preparing this

 [How to support your teen's mental health.pdf](#)

### EPQ Visit

Our EPQ students had the opportunity to visit the library of the University of Cyprus. The students were lucky enough to have a short, engaging tour led a librarian of the University

who showed them around the five-floor building, outlined its history and informed students about the library's various collections in primary and secondary sources, as well as the services it provides to students. The trip was organized as part of the EPQ curriculum which covers research skills, as well as the use of online tools and source selection and evaluation. Thank you to Mr Aristodemou for arranging the visit.



*Our EPQ students 'on tour'*

### **Hispanic Heritage event**

On the last day of September students from the IGCSE Spanish class participated in the Hispanic American Heritage event organised by the United States Embassy in Nicosia. During the event tribute was paid to various famous South American celebrities (authors, musicians, athletes, etc). Additionally, the students were introduced to traditional South American cuisine.

### **Passage to Tromsø confirmed**

Delighted to inform the community that three of our students have been selected to participate as part of the Cypriot delegation at EYP Tromsø, Norway during the Spring of 2023. The students are: Joe Stewart 9Y11), Harriet Economou (Y11) and Anna-Myria Oxynos (Y12). Congrats and best of luck to all.



### **Creative writing workshop**

Our Year 9 and Year 10 students were fortunate enough to attend a Greek language creative writing workshop led by well know professional lyrics writer, Mr. Stavros Stavrou. Students had the opportunity to engage in various activities and conversations, which were designed to reinforce their critical thinking and creative writing skills. Thank you to Ms. Kyza and Ms. Thrasyvoulou for leading the workshop!

### **Art and Literary Appreciation**

Our Y10 IGCSE Greek students also had the opportunity to visit the AG Leventis Gallery, as part of their Greek Lessons. Having studied various methods of response, they were asked to describe the painting “People of Cyprus” by painter A. Diamantis. The painting was presented to the students by the museum curator followed by student response. In addition, students studied fragments of the poem “Cyprus symphony” by Theodosios Pieridis with a view to developing their literary appreciation before exploring Vincent Van Gogh’s “The Potato eaters”. Both Vincent Van Gogh’s and Diamantis’ work share a popular theme, the struggles of common people. Many thanks to their teacher Ms Kyza for arranging for her students to gain from this educational experience!



*The remarkable ‘People of Cyprus’ work intriguing our Year 10s*

### PE Students

Y11 IGCSE PE students travelled to Kahuna Surfhouse in Larnaca and had the opportunity to try surfing, stand up paddle (SUP) and took part in team building activities. Reports suggest that they all benefitted immensely and had the chance to observe how risks are assessed before water activities as well as learning about the measures taken to ensure safety in water sports – a topic directly linked to their syllabus in PE.



*Year 11s take to the surf*

### Congrats to Ms Skordi!

Many congratulations to our Greek teacher, Ms Ioanna Skordi, for her recent achievement! She has had her paper accepted for the forthcoming academic conference "*Nikos Kazantzakis - 100 years of Askitiki*", which will take place at Queen's College, University of Cambridge, on June 30th and July 1st, 2023. The event is being organised by the Cambridge Centre for Greek Studies which aims to attract the very best pioneering research in cross-disciplinary Greek studies, covering the entirety of the Greek-speaking world from the Bronze Age to the present day. No doubt, Ms Skordi will be making a significant contribution to this effort.

### Erasmus +

We are excited to report that we have submitted our application to become an accredited centre for Erasmus +. This is an EU programme which supports all kinds of education and



training projects for both students and educationalists across Europe. As an accredited institution, the Senior School will be able to access significant funding for mobility projects for our students and teachers which also meet Erasmus + objectives. Erasmus + funding will allow us to collaborate on an international level with institutions and partners across the European Union and beyond. Hopefully we will be successful in our application. More news on this should be available by February. Thanks must be extended to Mr George Papaconstantinou (Finance Department) and Ms Mary Poufou (Bursar) for their outstanding efforts in meeting all the requirements for our application.

### **Founders' Day Celebrations at the SS**

The Senior School celebrated the founding of our school in a series of sporting and team building activities on the last day before half term. It was a morning packed with activity which included the normal fayre of team sports along with tug of war and other fun pursuits! Inevitably, a teachers vs House Captains tug of war was fought, and despite our best efforts, teachers were unable to overcome the overwhelming might of students. Medals were awarded and birthday cake consumed, and with almost pre-ordained timing, we were able to conclude all events just before the sky darkened and a light drizzle sprinkled the sports areas.



*House team members at the volleyball court*





*Fair play and pride in the legacy of their House names*



*Team building for KS3*

### Other news

- Please make note in your diary: On the afternoon/evening of December 14<sup>th</sup>, we will be having our **Open Day** at the Senior School where visitors will be able to view the work of departments and what we offer in terms of extra-curricular activity. Everyone is, of course, welcome but we are especially keen to display much of the amazing experience of being a student at our school, so do spread the word!
- On December 9<sup>th</sup>, we will have the honour of welcoming to our school Ms Annita Demetriou, Speaker of the House Parliament. She has graciously accepted our invitation to visit and formally inaugurate our new library resource centre which our students are, of course, already enjoying.
- We are currently preparing for options information sessions for students and parents. Details on these will be shared soon.
- Parent consultation days (ARDs) will this year be conducted remotely via the platform SchoolCloud. <https://www.schoolcloud.co.uk/>. Details on this will be forwarded very soon.
- Note that a new item of the school uniform has arrived. The plaid, pleated skirt is an addition to the girls' uniform which can be purchased from our official suppliers, Classmates.

*Yiannis Georgiou*

*Senior School Headteacher*