

Headteacher's Newsletter – September 2023

Quote of the month:

"Success isn't overnight. It's when every day you get a little better than the day before. It all adds up."

Dwayne Johnson, actor and former pro-wrestler

Welcome back to the new school year! Following a very good set of examination results in IGCSE and A Level, our focus right from the start of year is to underline the support and advice we will give for students to achieve. One of the main messages we have been underlining to students at this point has been the need to be properly organised with studies and homework, to develop appropriate and effective study skills and habits which facilitate a positive and productive beginning and longer term performance. There are clearly a variety of approaches to good study habits, but I would like to focus on the more obvious ones and would be grateful for parental support in this regard in terms of encouraging the right mindset:

- Students should have a set routine after school for study/completion of homework (as well as enjoying extracurricular and other activities).
- In particular, and especially for the exam classes, it is advisable for students to allocate time after school to homework and a review of notes from that day's classes. Have a daily study plan in place. Questions or queries can easily be identified and brought to the attention of their teacher at the next opportunity to address any gaps. This will avoid an accumulation of work and revision. *Revision begins now.*
- Keep all notes and homework assignments organised. There is a benefit in having all the year's work well ordered to avoid a last-minute scramble to sort out notes for a range of subjects and modules or units of work.
- Use whatever approach to studies/revision suits your child; there will be a focus on study and organisational skills development in the PSHE programme we now have in place.
- Students can ask for extra work/assignments to stretch themselves further. We aim to challenge our students and to encourage high expectations in themselves. The so-called growth mindset engenders a can-do approach whereby opportunities to entrench learning are taken up and a belief in attaining the top grades is never underestimated.
- Full attendance to school is a must. When students are significantly or regularly absent from school, they miss vital development of skills and understanding of content which will have a negative impact on overall learning and exam performance. 'Catching up'

after an avoidable absence is no substitute for being in class. The evidence on the link between non-attendance and academic performance is compelling: *'Pupils who did not achieve grade 9 to 4 in English and maths GCSEs in 2019 had an overall absence rate of 8.8% over the key stage, compared with 5.2% among pupils who achieved a grade 4 and 3.7% among pupils who achieved grade 9 to 5 in both English and maths.'* (UK Department for Education report). Indeed, 95% attendance vs 85% attendance can impact a student's A Level performance by at least a grade. Parents/guardians are, therefore, requested to avoid unnecessary absences from school for their children. Please do not arrange unauthorised absence for an overseas trip during term time, for instance. Do contact your child's Form Tutor or Head of Year for guidance on obtaining permission for any planned absence.

As indicated above, this year's public examination results were overall pleasing:

At A Level:

A* grades: 16.4% of all SS entries compared to schools in England: 8.9%

A*/A grades: 42% of all SS entries compared to schools in England: 27.2%. This also compares well with secondary selective schools in England (39%) and independent schools (47.4%)

At (I)GCSE:

A*/9-8: 32% of all SS entries

A*/A – 9-7: 55% of all SS entries compared with schools in England: 21.6%, Secondary selective schools in England: 59%, and Independent schools: 47%.

Ofqual (the Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulations in England) in its report in August 2023 states that *'there has been a return to pre-pandemic grading this summer in England...It is most meaningful to compare results to 2019, the last summer exam series before the pandemic.'* Our students then performed especially well in terms of maintaining or even improving on results from the pre-COVID period in 2019.

As is always the case, the start of the academic year has been very busy with a number of events, achievements and activities alongside regular school.

Physics Competition Achievements

We are proud to report on the success of our students in the Pancyprian competitions organised by the Cyprus Society of Physicists right at the end of last academic year.

Well done to Iliana Skordi and Melina Louca who gained 3rd place in the "physics presents" competition where they produced a 3-minute video to explain pulsars.

Alex Theodorou and Pavlos Bismal were 3rd in the photo competition showing a clash of waves. Thank you to Ms Monou for her support and guidance.



