



Friday 20th December 2017

Create your future

Dear Parents and Families

It is the end of a long term at UAE. This has been a significant term for the school with many changes and some exciting events and opportunities for the students. And for me it has been an intense and rewarding journey of discovery as I have learnt about the school and its students and staff, what they are great at and what we need to improve together.

One highlight of the term was watching last week's Fringe Festival. To see so many students go up on stage in front of an audience of over 150 of their peers and parents was inspirational. All the participants should feel really proud of what they achieved. I'd like to thank Ms Morgan and Ms Campbell who organised the event and supported the students as they prepared their performances, along with many other teachers and support staff. Participating in a performance to an audience is an opportunity to increase the confidence and the ambition of students and we increasing the opportunities for students to do this over the next year.

Lots of students have taken their turn in organising charity fund raising events this term. Each community has a designated week in the year where they are responsible for raising money for one of the schools four charities. So far Air 1, Earth 1, Water 1 and Fire 1 have raised £947 between them. Next time you visit the school have a look for the new charities notice board near reception to see more on what the students have done and the money they have raised.

We engage the students in charity fundraising because we feel it supports the development of their sense of social responsibility. We are working on developing this in other ways too. One of the key changes we have made this term has been to appoint staff to build links with people in the local community to allow students to work on community projects outside the school. If you have contacts and ideas about where the students can work outside the school, supervised by school staff, to support the local community then please contact Mr Harding (rob.harding@uaesouthbank.org.uk) and let him know about them.

On the sporting front we have increased the number of competitive matches we have had with other schools in football and basketball. We are planning to compete in netball, BMX, athletics and table tennis competitions over the rest of the school year. Notable successes have been the year 7 boys football team which reached the 7-a-side London finals and the year 7/8 boys basketball team which also reached the London finals.

Our Enrichment programme has been a success this term and the teachers have again stepped up for next term with an increasingly varied and engaging offer of extra activities that your child can take part in on Tuesdays, Wednesday and Thursdays from 3.40 to 5pm. You can pick up a copy of the Enrichment programme from reception. One new innovation is the societies which will be starting up, these will be run by the students rather than the

staff. We expect all of our students to take part in at least one after school enrichment activity a week, and they are all able to take part in three a week if they wish to.

One aim of the enrichment programme is to broaden the students' horizons and increase their ambition. Another way we are going to do this is by increasing the number of educational visits that the students take part in. To support this, we have just appointed a new educational visit organiser.

Another change that you may have heard about is the increased expectations of behaviour both in and out of the classroom. I can confidently say that this school is a safe and friendly environment. We expect all students to move between lessons calmly and purposefully and we have taken steps this term to make sure this expectation becomes normal behaviour across the school.

To increase the engagement in lessons we are now going to focus on setting out clear expectations for student's behaviour in their lessons. Nobody has the right to behave in a way that distracts teachers from teaching, or distracts other students from their learning. After Christmas we will be explicitly demonstrating to students how they will need to behave in lessons to ensure everyone can learn and concentrate for the whole of every lesson.

You will also see some significant changes to the way we report on your child's progress in their school work. In the past you have received a grade for every subject every module. I want to shift the teachers focus' from grading students to identifying, and working on, each student's areas of weakness. From now on we will report to you twice a year with grades. However, the second report will be an end of year report which will contain much more written detail about your child's progress from their subject teachers.

I would like to take the opportunity to urge you to encourage your child to read a book over the Christmas period, and if your child is in year 7 or year 8 then ask them how they are doing with the 'accelerated reader' programme. If there is one thing a parent can do to support the education of their children it is to help them to develop a love of reading books.

Finally, I sincerely wish you all a safe and joyous Christmas with your family and friends. I look forward to meeting you all in the New Year.

Yours sincerely

John Taylor