

Headteacher's Newsletter – November 2022

Quote of the month:

'The dogmas of the quiet past are inadequate to the stormy present. The occasion is piled high with difficulty, and we must rise with the occasion. As our case is new, so we must think anew, and act anew. We must disenthrall ourselves, and then we shall save our country.'

Abraham Lincoln, from speech to the US Congress, one month before signing the emancipation proclamation.

November has been another vibrant month of activity in our school. It has been my pleasure to have witnessed not only hard work and commitment from students in their lessons, but also a myriad of pursuits and interests outside the classroom. Our afternoon activities programme is in full swing and it is gratifying to see so many of our young people engaged in a number of activities which will help enhance their own personal and social development, whether it be debate and public speaking, ECO schools, the Bridge club or the upcoming Musical production. Whatever your child's interest, we are sure there will be something they can make the most of in furthering their overall development in terms of life skills as well as, for older students, being able to record a healthy breadth of involvement in their profiles for university applications. We will also be initiating surveys on the afternoon activity programme in the near future to see how we can further improve on the extra-curricular provision.

In the meantime, we are also looking at how we can further improve our academic programme with a thorough curriculum review. The aim will be to ensure, amongst others, a broad-based curriculum that meets the immediate and longer term needs for all students, embedding mental wellbeing and PSHE throughout the school curriculum, an IT based approach which is *consistent* throughout the school, optimisation of time during the school day. Education is a field that can never stand still and, as you will appreciate, as society changes, we must adapt and this will mean looking at novel ways in which we plan and deliver our programme of studies so that *all students* are given the opportunities to thrive and succeed. Our curriculum review will also be an opportunity to reflect on current practice and to sometimes relinquish old approaches and step up and innovate with a view to overall school improvement that has substantive impact on the progress of our students.

SS students: celebrating academic success

On that note, allow me to convey to you the superb achievements of our students. As I write, we have been informed that no less than seven of our Year 13s have (so far) been invited to Oxbridge interviews. This is a remarkable achievement in itself in this post-Brexit era. We will

be supporting these students with important preparation, including mock interviews, and wish them well.

We are also delighted to celebrate the achievements of a number of our students in the public examinations of last summer. Cambridge International Exams have informed us of 7 successes for our students who will be recognised at an awards ceremony in December. Another two students will also attend another ceremony in December at the Pearson Outstanding Learner Awards ceremony for their achievements in Pearson Edexcel exams last summer.

On November 30th the Senior School itself hosts an awards evening to recognise the success of our students in all subjects for last summer's public examinations session. Top achievers are being awarded prizes for their exceptional (I)GCSE and AS level performance.

Many congratulations to all.

English Strikes Gold

Our Y11 student, Styliana Avraamidou, has received the **Gold Award** for the Queen's Commonwealth Essay Competition 2022 for her piece 'What makes us who we are'? The judges clearly recognised her sensitivity and skill as a writer. This is under the auspices of the Royal Commonwealth Society and is the world's oldest essay competition for international schools. The aim is not only to foster creative writing but also to encourage young people to offer new perspectives on a range of issues, particularly on the challenges that the world currently must address. An extraordinary achievement. Well done, Styliana.

Academic Skills Development



Mr Papadopoulos leads on critical thinking skills



Presentation on the study of Chemical Engineering at the University of Newcastle

Rotary Club visit and tree planting

We were most grateful to welcome members of the Rotary Club of Nicosia-Ledra for their kind donation of 25 orange blossom trees to the Senior School – Another 25 were also gifted to the Junior School site. During their visit, students were able to learn more about both the Rotary Club itself and its associated charity work via the Interact club. ECO Committee members also took an active part in symbolically planting the first of the trees which will add both colour and fragrance to our school campus. Year 11 Biology students and ECO Committee members (Danae, Emily, Harriet, Joe and Pavlos) were on hand to help with the tree planting and to give an inspirational presentation and poem about the importance of trees. Watching our school's natural environment blossom as well as being able to rekindle our own connection to nature, proved to be an extremely powerful and gratifying experience for us as our sustainability goals were brought to life. We thank Ms Iordanou and her team from the Science Faculty as well as Mr Vallance in helping to organize the occasion.



Rotary Club Nicosia-Ledra President, Mr Athos Chandriotis, planting the first of the trees, ably aided by our students and Mr Fotis, our school gardener.



Rotary Club members, ECO Club students and staff record the day

Fund raising in full swing at the SS

Well done to our Year 7s for organising a bake sale and raising a massive €252.30 for the *Karaiskakio Foundation* in its fight against leukaemia. The main protagonists of this worthy initiative are: Louiza Liapi, Ioanna Stasi, Evelina Vassiliou, Christina Lamprianou, Angeline Kyriakide and Fani Theophilide. And thank you to their Acting Head of Year for guiding our Year 7s, Ms Ioannou.

Year 8s have also been very active in their fundraising efforts through bake sales to raise cash to support a local charity. They will be having four separate bake sales, as a competition, in order to raise money for Melathron Evgyrias, Nicosia (home for the elderly). On 14th December, Mrs Filippou along with the Senior School Orchestra will also be visiting Melathron Evgyrias to entertain the occupants with some Christmas music. Mr Athos Matsas, manager at Melathron Evgyrias, has expressed his sincere appreciation. Well done to Ms Drousiotou, Head of Year 8, for arranging this initiative.



Year 8 Bake Sale - open for business

Buddies Without Borders have been active this month: The BWB Club are collecting new or used children's books (Greek or English) which will be donated to the Makarios Hospital Children's Ward. Any donations may be dropped off at the students' entrance to the school. BWB have also been active in raising funds via a bake sale for the 'Monadika Hamogela', an association which supports children with rare genetic diseases. Great job, BWB!