Iliana and Melina at work on their submission

Iliana Skordi and Melina Louca report on their experiences:

"We are truly honoured to have been awarded 3rd prize in the annual Pancyprrian 'Physics Presents' competition organised by the Cypriot Physics Society, an experience that has not only allowed us to gain valuable knowledge on key concepts in physics, but which has given us the stage to communicate our scientific knowledge with a wider audience. Conducting research into the captivating field of astronomy, specifically on the discovery of pulsars, we were able to recognise their significance in modern astrophysics as they were instrumental in confirming the existence of the neutron star, and facilitated strides in the theories of stellar collapse, the formation of black holes and even the theory of general relativity. On a deeper level, we uncovered the inspiring story of Dr. Jocelyn Bell Burnell, a PhD student at the Cavendish Laboratory at Cambridge University who played a crucial role in the actual discovery of pulsars, but whose contribution was never recognised to the fullest, as she was ignored when the Nobel Prize in 1974 was awarded to Anthony Hewish, her supervisor, with only a minor contribution. But most importantly, we understood that the story of the discovery of pulsars sheds light on the important role of women in science, and on the inequalities that exist to this day in a historically male-dominated sector. Jocelyn Bell Burnell was and continues to be an important example, and a trailblazer for women scientists. This opportunity to tell

the story of pulsars, irrevocably tied to that of Jocelyn Bell's contribution in the field of STEM was one that we are extremely grateful for, as aspiring scientists. We undoubtedly encourage others to learn more about the discovery of pulsars by watching our video and embark on their own journey of scientific research and communication by participating in this competition next year!"

Iliana Skordi and Melina Louca

Science project in collaboration with the Makarios III Technical School of Nicosia on track!

For this collaborative project the vision encompasses the creation of a "Solar Tree" for our Science Park where students will be able to utilize solar power to charge up their devices via a USB port.

This will provide our Physics students with a unique and enriching experience, where they will not only benefit from the technical expertise and equipment of the technical school students and their teachers, but also will have the opportunity to apply their learning in a real world application.

We look forward to learning more on the project as it proceeds. Many thanks to Ms Hartoutsiou for leading this initiative alongside our Ms Sfikouri, our new lab technician.

UN International Peace Day marked at our school

Thursday 21st September was the United Nations International Day of Peace which was recognised by students in our school. Anastasia and Athina, Year 11 Religious Studies students, prepared an assembly presentation for various year groups to encourage our community to act for peace. The International Day of Peace 2023 encourages all young people to be ambitious in their engagement as positive and constructive citizens, to join the movement to reach the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals and contribute to building sustainable peace. They also raised awareness about 2023 being the 75th anniversaries of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of Genocide.



Athina and Anastasia speaking at the Year 8 Assembly.

Students were also asked to take action by joining the global movement for change and to download the ActNow Challenge app, or enter the peace themed photography competition, and encourage each other to perform random acts of kindness. Their message -Together we can help to lead our world towards a greener, more equitable, just, and secure future for all. Much appreciation to Ms Kaccoufa for leading this activity.

Chemists at work

The Chemistry department is proud to share some photos of recent experiments in Year 10 Chemistry as well as to celebrate the excellent recent exam results:



Reaction of ammonia and hydrogen chloride gases to form a white smoke of ammonium chloride



Investigation of the rate of diffusion of potassium permanganate at different temperatures

In common with other subjects at school, at the heart of our educational philosophy in Chemistry is our student-centred approach, which allow learners to have practical hands-on experience in the laboratory and to visualize the abstract world using technology. An outstanding beginning to the year, Chemistry! Many thanks to our new Subject Lead of Chemistry, Ms Papasavva.

Empowering Education Through Art: A level Greek students attend "Rat Park" performance

On Friday, 22nd September, A level Greek students, accompanied by their Greek teachers, were treated to an eye-opening performance of "Rat Park". This powerful production delivered a compelling message about addictions and their profound impact on society. The performance featured our exceptionally talented George Spaneas, Year 13.

"Rat Park" was not just a theatrical event; it was reported to be a transformative experience for everyone in attendance. The performance brilliantly blended art with education, allowing students a unique opportunity to explore complex themes both inside and outside the classroom. Many thanks to the Greek Department for enabling an enriching educational experience that transcends traditional classroom learning and which can be instrumental in shaping well-rounded individuals.

