

Headteacher's Newsletter – January 2023

Quote of the month:

'For most of us the problem isn't that we aim too high and fail. It's just the opposite; we aim too low and succeed.'

Sir Ken Robinson

As we enter the Spring Term, Year 11s have been busy for the first weeks of January with their Mock examinations while Year 12s and 13s remain on the rapid path towards their own Mocks to be followed swiftly by the summer A/AS levels. Whilst this may seem a short time frame, there is still much work to be done in preparation and a great deal of exam practice to ensure our students succeed. Much has been written on how we can encourage young people to attain high grades as well as the matter of potential. What we also need to underline, however, is that what brings about high levels of achievement, whatever the discipline in question, will depend to some degree on high aspirations. If they do not set themselves high goals, and if they fall into the trap of underestimating their own abilities, young people may risk not achieving those top grades they will need in order to gain entry to the universities of their choice. Encouraging high aspirations and a never-be-satisfied attitude or frame of mind is what we aim to nurture in our students. To be willing to take a risk and to not view failure as an obstacle, but more of an opportunity, is the ethos we encourage. As Sir Ken neatly states: 'If you're not prepared to be wrong, you'll never come up with anything original.' What he was, of course, referring to here was the matter of imagination and creativity, but the essence is the same. Take risks, persevere, aim high.

It is then with great pleasure that I can convey some of the successes of our students who have aimed aim. Our congratulations to our students below:

Yushan (Helen) Zhu has been offered a place at Oxford University to study PPPE. A magnificent achievement in light of the competitiveness not only of the applications process for Oxford, but also for the highly demanding and equally competitive nature of getting onto a PPE course.

Alex Prodromou has been offered a place at the Berklee College of Music in Boston, Massachusetts. This is a remarkable feat due again to the highly competitive nature of the application process along with the stature of Berklee. However, Alex is also in line for other opportunities, such as NYU and universities in the UK who have all made him offers! He will inform us soon about which one he intends to accept!

Marina Theophanidou has won a competition-based scholarship from the Instituto Europeo di Design (Milan) to study Interior Design in Florence. The scholarship panel were highly impressed with Marina's work which centred on the transformation of a traditional Cypriot home into a contemporary design that retains elements related to Cypriot tradition and culture.

Well done to Athena Vourgos (Year 13), who has been selected as one of the four winners in an international space competition organized by the *Space Generation Advisory Council* (SGAC) entitled SEPG-AAE Dream Mission Call 2023. Athena wrote a paper which focused on topics such as space law, general technical aspects of space exploration and the space-related sociopolitical aspects of international relations. As a winner, she will attend a conference in Turin in May (AAE Space Exploration Conference) where she will do a 20-minute presentation on her topic. Athena will also be able to attend a one-to-one session with an expert at the conference of her choice.

The Space Generation Advisory Council is a global non-governmental, non-profit organisation and network which aims to represent university students and young space professionals aged 18-35 at the United Nations, space agencies, industry, and academia.

The Talent Show – a wealth of creativity, artistry and skill

Last month, we were fortunate to be able to enjoy a range of superb acts at the School's Talent Show as a result of a huge amount of preparation and rehearsal. Well done to all the student participants and to the teachers who supported their endeavours (Ms Filippou for music, Ms Cosma for drama and Ms Parpotta for dance). Special praise also to the Year 13 student presenters who were highly entertaining: Ayla Sayegh, Christina Christofidou and Suzannah Galea.



Interlude entertainment from Year 13 presenters



Emin Djiyaslioglu – Traditional Cypriot dance



From the 'rehearsal' for the nativity scene!



Danae Petrides presents her own interpretation of Michael Bublé's 'Feeling Good'

Student Voice in action

Members of the Student Council attended a meeting with our school uniform suppliers, Drousko, to request some adjustments to the uniform and to convey some of the feedback from the student body. This was an opportunity to convey student requests which ensure comfort as well as retaining the school's identity in the appearance of all students. We are glad to report that Drousko have been willing to respond favourably to many of the requests from students that will include: the new track suit pants in black with the school logo in cotton/polyester, available now at their shop and for online order, a new black hoodie with kangaroo pockets with the school logo, boys and girls trousers with *softer fabric* and with *more stretch* to ensure much improved comfort, two more options for girls' skirts, one new skort and one new skirt both with an internal brief which are in addition to the plaid pleated skirt we have introduced recently. The previous charcoal grey skirt will be phased out. On the PE shirts, the school logo will be placed top left in line with the style of the rest of the school uniform. Well done to Student Reps for their constructive input.

