

Headteacher's Newsletter November 2023

Quotes of the month:

Technology can be our best friend, and technology can also be the biggest party pooper of our lives. It interrupts our own story, interrupts our ability to have a thought or a daydream, to imagine something wonderful, because we're too busy bridging the walk from the cafeteria back to the office on the cell phone.

Steven Spielberg
Movie director/producer

The Web as I envisaged it, we have not seen it yet. The future is still so much bigger than the past.

Tim Berners-Lee
Inventor of the Internet

We have recently implemented our latest policy on mobile phone use at the SS and have received very positive feedback from parents and staff. Perhaps not so much from students, but we believe that in the longer term this will become fully accepted. In the meantime, we are in the process of exploring how we can further develop our digital strategy in the school for pedagogical and other administrative uses. Indeed, we have set up a team dedicated to what we term 'Digital Transformation' with a view to establishing a 3-year strategic plan that aims to set new standards of excellence through innovative and technology-driven education. Essentially what this means is our taking on an analysis of our current status, our needs and key objectives, which will lead to the establishment of a basis upon which we plan to build a dynamic and responsive digital ecosystem.

Our key objectives include a number of features such as utilizing technology to support engaging and interactive learning experiences, to foster critical thinking, creativity, and problem-solving skills through digital tools and resources, allowing students to feel comfortable and confident with the use of digital resources. We also are focused on promoting better parental engagement through channels and platforms as well as placing data at the centre of much of our school and student improvement diagnostics. As you will appreciate, there is much work to be done and we will require clarity of purpose and vision to see this transformation through to fruition.

One of the ways we have begun extending our use of data for improvement is through ALPS Data training, which assists in informing the development of teaching and learning strategies. Data based analysis of results and incisive breakdown of data allow us to fully understand our performance and the steps required for further improvement. In essence this is a performance analysis of examination results which is designed to measure our progress against aspirational benchmarks based on the data base made up of real students sitting exams at GCSE and A level in the UK and internationally. The use of this data, along with other

tools, can help us to ensure all students achieve their potential as well as encourage or nurture a culture that is centred on continuous improvement: This is our first year in making use of such data and we have held training for middle and senior leaders to learn about its potential. (For those interested: <https://alps.education/how-alps-works/>)

November has seen a myriad of activity in our school. But, first of all, let us celebrate yet more success for our students. In addition to last month's news on the extraordinary achievements of students sitting Pearson Edexcel exams (where most of our exam entries are made), we can also announce that the following will be awarded for their performance in Cambridge International Exams:

For the summer session in 2023, Olivia Iacovou is *Top in Cyprus for Cambridge IGCSE Literature in English* and Penelope Artemis is *Top in Cyprus for Cambridge International AS Level Literature in English*. Congratulations to both and to the English Department for yet more success.

SS writers shine!

In addition, we are proud to announce that two of our students were successfully shortlisted in the prestigious *Oxbright Essay Competition*. *This competition* attracts over 1000 entries globally!

Emily Kyriakides wrote a brilliant essay in response to the question "How can long-term thinking in the field of Politics foster optimism about the future?" And Danae Kartoude produced an outstanding piece addressing the question, "How can long-term thinking in the field of History foster optimism about the future?" The panel of judges awarded our students a free place at an *OxBright academic conference*. Well done to both Emily and Danae and congrats to the English and History departments!



Extraordinary achievement, Emily and Danae!

JA team innovators recognized!



On Saturday 18th of November, The Junior Achievement team, 'Connecteen', received an award for innovation at the *Cyprus Youth Tech Awards* held at the University of Nicosia. We are incredibly proud of our students and their teacher, Mr. Afantitis, for his support and wish them great success!

Great work from Connecteen!

First Aid Champions



On 24th November, 20 of our Year 12 and 9 Year 13 students were successful in passing their first aid exams where they learned about Cardiopulmonary resuscitation, how to use the recovery position, and how to save someone who is choking along with a range of other important first aid skills. Well done to all in acquiring both the qualification and vital lifesaving skills. Many thanks also to their teacher, Mr Vyrides.



Year 13 lifesavers!

Sports Week, a grand success!

