



THE ORYX

The weekly newsletter of Windhoek International School

FROM THE DIRECTOR

Ever Thought of Being on the Board?

Windhoek International School is a Section 21 (not for profit) company governed by a volunteer board. The board may number as many as twelve. Currently, there are ten members and, though it is not a requirement, all ten are parents of children at WIS.

Some members are elected at the AGM (which this year will be at the end of November) and others are appointed by the board itself. All enjoy the same voting rights and the same responsibilities.

The board approves the annual budget (which, of course, includes setting the fees), hires (and fires? 😞) the Director, and decides the strategic direction of the school. Board meetings occur roughly every five or six weeks during the school year, usually in the evenings. Most board members are also on one or two committees (such as Finance or Development) and these committees meet as and when necessary.

Periodically (annually, if possible), the board meets with an external consultant to review its practices and to help newer members of the board better understand their role. This year this is taking place on **Saturday 29th September** here in school from 9am till 4pm.

This is also an ideal opportunity for anyone who might be interested in being on the board to come along and learn more about what, when, and how the board does. If you would like to join us on this day, please drop me a line so we know how many to expect.

And if you would like to talk to someone before deciding, please feel free to see me or any of the [current board](#).

Peter MacKenzie

PRIMARY PRINCIPAL

Thank you to all parents/guardians who were able to attend the Back to School Night(s) this week. I hope you found the presentations by the Grade Level and Specialist teachers to be informative, as well as giving you an insight into your child's day. We have followed the same format for the last two or three years. As we are always looking to improve, it's important to know if you've found the Back to School Nights helpful. To that end, I would appreciate your taking a few minutes to complete this questionnaire. Click [here](#).

One of the pillars of the WIS Strategic Plan is connectivity. It's a theme we are continuing to give specific focus to as a school this year. At the Back to School Nights I encouraged being engaged and connected with your child and his/her learning. This can take many forms including:

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Dates to Remember

September 2018

- **03 - 07:** Secondary Week B
- **10:** Staff Work Day - no school for students
- **15:** WIS Swim Gala
- **25 - 27:** Photo Days - Details TBC



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Teacher Feature

Edwin Chinyemba

Physical Education (P.E.)

What is your Educational background?

Secondary Prince Edward School Teacher Training College Early Childhood and PE Sekesai Teachers College, BA in Education and Psychology UNISA, Masters in Educational Leadership TCNJ current

Where did you grow up?

I grew up in Zimbabwe. My dad was in the army so we moved around a lot, Bulawayo, Mutare and Harare.

What motivated you to be a PE teacher?

After leaving school I knew what I didn't want to be but not what I wanted to be. So I took a gap year at a small boarding government school as a Junior master. I fell in love with coaching and teaching. I started of in the classroom but my first experience did not allow for differentiated learning and decided to focus on PE only as I found it a better area where I could differentiate students.

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- Helping your child to find a place dedicated for doing homework and encouraging the homework to be completed on time
- Making sure that your child arrives to school on time (in the classroom by 7:20)
- Ensuring that your child is collected on time at the end of the school day (Dismissal is at 13:30 for Primary; Afternoon Activities finish at 14:45)
- Making an appointment with the homeroom or subject area teacher if you have any concerns about your child
- Getting involved with the PTA
- Attending and participating in the 3-Way Conferences (**Wednesday, 17 October and Thursday, 18 October**)
- Supporting International Day preparations;
- Attending the various unit presentations and Art exhibitions;
- Attending and participating in the parent workshops and information sessions offered (upcoming ones include Seesaw and PYP)
- Reading the class blog and writing a comment (as appropriate)
- Reading the weekly *Oryx*
- Talking with your child about his or her day.



I look forward to the partnership between home and school this year.

**Regards,
Beth Smith**

Mobile Device Protection

A well protected mobile device will last longer. It will not cost you a lot of money in repairs. If you are shopping this school holiday, here is something to consider.



Danai Maramba

Teacher Feature continued

What do you enjoy most in your job/What makes you passionate about your job?

I love to see students exceeding their perceived limitations. My greatest passion is inculcating a love for physical activity in students.

What do you think are important qualities a PE teacher should have at an international school?

My first principal said that the biggest mistake most people make is having the wrong level of expectation for students we are working with. As a PE teacher it's important to gauge the ability of your students and to know when to extend them or reduce physical and mental demands. As an international teacher it's even more important as students are coming from diverse backgrounds and are in need of our patience and sympathy.

Can you tell me a little bit about your personal life and hobbies?

In my personal time I like to read motivational, psychological and biographical literature. I also like to play tennis, workout and run a bit.

Could you describe your personality?

Very much an introvert except when I am in the classroom with students or when coaching.

What is your favourite motto that you use with students?

There is no success without sacrifice

PYP Coordinator's message

At WIS our approach to behaviour is a positive and reflective one where all stakeholders are part of creating decision-making choices within the school and classroom community, such as a restorative justice approach. We focus on mediation and agreement rather than punishment as a response to conflicts within the school community.



In the restorative justice model, the students play an essential part in creating the climate.

