



# Newsletter

Issue #2  
9, September 2015

This Week's Newsletter:

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A new suite of Apple Macs and iPads has arrived. It will take some time to install them but we are all looking forward to a state of the art IT lab.



## From the Principal's Desk

Dear Parents

Thank you to all those who were able to join us for the Primary and Secondary 'Back to School' nights. These evenings not only allow teachers, school leaders and parents to forge important relationships, they also give us an opportunity to share the vision for the school, outline its educational values and give some practical information about the school and class routine. Please keep in touch with your class teacher and if there is anything you would like to discuss with me, I am usually out in front of the school as the children arrive in the mornings.

In this week's newsletter I'd like to share with you ten simple things you can do to help your child succeed at school. They will not cost you anything, but will take up your most valuable commodity: your time. They are not equally applicable to 18 year olds as to 4 year olds, so please pick and choose.

1. Read stories to your children every day. Research has consistently shown that for children in Primary School this is one of the most effective ways to stimulate brain growth, encourage higher order thinking and prepare them to write essays later on in their educational careers. Encourage them to read independently. Have some books in other languages around the house: get some French and Arabic books.
2. Children thrive in routine and order. Get them into a steady routine that gives them at least nine hours of sleep a night, have a regular time for homework and always start the day with a hearty, nutritional breakfast. You cannot expect them to concentrate in class if they are low on sleep or hungry.
3. Praise is to children what water is to flowers: it must be given regularly and in the right doses. Praise effort and perseverance. Praising them for being naturally good-looking or clever is fine, but praise for writing a good piece of prose or completing a major research assignment shows that you acknowledge hard work and diligence.
4. Train your kids to organize themselves. Show them how to keep a diary in which they make a list of tasks that need to be done. Help them to plan ahead for major assignments. Teach them to manage their time so that their schedule allows for both work and play. Get a whiteboard on which they can record things that need to be remembered. Have them pack their schoolbags the night before.



## GCP Coffee Morning



## Secondary Back to School Night



5. Teach them to take and shoulder responsibilities. Give them chores that are appropriate to their age: feeding the dog, taking out the rubbish, cooking the family dinner. In doing so, children learn to be accountable and develop the self-discipline of doing things they don't enjoy but have to be done.
6. Children thrive when they know that all the adults in their lives are working together. Take time to get to know your children's teachers and school leaders. They are important people in your children's lives.
7. Spend time with your children doing the things they enjoy doing. Kick the soccer ball around in the garden, go swimming, play board games, build Lego houses, do some colouring in or fix the bicycle together. Do the things you remember enjoying when you were a child. Dads, have a regular 'date' with your daughter where you take her out for a meal, just the two of you, where you can talk with no distractions. I haven't met many young children who really enjoy walking around shopping malls for hours and hours.
8. Keep up the learning when you're on holiday. Reinforce the reading, writing and mathematics that they have been learning during the year so that they will start off the new term with those skills fresh in their minds. Go to the art gallery or museum. Watch some classic movies and discuss the plot and characters afterwards.
9. Teach them that choices have consequences. If they choose to be honest, everyone benefits. If an adult chooses to drive the car too fast, the consequence is a speeding fine. Don't feel sorry for yourself. Teach them that when they are frustrated or upset they can choose how to respond and that there are positive and negative ways to express those emotions. If they choose to be lazy and not do their homework, a punishment will follow. Whatever happens, don't rush off to the teacher to cover up and make excuses for them.
10. Place limits on screen time. Smartphones, iPads and TV's are addictive and there is no research to show that they have any educational benefits. They are a part of 21st century life, but there also needs to be time for talking to family, reading books, riding bikes and playing around the pool. These are all a vital part of a happy childhood.

Best wishes

Andrew Wood  
Greenfield Community School Principal



## Secondary Back to School Night



## Secondary School News



### Secondary School Head of Secondary: Mr. Neil Bunting

I believe the secondary school has made a good start to the year but there is certainly plenty more to do and to improve on. No two days are the same and that is an exciting feature of being a school head and wearing many hats!

We have wonderful students at this school and I have met many of them already in mini grade level assemblies. I believe strongly in student voice and I will be involving and listening to the student opinions through the student council and giving them opportunity to speak and present. I have mentioned a great deal to the students that with their rights come responsibilities and next week at the assembly I will be reminding them that study hall comes into action for non-compliance with school expectations regarding uniform, punctuality and equipment. The students are getting accustomed to the new day and the two week timetable and we will very shortly be starting the extra curricula program. Details to follow on the sign up.