Sports week was calendared a little earlier this year and was once again a resounding success. One keenly anticipated tradition is the teachers v students events. On Day One, the teaching staff won the basketball match, and on Tuesday were again winners in football. However, Wednesday saw students get into their stride and defeat teachers in volleyball! Well done to teachers and students who participated during their breaks. Your participation was greatly appreciated!



Students v teachers – let the games begin!

As to Sports Day itself, The PE department once again organized a full-day event for all of the Key Stages. All students had the opportunity to be involved and compete in inter-house competition. Well done to all staff and students, and in particular to the PE department for their organisation and leadership of all events.



High jump approach



Mr Glykis oversees long jump event



Year 13 - True to the traditions of SS Sports Days!

Sports School special guest appearance!

The SS had the rare privilege of welcoming professional footballer, Giorgos Efrem! Mr Efrem was able to share invaluable insights about his journey to becoming one of Cyprus' finest football stars. His tales about dedication, perseverance, and hard work resonated

deeply with our students, hopefully igniting a passion for excellence within each one of them! Thanks to our Elite Football Coach, Mr Constantinos Charalambides, for making this unforgettable experience possible.



Budding football stars in the company of Cyprus' elites

UCY visit for SS Students

We pride ourselves on planning for as many motivating and productive offsite visits as possible and the Greek Department is no exception. The department recently organized an educational visit to the University of Cyprus, where students enjoyed a fascinating tour and exploration of the state-of-the-art library and Language Lab, the only Language Lab in Cyprus. The library visit also gave students an opportunity to carry out valuable work on current projects in the curriculum. Following a productive session, students relaxed at the cafeteria, immersing themselves in the vibrant atmosphere of student life.










Admiring the inner core of the library!



Learning how to search for books and how to use the library effectively

Science Week

In November, we were fortunate to enjoy a week dedicated to Science at the SS.

 Science Week November 6th-10th, 2023				
Biology Day Monday 6/11  1st break: Biodiversity games @ Hall Foyer 2nd break: Gardening fun @ Science Park	Chemistry Day Tuesday 7/11  1st break: Dry Ice activity 2nd break: Whoosh bottle demo Hall Foyer/ Outside Veranda	Physics Day Wednesday 8/11  1st break: Physics activities Outside Veranda 2nd break: Ask a Physicist @ the Hall	Psychology Day Thursday 9/11  Break times in the Hall Foyer / Outside Veranda Optical illusions & Stroop Effect activities	World Science Day Friday 10/11  Both breaks: Bake sale @ Hall foyer Evening Presentation @ the Hall – 6.45 pm Meet Nicola Picele – Galactic Pilot/Astronaut 

The Science Faculty celebrated Science Week with many opportunities for students and staff to enjoy some Science learning. Biology Day started the week with activities that raised awareness on research exploring nature's inspiration in biomimicry product development (iridescence in currency, Nano-Text fabric that repels liquids and stains which mimics the Lotus Effect) Velcro from burrs, fast swimsuits from shark skin and self-cooling buildings from termite dens) and a gardening activity aimed at creating useable lab materials. The Chemistry



Day celebrations were filled with lots of colours and excitement with dry ice demos that filled the first break with the wonders of water bottle explosions and second break with a whoosh bottle rocket activity. The Physics day celebrations included full student participation in a Physics word guessing game as well as the opportunity for students to ask Physicists any questions within the "Adopt a Physicist" programme. The Psychology department had activities demonstrating perception through optical illusions, discussed mindfulness and presented mindfulness activities and fun games displaying memory theories. The week ended with a Science-themed bake sale that raised over €350 euros for *BirdLife Cyprus* and our Science Park initiative for the purchase of a Solar Tree. We all appreciate the preparation and organisation of the week from Ms Iordanou and her Science Faculty team.

Business Week

November also saw the school celebrate Business Week with a number of activities related to the subjects of Economics, Business Studies, Accounting and Financial Education.

Our four *Junior Achievement Cyprus* Companies also were on hand to present their products:

Encased - customizable, durable and sustainable phone cases.

Ambrosia - all natural essential oil-based fragrances for everyone)

Sweet Tooth - ingredient mixes for sweets

Bioignite - eco-friendly petrol tablet designed with a strong focus on environmental sustainability.

All 4 had the opportunity to present their products and answer questions with regards to the set-up of their company.