In addition, student leaders (Head Girl/Boy, Deputy Head Girl/Boy and President of the Student Council) have been making valuable contributions to the recruitment and appointment process for a new Deputy Head Curriculum, Assessment and Teaching + Learning for September 2023. Candidates for the position have had to participate in a number of tasks as well as being interviewed by Senior Leadership. However, we have also arranged for the

student leaders to themselves interview each of the candidates and to provide their feedback to us as part of the process. Many thanks to Eva, Carolina, Aris, Alex and Melissa for their input.

Student Council fund-raiser for Lebanese Hospital

The Student Council-led non-uniform day raised a significant amount for the Sacred Heart Hospital in Lebanon. This, along with funds raised by the Maths Department, totaled €1367 which has helped 5 people get the chemotherapy they urgently need. Sisters from the Hospital have written to the school to express their gratitude and admiration of our students for their 'spirit of solidarity and their compassion for the neediest...We assure you of our prayers and deep gratitude.' A worthy initiative from our students. Well done, Student Council!

Newly Elected House Captains:

Last term the school selected House Captains for the academic year 2022-2023. The house captains this year are:

- Gabriel Davidian for Stone, Y12E
- Harry Ioannou for Kenny Y12E
- Mohand Alghol for Christodoulides Y12E
- Penelope Artemis for Gayford Y12R

In their words: 'As house captains we are prioritizing the improvement and enrichment of school life. We have various events on our agenda in fields like chess, music and more, which will include the participation of students of all ages. We will spend our year as House Captains productively and efficiently, and we encourage students to share their ideas with us on how we can make their school experience even more memorable.'

It was also good to see a joint meeting of the Junior and Senior School House Captains. By all accounts, our Senior School students came away from the meeting feeling energised and enthusiastic. Senior captains introduced the idea of including the Junior captains in their fundraising efforts for each of their charities as well as a combined house points competition across the Junior and Senior School. This is the first time such collaboration has taken place between the Senior and Junior House Captains and we look forward to hearing more about joint projects and initiatives!

BWB initiative

During the Christmas break, members of the Buddies without Borders Club, along with Dr Irene Stavrou, visited Paidika Xamogela to present them with the money raised from a bake sale (250 euros). They were also able to fully appreciate the work done at the multidisciplinary centre for children with rare genetic diseases. During this visit, our students gained not only an awareness of rare genetic diseases but also the multifaceted approach the centre takes in supporting children in overcoming their conditions. This local action initiated by the presidents of the BWB club, Iliana Skordi, Emily Kyriakides, Natalie Eleftheriou and Helen Zhu was also featured by the Global BWB director on the Global BWB club website and was viewed by all BWB clubs around the world. To view this, go to the Global Education Destinations website and click on Blog. <https://www.globaleducationdestinations.org/post/sky-is-the-limit-bwb-club-at-the-senior-school-nicosia-cyprus>

Religious Instruction excursion

Earlier this month, Year 9 Religious Instruction students visited the oldest educational establishment of secondary education in Cyprus, the Pancyprian Gymnasium, where they learned about the significance of the school and its close connection with the Christian Orthodox Church. Following the tour, students were guided to a crypt where Archbishop Kyprianos had been informed about the preparations for the Greek Revolution. At the Pancyprian Gymnasium Museum, students learned about education in Cyprus in the past century, the strict rules that students had to follow, and were lucky enough to see old exercise books and educational materials. Students also viewed the Archaeological and Numismatic collections as well as sections with old maps and antique weaponry. They also toured the Art Gallery where they saw the work of great Cypriot painters who were both teachers and students of the school. After the tour students visited the old and new Cathedrals, where their RI teacher, Mr Philippou, referred to the various features of murals and Christian icons. Many thanks to their teacher, Mr Philippou, for organising the visit and tours.