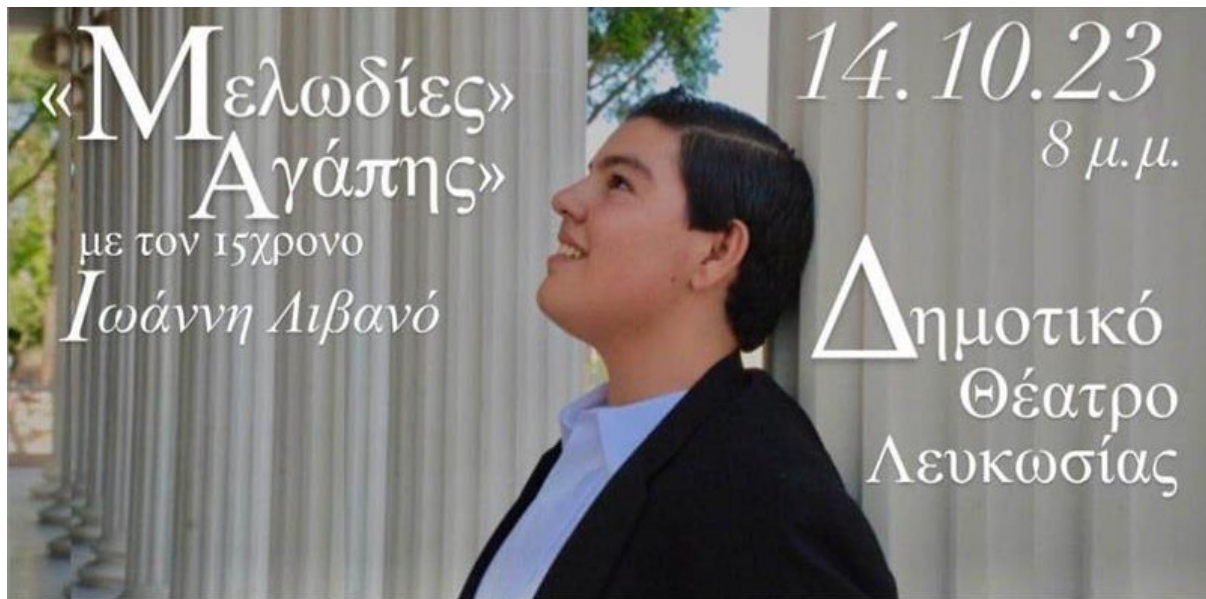
BWB - Recognition

Congratulations to Dr Stavrou for her drive in leading our Buddies without Borders club. Indeed, it is gratifying to note her recognition globally. She has consistently supported our students' efforts in establishing the BWB club in our school and this has empowered them to bring their local action plans to fruition. Dr Stavrou's efforts have been recognized by *Global Education Destinations* under which all BWB clubs fall and by Ms Yihung Mohs, founder and Chief Executive officer for the organization. Please see this wonderful article via the following link:

<https://www.globaleducationdestinations.org/post/congratulations-to-dr-irene-stavrou-global-educators-of-the-year>

Good luck, Ioannis!

On the 14th October, at 8pm, Ioannis Livanos (Year 10) will be singing live at his first ever fundraising concert at Nicosia Municipal Theatre. All proceeds from the tickets will be donated to «Μικροί ήρωες» - small heroes – a charity foundation dedicated to assisting the families of children battling cancer.



Ioannis has expressed how much it would mean to him to see his peers but most importantly, his teachers there cheering him on. The event promises to be a successful evening and we hope to see many of you there supporting Ioannis. Tickets can be booked online via SoldOut tickets.

New Student Leadership

We would like to congratulate our new student leaders on their appointment:

Anna-Myria Oxnoa: Head Girl

Charidimos (Harry) Ioannou: Head Boy

Athena Savva: Deputy Head Girl

Mohaned Alghol: Deputy Head Boy

These young people have already shown themselves to be mature, responsible and well organised in their approach to their duties as student leaders. We look forward to a productive and collaborative year. Their role is essentially to lead not only the student body but also to represent the entire school community at events both in and out of school. A highly demanding role, we thank them for stepping up and taking on the mantle of leadership.

A new look for Pastoral Care:

We now have in place 7 Heads of Year for the 7 year groups. Their role is to oversee and support all the students in their care and to respond to any concerns (academic, personal wellbeing, etc.) along with driving our newly introduced PSHE programme throughout the school:

Head of Year 7: Ms Lysimachi Vasiliou

Head of Year 8: Ms Joanna Drousiotou

Head of Year 9: Ms Elena Andreou

Head of Year 10: Ms Katerina Ioannou

Head of Year 11: Dr Ioanna Skordi

Head of Year 12: Mr Guy Dean

Head of Year 13 (and 6th Form Coordinator): Ms Konstantina Varvatsoulis

These Year Heads are also supported by our Deputy Head Pastoral, Ms Eithne O’Riordan and Assistant Head, Ms Anne-Marie Theodorou. We thank them all for stepping up and leading on a vital component of school life which ultimately underpins all success (academic, personal growth, mental and emotional wellbeing, resilience, etc.).