The ECA program is optional, but strongly encouraged. Holistic learning is very important for developing well rounded learners. For example, playing the piano has been proven to help math sequential learning and sport with social skills as well as fitness. We hope the students will enjoy the options on offer. There will be a 3:30 bus after ECA, study hall and for Grade 11 and 12 students.

I want to thank parents for the positive feedback on the Secondary Back to School Night. We will make use of the feedback we received with regard to maps and communication of the dates earlier, but the thinking really was to give parents that early opportunity to meet their class teachers.

I believe experiential learning outside of the classroom and creating real life situations related to subject learning to make learning come alive is very important. In relation to this I would like to remind parents that on **Tuesday, September 15th**, there will be presentations and Q and A sessions with World Challenge with regard to proposed forthcoming trips to Tanzania (Grades 8 and 9) and Ethiopia (Grades 10-12). There will also be a presentation on a proposed forthcoming Grade 8 camp.

## Secondary School News

### Grade 10 cardboard creature challenge lesson



If you would be at all interested for your child please attend these important information giving sessions.

- Grade 8 – camp in UAE – Auditorium 5pm.
- Grade 8 and 9 – expedition to Tanzania – Auditorium 6pm.
- Grade 10 and 11 – expedition to Ethiopia – MYP library 5pm.

The Secondary GCP coffee morning is this Thursday 10 September at 8am in the secondary library.

Kind regards,

Neil Bunting

Head of Secondary

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### From The Head Student

#### Grade 12's helping out with the MYP to DP transition

Transitioning from MYP to the IB is not something that can come along easily, but luckily for the grade 11's they had the grade 12's right by their side supporting them when needed. They helped them grasp a better understanding of the requirements of the DP

and how to manage their time for better academic outcomes. The grade 11's and 12's have been working collaboratively in their common room and there have been no complications since the year has begun. It is great to see how well they seem to be working with one another and we hope that they maintain the charisma until this batch of grade 12's graduate and then follow through to the next batch of grade 11's. The year has just begun and friendships are yet to be built, but we hope to see this atmosphere maintained throughout the year.

Fawzi Mashal & Giuseppe Ascone Modica

Head Boy & Deputy Head Boy



## Primary School News

### Primary Back to School Night

#### Primary School

#### Deputy Head of Primary: Mr. Jamie Plunket



Dear Parents,

On behalf of the staff in the Primary School, I am happy to welcome you all to the 2015-2016 school year! We are looking forward to a productive partnership with you to ensure our children can achieve their highest potential. We recognise that in order to be successful in school, our children need support from both the home and school. A strong partnership from both sides will make a great difference to your child's education and allow them to continue their education journey at GCS. It was a pleasure to welcome so many parents to our 'Back To School Night' and I hope you left the presentations feeling assured both on an academic and social level that your children are in the right place.

One of my initiatives as the Deputy Head of the Primary School, working alongside Mrs Khawaja, is to ensure that every student feels valued and has a voice. At the forefront of this will be the Primary Student Council, who will be meeting on a weekly basis to push through their ideas and plans for the school year. In the first meeting, the students were deciding on their 'Mission' and 'Vision' to ensure all voices are heard. You will be hearing about their ideas over the coming weeks and they will be asking for the support of parents as well as students to ensure every stakeholder plays their part in pushing GCS forward.

A lot of work behind the scenes from our dedicated staff has gone into setting the Primary School up so that academic lessons get going straight away. The IB Learner Profile will be at the heart of these lessons and students who showcase these important traits may be recognised with the IB Learner of the Week trophy.

Away from the classroom, in the coming weeks will see the launch of our ECA Programme, sporting fixtures getting under way and parental coffee mornings. There will be workshops to keep you informed of further initiatives and changes to help take the Primary School forward.

I look forward to meeting you over the coming weeks and please if you have any queries regarding your child's education the communication chain will allow these to be answered in the quickest and smoothest way.

Sincerely

Jamie Plunkett

Deputy Head of Primary



## Primary School News

**3JH Photos - Who We Are  
(Collaboration, Creativity,  
Commitment, Enthusiasm)**



### Grade 3 News

We have been off to a fantastic start of the year in 3JH! We have learned about ourselves and each other through collaborative work and cooperation. We started the week by thinking about who we are and what qualities we have. The children discovered that there are many parts to each of us and that we have many commonalities as well as interesting differences.