One of the highlights of the week was the Bake Sale in support of 'Γκολ στην Ζωή'/'Goal in Life', a voluntary-charity organization (the first footballer-led charity organization of its kind in Cyprus which aims to support those most vulnerable in the community through united action). A representative of the organization, Mr. Nectarios Alexandrou, also a former footballer, together with two other football players, Mr. Paris Psaltis and Mr. Panayiotis Zachariou visited our school and talked to the students about the organization's work.



'Goal in Life' footballing representatives – The highlight of Business Week

Many thanks also to The Viridians, who supported during the week, as well as to Ms. Stella Parpotta, Director of Sports, and our Year 12 student, Stephanie Pandela, for her lovely contemporary dance performance. Much appreciation to Mr Pipis and his team for a hugely successful week.

Buddies Without Borders – Continuing initiatives

The BWB is still going strong and is this year focused on the Sustainable Development Goal: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions. The intent is to contribute as a student collective to the most critical social inequities on a national and international level. As such, a range of activities and initiatives have been planned. The group plan to work with Mrs Filippou, Head of Music and the school orchestra and visit "ΙΡΙΔΑ", a therapeutic centre which provides multidisciplinary therapy, including music and art therapy for severely disabled young people and young adults in Nicosia. The visit will aim to communicate musically with the patients in a creative, non-verbal way through a short performance. BWB also plan to support the centre with a donation from the proceeds of a movie night (200 Euro raised!).

BWB have also been active in support of the Nicosia Dog Shelter via the campaign, *Paws for a Cause*. They are collecting urgently required supplies for the shelter whilst simultaneously highlighting the significant impact of local and global adversities on the wellbeing of animals. All students are being encouraged to donate products such as dog food, towels, blankets, beds, leashes, and toys.

Upcoming initiatives planned by this vibrant group include the idea of hosting a panel discussion with active, young individuals from Cyprus to promote the importance of the voice of young people in policy-making, including Helen Zhu, (SSL22), BWB's co-President last year who is currently a PPE student at Sommerville College, Oxford and, Christos Parmakkis, a local youth advocate and Cyprus' youth representative at the EU.

Well done, BWB, for continuing to raise awareness and promote student voice and student action in the community. Many thanks also to the lead teacher of the BWB, Dr Stavrou.

Year 9 students in charity drive for animal welfare

Well done to Year 9 students Ioanna Isabella Grimm, Emma Plati, Christina Tsangaridou, Anna Athanatou and Stephania Filippou, who raised €130 from a bake sale for *Humane Society International*, a global organisation that works to protect all animals from mistreatment and abuse.

Youth Tech Fest Awards for Student-led STEAM project work

Two teams of enthusiastic KS3 Science students were recently recognized for their commitment and impressive work in their creative STEAM related projects on November 18th at the Youth Tech Fest held at the University of Nicosia. The two projects are: The “Nature’s Tiny Recycling Warriors” project led by Ivan Symeonides, Polina Lebedeva, Nikolas Maroudis (current Year 8 students) who are now working on a tissue regeneration project; and “Waste To Watts: Powering The Future With Biomethanation” project currently being completed by Alexandros Kyriakides, Emily Adams, Kaliroi Mouzaki, Shashank Rengarajan (current Year 9 students) and Iasonas Sakkas (current Year 7 student). Their project mentor, Ms. Melina Chrysostomou and the Head of Science Mrs. Katerina Iordanou, were on hand at the awards ceremony to celebrate their achievement. Congratulations to our keen scientists!



Poetry workshop at the SS

English Literature students enjoyed a fascinating poetry workshop at the Senior School in early November. This workshop, led by Norwegian poet, Sarah Camille Osmundsen and Cypriot poet Maria Kouvarou, was also accompanied by the lyrical guitar music of Jorn Erik Alkager.

The English Department had invited the two slam poets as part of the 6th International Literary Festival, 'To the sea-girt shores of Cyprus'. Students and staff were in awe of the content of the poetry as well as the captivating performance that was shared with us. Our gratitude goes out to the poets who demonstrated to students the significance of form and structure in poetry. Well done to the English Literature students also for making such insightful points and displaying such maturity of thought during the question-and-answer component of the workshop! And congrats to Ms Kasparides and her team for organising such a wonderful event.



Ms Osmundsen performing her poetry, accompanied by Mr Alkager on guitar.

