

Headteacher's Newsletter – April 2023

Quotes of the month:

'I hated every minute of training, but I said, "Don't quit. Suffer now and live the rest of your life as a champion."'

'Don't count the days; make the days count.'

Mohammed Ali, US professional boxer, activist

Now that we are well into the Spring, public examinations are already upon us. Our Year 11s, 12s, 13s and a small number of Year 10s are preparing to sit their IGCSE/AS/AL exams and will be revising and practising after a busy two terms. Soon enough other KS£ and all Year 10 students will be sitting school end of year assessments, too. No doubt, many students will be anxious about their performance and will at the same time be aiming to achieve highly. We strongly recommend that students make the most of all support from their teachers (whether it be extra tuition, practising past exam questions or targeted learning on key concepts and content). At the same time, we recommend that students have a daily revision schedule for their own preparation that will be realistic but also effective in thoroughly revising and reviewing everything they will need for success in their exams. They will also need the support of parents/guardians and that is best relayed through providing them with the following (a not exhaustive list, but certainly some of the more obvious and important):

1. Make sure they have a quiet study space which allows them to spread out notes and to be able to focus.
2. Support healthy eating. Make healthy snacks readily available without them grabbing for the nearest chocolate bar or chewy sweet! This includes healthy drinks. They should be avoiding caffeine intake as much as possible.
3. Encourage exercise (or at least a brisk walk) as a break from studies and their study area. This can re-energise. Sound sleeping routines are, of course, vital. Do encourage proper sleep habits!
4. Be supportive and encouraging and a good listener. Be their advocate, not a source of stress. Please see this link for ideas on dealing with exam stress which parents may wish to share with their child: <https://www.childline.org.uk/info-advice/school-college-and-work/school-college/exam-stress/>
5. Parents and students can also refer to the useful links on the following website page from Veema education: <https://veema.co.uk/wellbeing-during-exam-time/>

Almost Alice – A triumph!

Just before the beginning of the Easter break saw two performances of *Almost Alice* at the Satiriko Theatre. This was an original musical production based on the play 'Alice, or something like it' devised by our own students in 2015! The result was a hugely entertaining production that took one on a rollercoaster of emotions. The actors/performers were outstanding in their roles, costumes were stunning and stage design was innovative, if not ingenious, much of it made from recycled material. An exceptionally talented band of musicians accompanied the action on stage throughout. There are many people to thank and congratulate for their contributions to the success of both evenings, but in particular we should extend appreciation to Ms Eirini Filippou who composed all the new music, Ms Natalie Jones as Movement Director which included the challenge of choreographing movement and dance that was synchronised with the music in each scene, and Ms Eleni Cosma as Director and Writer. Ms Cosma not only developed the script but also led the production and ensured every one of the components of the musical came together as a seamless, remarkably creative staging that left the audience in awe. This was an extraordinary endeavour that was the result of countless rehearsals, dedication, and the harnessing of the talents and artistic skill of our students. Well done to all!



The Hatter holds forth



Suzannah and Ayla in their parting roles for the school – We wish them well in their future pursuits

ALMOST ALICE – The Journey

A unique perspective from our School Librarian, Ms Shakti Mullick

A successful moment is a culminating point of hard-work, grit, unquestionable devotion to the goal and sheer joy with which the task is undertaken. Almost Alice is no different. The journey of this creative venture is as beautiful as the final product created by a group of talented SS students and their dedicated teachers. This journey is an extraordinary learning experience for the students who were involved at every stage of the production - creating the sets/props, working behind the scenes on logistics, costumes etc.

The creative field is beautiful but requires persistence, patience and passion. Falling in love with the process is as important as the performance itself. The amazing team of teachers, Eleni Cosma and Natalie Jones, undertook the extra-ordinary task of involving the students and making them fall in love with the process. I have seen students after a long day of lessons and during holidays run to the Drama room, sitting on the floor creating props, practising their roles, and absorbed in every aspect of the play – all this with a giggle and a twinkle in their eyes. Each after-school session began with quick lunches, followed by the behind-the-scenes prop creation buzz and enthusiasm. Finally, the spell-binding practice sessions began. As a spectator to this entire process, I was always in awe when I watched the performers, sing or deliver their lines, while the entire team sat absorbed and totally captivated for the cause. The future of this generation may be deadline driven, fast-moving and social media dominated, but when they practised, they were learning to sit down and appreciate something that is creative, cathartic and calming. Imperative soft skills - to listen, observe and imbibe.

The students involved in the production of Almost Alice have not just gained tenacity and confidence in their craft but have acquired valuable life lessons – resolve to complete a task, handling pressure, teamwork, finding solutions, managing a crisis with a smile and patience. They have learnt this from the teachers who have led by example. A good teacher is not someone who knows everything, but someone who can share and impart their love and passion for the subject to the students. Kudos to the team!

Shakti Mullick

Sports Week 2023

Once again, the school ran Sports Week activities in the days leading up to the Easter break for all Key Stages. Apart from the traditional sporting events, a number of other activities were organised that included, taekwondo sessions, dance, and sports psychology speech presentations. Many thanks to Ms Stella Parpotta and her team in the PE department as well as all staff who were on hand to oversee events.



Our younger students are introduced to the finer elements of taekwondo

Students Vs Teaching Staff

Sports Week also saw a number of activities involving teachers with students. A good level of participation and a lively atmosphere:



Get set!