Anti-Bullying Month – a busy focus of activity

November has also been the focus of anti-bullying and mutual respect with assemblies and Form periods devoted to appropriate behaviour and courtesy for others regardless of personal identity, talks from outside specialists for KS3 on Cyber safety and an *odd socks day* that illustrated how we are all different and should be able to express our individuality without fear or favour! In addition, we were able to enjoy a dramatic piece in break on the theme of bullying and its impact as well as initiate a poster/film-making competition to raise awareness and with messages of support.

Student Leaders making their mark

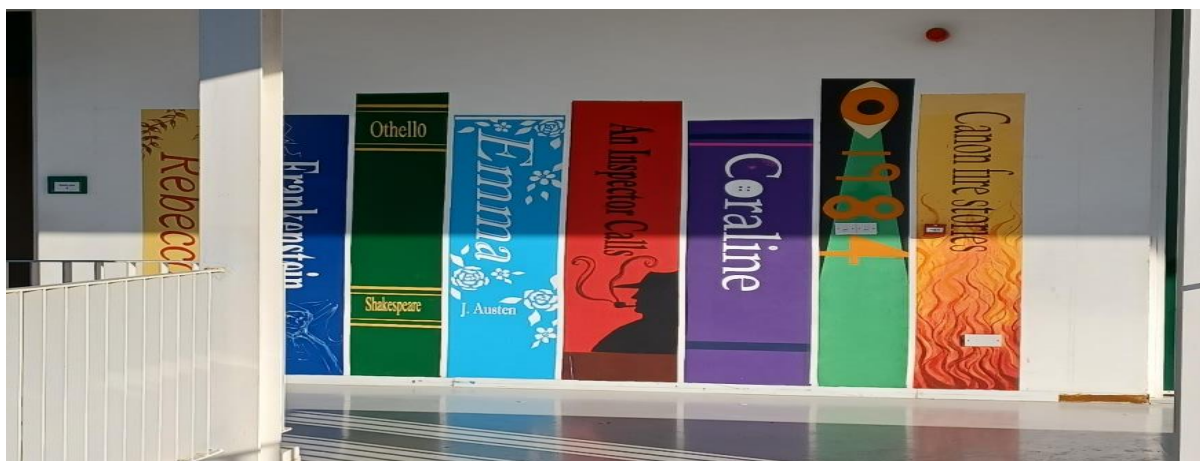
The Head Girl, Head Boy and Deputies have been well involved in interviews for House Captains. They have also been kind enough to write about their aims in contributing to the process: *‘To integrate student voice in the selection of our student leaders and elevate their positions. It is vital to us that the team of student leaders act as a cohesive unit, whilst maintaining their unique perspectives and opinions since they are an important element of our school. As student leaders, having an active role in the selection panel and interview process allows them to represent the student body, rather than just being able to perform well in an interview. We hope that by elevating the House Captain position and attaching more responsibility to the role, it will help to establish and strengthen not only school spirit, but also a sense of belonging found through their houses.’*

The assistance of Aris, Eva, Alexis and Carolina is hugely appreciated. Congratulations are also extended to the newly elected members of the Student Council and, in particular, to the President of the Student Council, Melissa Charalambous.

Dance Visit



The Y11 GCSE dance group had the opportunity to observe and to perform with a group of dancers with disabilities from Greece. An amazing experience for all!



Art and English Depts join forces to create a mural celebrating literature (English Dept corridor).

Art Captains and other KS4 and 5 student volunteers contributed to the design of the mural above along with the thematic content. Phase 1 of the project was completed by students on Saturday 26th.

The Sporting life

An impressive win for our girls' basketball team who won their knockout game and have qualified for the Final 4 of Nicosia District Public and Private Schools Basketball tournament. A dedication to training and preparation as well as excellent support from their coach, Ms Efthymiou, have contributed to their success thus far. This is truly a remarkable achievement and we wish them well as they move forward in the competition and, indeed, hope they can bring the trophy home!



Well done, team!

It may interest you to learn that not only do we encourage sporting success for our school through competition locally and nationally, but we also foster gamesmanship during the school day: Every Friday, during second break, the Senior School organizes an in-school tournament involving teachers against students in volleyball and basketball.



Students vs teachers on the volleyball court



Team teachers, fired up for the next match!

Interschool friendly matches

The School recently welcomed student teams from the English School to play friendly basketball, futsal and volleyball matches on our site. This was a great opportunity to offer competitive practice to students as well as to foster mutual collaboration between our two schools.



Our KS3 girls compete against ES in basketball



KS3 boys from both schools with their coaches

Options

This past month has clearly again been extremely busy. One key event we should mention is the Year 11 Options evening for parents. This was an opportunity for parents to hear exactly how the school will be assisting Y11s in their choices for A level courses in the 6th Form. Both parents and students were also able to visit the various department/subject teachers to discuss the courses available and to hear what students will be expected to learn and the skills they will be developing as well as careers possibilities. Parents were also informed about the various stages which the Options process will cover and the further support every student in Year 11 can expect before making their final decision. Many thanks to Ms O'Riordan (Head of

6th Form), Ms Varvatsoulis (Deputy Head 6th Form), Dr Ashfield (Director of Studies) and Ms Theodorou (KS 4 Leader) as well as Ms Petrou (Careers Officer) for their organisation and contribution to the success of the event. A similar event is planned for Year 9s as they begin the process of options for their (I)GCSE subjects.



Finally, as we are beginning to approach the festive season, we would like to extend our gratitude to the SSPGA for their valued help in decorating the school to add some Christmas cheer for the final weeks of the term!

Yiannis Georgiou

Senior School Headteacher