Year 13 Biology Field Studies Trip

The annual field studies trip to the Akamas area took place November 11th-12th with a group of Year 13 Biology students and supervised by Mr. John Pipis and Mrs. Katerina Iordanou. The students participated in a weekend of outdoor learning that included a walk to the Kremiotis stream, and ecological studies at Pikni Forest and the Kissonerga rocky shore. Students were able to apply their knowledge of theory learned on sampling techniques to complete two core practical investigations, the results for which are now being analysed back in the classroom to extend learning to data analysis and conclusions from investigations. Congratulations to the participating students for their hard work throughout the weekend and for being wonderful Senior School ambassadors.



SS Biology students on the Akamas coast

SS students meet astronaut!



On Friday 10th November our students were able to meet online with Virgin Galactic pilot, Nicola Pecile, at the Senior School Hall for a very special presentation he had specifically prepared for us followed by an extensive interactive Q&A session that allowed our students a unique opportunity to engage with him on a range of space-related topics. Mr Pecile talked about his role in the company for whom he is a test pilot and the challenges they face as well as the science behind space missions. We are very grateful for the time he allocated to our students. Many thanks also to Ms Monou for setting up the event.

DOE International Bronze Awardees – Congratulations to all on their achievement:

Aayush Ramdas
Alexandros Demetriades
Alice Joseph
Annita Hadjipanayi
Antonis Spanos
Benjamin Zeller
Daniel Cleanthous
Elena Oxynou
Giorgos Theodoulou
Ioannis Aristidou

Nefeli Yiangou Readman
Noah Nathanael
Noam Farhang
Orestis Constantinou
Philippas Carneiro Leao
Rohan Stylianos Dubey
Roman Bobrov
Sylvia Michaelides
Yiangos Grimm
Lara Partassis

Jordan Christodoulides
Katerina Paschalidou
Lucia Mylonas
Marilia Evangelou
Marisa Ierodiaconou
Nearchos Georgios Ioannides

Bartholomew Wilkinson
Amerissa Tsikala
Daniella Metaxa
Nestoras Panayiotou Ioannou
Evdokia Deftera

Launch of the joint SS-JS Teaching and Learning Community (TLC)

We are delighted to introduce you to our *Teaching and Learning Community* – a group of enthusiastic and passionate teachers who are working towards fostering a stimulating, innovative and reflective learning journey for both students and teachers at the Junior and Senior School.

Our exciting initiative aims to contribute to and help support the development of a shared approach to teaching and learning across the school, and they aim to achieve this by tapping into the wealth of unique strengths and skills nesting within our school community. The primary focus this year is to encourage student-centred learning and to foster a community of independent, metacognitive learners who exhibit positive learning behaviours, engage in constructive learning experiences, and who aspire to reach their true potential and beyond.

Meet the TLC:

Ms Anastasia Papanastasiou (Head of MFL, TLC lead)
Ms Dimitra Dinos (Y3 teacher, Year 3 Group Leader)
Ms Anthi Kostopoulou (English teacher)
Ms Eleni Kallitsi (Deputy Head, Curriculum, Assessment, Teaching and Learning, English teacher)
Ms Maria Monou (Physics teacher)
Ms Marion Paschali (Art teacher)
Dr Ioanna Skordi (Greek teacher, Head of Y11)
Ms Eleanora Yiallourous (Mathematics teacher)

Many thanks to the TLC team for all their efforts! In particular, much appreciation to Ms Kallitsi who has planned and led this very important initiative to drive substantive development of teaching and learning in our school.

Microsoft recognition!

Well done and congrats to our own Mr Nick Paphitis who has been recognised in the Microsoft Newsletter for Greece and Cyprus (December 2023) for his massive contributions to tutorials on *Training for and Passing the MCE Exam* for the Cyprus community: [MCE & MIEE \(Microsoft Certified Educator, Microsoft Innovative Educator Expert\) - YouTube](#)

Key dates in December:

7th December: **Awards Evening.** We will be recognising academic achievements of our students and we will be honoured with the presence of the Minister of Education, Ms Athena Michaelides.

13th December – **SS Open Day.** Our doors will be open to welcome all visitors as we put on show our school and the range of subjects and activities our students enjoy.

Yiannis Georgiou

Senior School Headteacher