Teachers and students – As one!

Adopt a family for Easter!

The Student Council were again active in their charity pursuits, this time in raising funds for families in need during the Easter celebration. A total of 554 Euro in cash was collected along with 100 Euro in coupons. The regional volunteer association for Nicosia have already written back to express their gratitude to the students of our school and their generous contributions.

School Houses in fund raising drive

In addition to the SC, we should also mention the initiative of the school's House Captains who led a non-uniform day to raise cash for each House's chosen charity or cause. This was organised in collaboration (for the first time) with the House Captains at the Junior School! Well done to all for this innovative approach to charity drives.

Gambit pays off!

The Senior School Chess Club hosted a three-day tournament in late March. Joint 1st place winners were: Alexandros Kyriakides from Year 8, and Michail Kravets from Year 7. The competition was fierce, with participants from all year groups giving it their all. Many thanks to the Cyprus Chess Federation for their generosity in lending the school the chess equipment for the tournament.



Opening moves...

Report from the Careers Officer, Ms Stella Petrou:

Another busy month has passed by with a number of events made available to our students.

An all-inclusive presentation was given to both Year 10 and 11 students on the use of the Unifrog platform designed to help them carry out their research on courses offered, university destinations and career options. The aim was to help towards developing confidence in beginning the process for applications to universities.

As mentioned in the last newsletter, a three-day parents professions event took place during which parents from particular professions gave a presentation on the nature of their work and career paths. Students and their parents had the opportunity to attend these presentations and gain some insight into what each profession may have to offer.



Parent presenters and audiences at our Careers event

University Visits

Prestigious universities such as Imperial and UCL visited our school and gave presentations to our students on course applications and scholarship options. Students took the opportunity to ask various questions on entry requirements, accommodation, and new available courses. The universities were very pleased with our students' attendance and their interest in their institutions. Note also that a planned visit by a representative of Oxford University to our school had to be cancelled due to ill health on the part of the presenter who had to delay her arrival in Cyprus. We hope to arrange a similar visit next year.

The Universities of Reading and Newcastle, and New York Abu Dhabi University also dropped by to offer us valuable information and to offer students the chance to pose questions regarding possible future applications.

The USA, Netherlands and UCAS

Another informative event was organised for all Year 12 students through which they had the opportunity to learn how and when to apply to US universities, relevant deadlines and entry requirements. This was followed by a presentation on the UCAS system which helped them understand the UK application platform, the specific deadlines and what is needed for a successful application. Finally, students were also able to hear about the Netherlands university application system, fees and deadlines. The aforementioned are part of their preparation for the September application procedures enabling students to be better prepared and wiser as they take the next steps in planning for higher education.

Students from Year 10, 11 and 12 had the chance to attend a presentation on studying in Italy. This gives them the opportunity to keep their options open and to consider applying to a range of possible destinations for higher education.

Finally, Ernst and Young visited our school to give a presentation on career opportunities and to advise the students on current internship programmes they can attend.

Other news:

Well done to Estella Zannettou Volchok (Year 12), Andriana Dombo (Year 12) and Ektoras Alexandrou (Year 11) for being selected to participate in the Cyprus Friendship Programme's (CFP) one month Residency Program in the USA (www.creatingfriendships4peace.com) in July, 2023. They will be flying to the USA with a group of 24 Teens from all over Cyprus to participate in a cultural exchange programme enriched with fun activities, peace-building workshops, and community work. Their one-month homestays will be with host families located in Maryland, Oregon, and Texas. We are sure they will have a fun and rewarding CFP experience and look forward to them sharing it with us on their return.

We would also like to congratulate Iliana Skordi (Year 10) who has been selected to participate in the Euroscola programme in the European Parliament, Strasbourg on May 4th as part of the CFP Teen delegation. The Theme to be discussed will be the Environmental challenges facing the Globe and the response of the European Union.

On May 3rd, there will be an Assembly for Year 9 students to present the CFP's Year 1 Program, which involves a one-week camp experience in Troodos in the last week of July/ first week of August, where students from all over Cyprus will have the chance to meet and participate in fun activities and educational workshops, including Art, Music, and Dance.

Many thanks to Ms Asvesta for leading on these incredible opportunities for our students.

Congrats:

Very well done to Christina Christofidou in Year 13 who has been offered a place on the BA Acting Course at Marymount Manhattan College, NYC; She has also won the *Presidential International Scholarship* for a total of 68,000 dollars over the 4 years. Amazing achievement!

.

Please note:

In the final weeks of the academic year, students in lower year groups will be preparing for end of year exams or assessments. Parents will have received details on these. In the meantime, you will also be receiving letters from Heads of Year regarding Exam timetables and advice on revision. These internal school examinations will be an opportunity for students to review their learning this past academic year and for them and their teachers to identify their strengths as well as any gaps that will need to be addressed during the summer months. This is particularly the case for Year 10s who are completing the first year of their (I)GCSE courses.

Preparations are well underway for the new academic year 2023-24. We are in the process of finalising our school calendar which will be shared formally in June. Once parents receive this, they will be able to make any family related plans for next year. We would kindly like to request that parents avoid any overseas trips with their children during school time as this inevitably impacts learning.

Yiannis Georgiou

Senior School Headteacher