Sports School: Football

We are excited to see our newly formed football provision begin as of this September under the leadership of our new Head Coach, Mr Constantinos Charalambides. Good luck to all!



Season underway at the GSP stadium

I would also like to note at this point that this summer we bid farewell to some Senior School teaching staff for this academic year. We wish them all well in their future endeavours:

Dr Beth Ashfield – Appointed to a new role at an international school in Indonesia

Ms Maria Xystra – Appointed to public school

Ms Nicolena Efthymiou - Appointed to public school

Mr George Klokkaris - Appointed to public school

Mr Mark Wilkinson - Taking up post at an international school in Indonesia

Mr Procopis Anastasiou – New position

Ms Maria Ptochides – Retired

Mr Pantelis Ropalis – New Position

Ms Aphrodite Eliopoulos – New position

Ms Eva Pantazidou – New Position

Mr Athanasios Archontides – New position

The beginning of the final stretch for our Year 13s

As this academic year's graduating class, Year 13s have begun the year in good spirits along with a determination to both succeed academically and to enjoy their final year with the Senior School.

We wish them the best of luck on this last leg of their journey with us!



Year 13 (SSL24) on the mark...

And a warm welcome to our new Year 7s!

Induction Day at the SS and Building Friendships on the trip to Kyperounta



On Wednesday, 5th September all Year 7 students spent their first day at the Senior School with their Form Tutors and their mentors. Students were led on tours of the school with their mentors, went through rules, expectations and procedures with their Form Tutors and had the chance to meet their new classmates as well as enjoying some team-building activities.



Orienteering in the wilderness

On Friday 8th September Year 7s enjoyed a day of activities designed to forge new friendships at the Adventure Mountain Park in Kyperounta along with their Form Tutors, their Head of Year, Ms Vasiliou, and our Director of Sports, Ms Parpotta.

Many thanks to all involved in Induction Day and the Kyperounta excursion, and in particular, Ms Vasiliou for putting together the programme of activities.

Careers Department News

Our Careers Officer, Mrs Stella Petrou, recently travelled to Milan to visit the NABA university as well as the Instituto Marangoni which are institutions that combine advanced teaching methods with the latest developments in fashion, design and art. The collaboration with these two highly prestigious institutions will certainly open up exciting opportunities for those students who may choose such career paths.

Moreover, NABA has been invited by our school to deliver a workshop for our students on 11th October where students will be able to meet Professor Michele Corradini from NABA institute and attend the Cyanotype workshop - the art of printing with the sun.

On 21st September, we had a visit from the University of Bristol for a presentation with Year 13, 12 and 11 students with regard to studying at Bristol University, courses and entry requirements as well as details on scholarships. Our students showed great interest in this organised visit and took the opportunity to ask questions and gather as much information as possible for their future studies and applications.

Careers events for October:

Name of event	Presenter	Date	Years	Place
Presentation for applications to Ireland	Embassy of Ireland	3/10/23	Year 12 and 13	Assembly Hall
Art workshop	NABA university /Italy	11/10/23	Year 12 and 13	Assembly Hall
Private university presentation	American University of Beirut / Cyprus	13/10/23	Year 11, 12 and 13	Assembly Hall
University presentation	Essex university / UK	16/10/23	Year 12 and 13	Assembly Hall
ICAEW presentation	ICAEW	17/10/23+ 06/11/23	Year 12 and 13	Assembly Hall
Mini educational fair	Netherlands, France, Switzerland and Italy	20/10/23	Open to all SS students	Assembly Hall

****Breaking news****

EYP representation - The Senior School has done it again!

Three of our students have been selected to represent Cyprus as part of a delegation of 6, in Istanbul, Turkey for the *European Youth Parliament*. The other 3 delegates have been chosen from the English School.

The event will take place in early May 2024.

The students are: Pavlos Bismal in Y12, Charis Chrisanthou Y12 and Iliana Skordi in Y11.

Wishing all students, staff and parents a productive, exciting and active new academic year!

Yiannis Georgiou

Senior School Headteacher