The children worked hard to express themselves through group discussions, enquiry, poetry and art work. They worked particularly hard in being creative and making boxes that were filled with different objects and photos, which built a picture of who they were as individuals. The children were very excited to find out interesting facts about their classmates and asked many thoughtful questions.

Towards the end of the week, 3JH were split into four groups and were given a challenge - to build the tallest tower they could, using only spaghetti and marshmallows as construction materials! They had a really fun time and drew on many of the qualities and positive attitudes that we had discussed during the first week; cooperation, commitment, respect and creativity. They learned a lot about the importance of listening to new ideas and working as a team!

We are all excited about the next few weeks, as we begin to discover more about who we are and develop strong self-beliefs and values. Watch this space!!!

Mr. Jonathan Harris

3JH Teacher

### Student Council President

Hi everyone

My name is Lara Botha and I am your PYP student council president for 2015-2016. Throughout this year the student council will be very active to make GCS a better place. The student council and I are busy working on our Mission and Vision and will let you know what we want to achieve this year. We will be using a notice board next to the library to communicate .



If you have any questions please feel free to ask me or any of the other student council members. I hope you have fun in GCS and I look forward to meeting all of you.

Lara Botha

Student Council President

## Whole School News

### Basketball Sports Team (2014-15)



### The Sports Page

Welcome back to the new sports year at GCS. There have been some exciting developments in athletics, allowing us to increase the quality and breadth of our sports program. We would like every child at GCS to be active and achieve success in their chosen sporting activity. The athletics department aims to offer a range of activities with both elite and inclusive opportunities.

Over the next few months I will introduce you to our new team and the skills they bring to GCS. We will be continuing to push for increased success in our competitive and experience programs. In future editions, I will also discuss what it is to be a Griffin.

### ECA & Sports in Term 1

The ECA programs in both Primary and Secondary will have many sporting opportunities, some as squads but with lots of participation activities as well.

We have 12 football squads this term ranging from Grade 2 to 12 along with a strong basketball program. We will be starting netball early to ensure that our teams are ready for their competitive season in Term 2. With new expertise in the department, Touch Rugby will also be offered along with Tennis in MYP. Our Swimsquads will be stepping up their game to continue with their success from last year.

### Facilities Upgrades

During the summer we had a few upgrades to sporting facilities around the school. The MYP pitch has a new surface and some seating has been added to the hard area behind the pool providing a seating for spectators. The Gym had a major overhaul; a new floor has been laid with the most up-to-date lines for multiple activities. Our most exciting addition has been 6 new basketball hoops, making us one of the best-resourced basketball facilities in Dubai.

Matt Christensen

Athletics Director

## Primary School News

### Grade 1 in Action



### Extra Curricular Activities

Our ECA program will start on Sunday, 27th September and continue until Thursday, 10th December. We try to offer a broad range of activities across grades 1 – 5. The number of outside activities is limited this term because of the hot weather.

Our ECAs take place on Sunday, Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday from 2.30pm to 3.30pm.

Parents should receive the sign-up link on Thursday, 10th September and the link will open on Sunday, 13th September and close on Sunday, 20th September.

We are all looking forward to a fantastic ECA program in 2015-2016.

Kind regards,

Barry Burns

ECA Coordinator.



### Whole School News

#### Greenfield Advisory Board

Firstly, may I take this opportunity to welcome our students, teachers and parents back after the summer holiday. I hope that the summer break was a wonderful time of rest and recuperation and time well spent with your families. A special welcome to our new students and teachers – welcome to the Greenfield Community School family.

I look forward to the year ahead with all the positive changes that have been brought about. Our new school auditorium and sports hall is of the best I have ever seen, and shows the wonderful commitment Taaleem have made in furthering education. Our new staff, are of the highest calibre and will give our children the first class education we all expect of them.

A big thank you also needs to be said to the GCP committee and parents. They have hit the ground running again this year. The GCP's contribution to the start of the new year is greatly appreciated and has been wonderfully received by all. Boy what a "slick operation" you run.

In the ongoing development of our schools, the Advisory Board is being structured this year to accommodate and cater for the demands of our developing school. I will shortly give you further updates with these developments.

To all our students, our teachers and our parents, may I take this opportunity to wish you all a successful and fulfilled 2015-2016 academic year.