Touring the Archaeological Collection



Year 9 students in the tunnel linking the Archbishopric with the Pancyprian Gymnasium

Humanities Faculty organises 'Movie Night'

Towards the end of last month, the Humanities Department organized a movie night. The film selected was *Judas and the Black Messiah*. The movie tackles the compelling story of how an FBI informant infiltrated the Black Panther party in Chicago and befriended Fred Hampton, leading to the deputy chairman's death in a police raid in 1969. The theme ties in neatly with the History curriculum for Years 9 and 13, which covers the US civil rights movement in the '60s. With a turnout of about 30 students, a good time was had by all with buckets of popcorn freely available!



Judas and the Black Messiah, amongst other accolades, was a triple Oscar winner



The serious business of preparing sufficient supplies of popcorn

Mathematicians at large

Stats success:

Many congratulations to our Senior School Statistics Team that participated in the European Statistics Competition hosted by the Statistics Service Agency of Cyprus! All 12 students that took part were outstanding with our Y13 Team qualifying for the second phase of the competition. This is an impressive accomplishment by Yushan (Helen) Zhu, Haiqing (Helen) Lu and Christina Theodotou. Much appreciation to Mr. Nikos Papadopoulos for his support and guidance. We wish the team the very best for the next round of competition!

National achievement for Iliana:

Year 10 student, Iliana Skordi, has ranked 8th at the the National Mathematical Competition and is now eligible as a candidate for selection as a member of the National Team to represent Cyprus at international competitions such as the Balkan Mathematical Olympiad, the International Mathematical Olympiad and the European Girl's Mathematical Olympiad. A superb achievement!

CTV:

Our school has hosted the Center for Talented Youth (CTY Greece) Examinations for the second year in a row with the participation of 165 students between the ages of 7 and 15. This was a test of participants' knowledge, skills and abilities in a demanding but enjoyable event.



Participants engaged in a number of challenging activities

CTY Weekend Program on Game Theory:

The very first ever weekend course offered by the Centre for Talented Youth (CTY Greece) in collaboration with our school's Inclusions Department, was offered to eligible students from across Cyprus on our school's premises last month. The two-day course was designed as per guidelines issued by CTY Johns Hopkins University. Dr. Haido Samaras, CTY Greece's Academic Dean, visited our school for the occasion, which is part of a series of exclusive events offered by CTY Greece in collaboration with the Senior School. We are most grateful to Mr Papadopoulos for his energy and leadership in this programme.



Mr Papadopoulos leads a session on Game Theory

Junior Achievement initiative

Connecteen is a company participating in the Junior Achievement Programme and they are currently in the process of creating a platform which will connect young people with companies and organizations to help them find a part time job, internship, or a volunteering placement. This will help young people gain practical experience in the field which they may want to pursue in the future, alongside developing a sense of social responsibility by participating in events or activities that benefit society.



On Friday 27th, the Connecteen team held a bake sale to raise funds for their initiative. Well done to all those involved!

Sports School students pushed to their limits!

The elite athletes of our Sports School have had an opportunity to run ergometric tests for their coaches to monitor their fitness progress and adjust their training sessions based on their current performance. This involved a rigorous set of tests that pushed and challenged each of the students!



Calm before the storm of a series of physically demanding tasks for our sports school

Economists present their findings



It was a privilege to see the work produced by Year 13 A level Economics students from their research into a number of regional trading blocs, their effectiveness and the mechanisms through which they function as well as the challenges faced. Well done to all and to their teacher, Mr Pipis, for his guidance.

Chain of Love



In December our school took part in the Sophia Foundation's Christmas Chain of Love, along with other schools from all over Cyprus. The aim was to help children in need both in Kenya and Cyprus. Our students created bracelets from Kenyan beads and sold them to students and staff as well as during the Junior School Christmas Bazaar. A total of €416 was raised and given to the Sophia Foundation. Special thanks to the students who volunteered to create and sell the bracelets and to Ms Theofanous and Ms Theodorou for taking charge of this initiative.

A reminder that the half-term break runs from Green Monday 27th Feb until Friday March 3rd. Following half-term, Years 12 and 13 will be sitting their Mocks as essential preparation and as a diagnostic process in light of upcoming summer A and AS Level examinations.

Parent-teacher consultations for Year 11 students will proceed via SchoolCloud on February 8th. The same will apply for Years 12 and 13 after their Mock exams in March. These slots are ideal opportunities to reflect on progress and to identify key areas for students to focus on prior to their public exams.

Yiannis Georgiou

Senior School Headteacher