Boyd Edmondson

Chairman – Advisory Board"



## Whole School News

### Grade 6 in the Science Lab



### Sleep, learning and the teenage brain

To be physically, mentally and cognitively healthy, adolescents need about 9 hours of sleep per night. If this is said to nine out of ten teenagers, they will laugh. What teenager has time to sleep for 9 hours a night during a school year?

According to a study in the Journal of Adolescent Health, only 8 percent of American teenagers get the sleep they need. The rest live with chronic sleep deprivation – some mild to moderate, but more than half (59%) have severe sleep deprivation meaning they sleep on average six hours or less during most school nights.

The American Academy of Pediatrics notes that lack of sleep not only undermines teenagers' safety and their academic performance, but puts them at higher risk for depression and obesity. The AAP supports later start times for high schools.

There are lifestyle changes that high school students can make, and even several small changes can have a big effect on their well-being.

### How can teenagers win back a few hours a night?

- **It takes commitment**

It is one thing to enforce bedtime for a younger child, but when it comes to adolescents, it's trickier. Teenagers aren't likely to change their sleep habits unless they recognize that more sleep will make them feel better and improve their performance in school. Both teenagers and parents have to be willing to put in the effort. It is hard, but parents need to show that it is important, and talk it out.

- **Parents are important**

There is good evidence that parental help with limit-setting around bedtimes and study times are helpful. It is hard to jump in with teenagers if you have not started when the child is younger. Despite adolescents' expectations of independence, parental influence and expectations really do help teenagers make better decisions about managing their time.

- **Be consistent**

Consistency is really crucial in terms of building healthy sleep habits. That means it is important for teenagers to go to bed as close as possible to the same time every night, and get as close to 8 hours of sleep as possible. It is also important for him or her to stick to the same schedule, within reason, on the weekends.

## Whole School News

### Grade 8 decorating the Art Room



- **Screens off an hour before bed**

The importance of turning off all electronic devices an hour before bedtime cannot be overstressed. It is more than the excitement over social media or gaming that keeps the teenagers up. Electronic screens emit a glow called “blue light” at a particular frequency that sends a signal to the brain which suppresses the production of melatonin and keeps children from feeling tired. Parents should assist teenagers with planning ahead, so that homework that needs to be done on a screen is completed by early evening and off-screen work is saved for later at night.

There is a free app, called f.lux that automatically adjusts the light on your computer screen to coincide with the time of day. F.lux automatically removes the stimulating blue light from your computer screen at night so that you are able to sleep better even if you have been up late working on a paper.

The family can help by altering the home environment. It can be useful to start gradually dimming lights around the house to signal when it is time to quiet down and start moving towards sleep.

- **Snacking at night should be watched**

During adolescence, many children take control over their diet for the first time. This can lead to erratic eating habits, as a means to self-regulate, to stay awake or just because they can. It is important to state that eating late at night or caffeinated beverages any time after dinner, can postpone sleep.

- **Boost the biological clock**

- **Set a good example**

Parents should to model good sleep habits for their teenagers. Staying up all night with a teenager to edit his/her paper or pulling off an all-nighter for work is not sending the right message. Parents who make sleep a priority for themselves, show their teenagers that it is part of living a healthy lifestyle.



## Whole School News

### Streamline mornings

There is not much that teenagers can do about their school's start time, but they can organize their mornings so that they can sleep in as long as possible. Consideration would be showering, picking out clothes and packing up school books before they go to bed so that less time is spent doing it in the morning. The parents can prepare a healthy snack that the teenager can eat on the way to school. Whatever it takes to squeeze in as much sleep as possible and arrive on time for school feeling refreshed and ready for learning would be ideal.

Parents can always check on their teenagers and ask, "What can I do to help keep you on track?" If your teenager can be consistent about making even a few of the changes suggested above, you might be surprised at how quickly you can all reap the rewards of more sleep.

### Additional Reading:

Carskadon, M.A. (2010): Adolescent sleep patterns: Biological, Social and Psychological Influences

Emsellen, H (2006): Snooze... or Lose! 10 "No-War" ways to improve your teen's sleep habits

Dement, W.C. & Vaughn, C (1999): The Promise of Sleep: A pioneer in Sleep Medicine. Explores the vital connection between health, happiness and a good night's sleep

Owens, J & Mindell, J (2005): Take charge of your child's sleep: The All-in-One resource for solving sleep problems in kids and teens

Ms. Ingrid Pretorius

School Counselor