Please note that teachers are responsible for the learners in their lesson. Teachers endeavour to support behaviour choices and encourage the students to reflect. A lot of strategies include yoga and breathing techniques, growth mindset activities, a focus on personal, social and emotional development, plus reflection on what the IB Learner Profile means.

This is also an important component of the **IB PYP Learner Profile and Attitudes**, in which every class creates their own classroom essential agreements which they all agree to model and be accountable to be part of.

Through the application of consistent approaches to positive behaviour modification, the students are able to apply their understandings as they become communicators, reflective, caring and balanced individuals at WIS.

We believe that the "Parents/Guardians as Partners" philosophy is essential to our learning community. Involvement and regular communication with all parties ensure active involvement, a supportive approach and an opportunity for students to succeed.



The underlying belief is that all students have the opportunity to access their learning and develop and thrive successfully with a positive and a supportive approach.

Strategies:

- Homeroom teachers keep regular communication with you as parents so you know of any minor incidents that take place in the classroom.
- They encourage students to solve problems and make good choices.
- If there are actions such as fighting, hurting other students, breaking property, theft or vandalism then this is considered a major incident. This is then scheduled as a Friday "reflection" time with the PYP Coordinator.

WEEKLY PUZZLER

The only place on earth where you can set off walking ten miles south, then ten miles west, then ten miles north, and end up where you started is at the North Pole. If you ever get a chance to go to the North Pole give it a try. Otherwise you can get a globe and trace out an imaginary walk and see that it's true. So for the time being, while the North Pole is still cold enough, the only bears there are polar bears. Hence the answer: white.

This week we are with the same bear, and we are looking at her journey. Each direction that she walks is in a straight line. Her journey consists of three straight and equal lines, ending where she began. It is a triangle. But it is a strange triangle. What is strange about the triangle? And why?

Please send solutions, or any fun and interesting puzzlers to pfarrell@wis.edu.na



This takes place during second break on a Friday and the purpose of this session is to reflect on poor behaviour choices made in class or in the playground. It is aimed to support students in taking appropriate action in how they can participate and be part of learning. The students then bring a reflection sheet home to be filled in with the parents/guardians. The focus is on choosing appropriate action in the future and communicating collaboratively between the school, home and with the child.

Ms Avril van Zyl

SECONDARY PRINCIPAL

How aware are you of your child's online behaviour?

Last week Friday we had an assembly to talk about VPN's, cyber security and online behaviour. It was quite astonishing to see how many of our students use VPN's in school. Until last week, I did not know what a VPN is. As I was told by our Administrator, VPN's are not illegal.

However, VPN's are used to bypass a firewall. Why would so many students want to bypass the WIS firewall? Certainly not to access content that is part of the lessons they sit in.

At times, we are told to ban all electronics from school. Would that be a wise move? I don't think so! Our children grow up with technology and spend a large part of each day working online or with technology. Banning it from school will not make our children more tech-savvy. To the contrary, they will use technology even more "behind our backs".

We here at WIS are convinced that it is our duty to educate children to use technology - the internet and all that comes with it - responsibly. But that also means that we should know what our kids are doing. We should discuss their internet behaviour with them. It should not have to be necessary that they have to do things online that they have to hide from us.

How many of these words do you know?

On Thursday the 13th of September 2018, there will be a Road Show on Cyber Safety at 11:15 in the auditorium.



Regards,

Maggie Reiff

Health-wise

During the staff work week at the start of our 2018/2019 academic year a group of Health Workers visited WIS to do a general health screening on



our staff.

Sharon Gorelick

The Work Experience programme

For Grade 9 & 10 at WIS

The philosophy of teaching and learning at Windhoek International School tries to embrace all aspects of the life and growth of a student.

The word “holistic” will already be a familiar term for you having your children attend WIS. In the dictionary ‘holistic’ means ‘looking to something/someone as a single system’. In education, this means that we want to work with each student making sure that there is a balance between the academic aspect and the social aspect of the person.

Taking this into consideration, WIS has, in addition to the two years of the Cambridge IGCSE Programme, the Work Experience.

This non-remunerated programme, is an opportunity for Grade 9 & 10 students to experience working life before making a final decision on what they want to do in the future. It is a requirement for all students that want to take part in the IB Diploma Programme at WIS.

Often students, having completed their work experience, come in with a lot of insight and enthusiasm.

The student that we are showcasing today, sets an excellent



example of what we want to hear from “employers” by the end of this working week. From the Charité Centrum for Tumormedicin, in Germany, I got the report below.

“To whom it may concern [...]. I was particularly impressed by Viktoria’s interest in understanding the scientific background to cancer immunotherapy. Although she still has only limited knowledge about basic principles of genetics and immunology, Viktoria managed to follow our discussion about mutations in cancer [...]. I am convinced that she has the potential to develop all necessary abilities to assert and maintain a position in academic science. [...] She was a very pleasant trainee and we enjoyed having her as part of our team.”

We will continue sharing with the community these examples of students that make us feel proud of our commitment to prepare independent, inquiring and self-motivated citizens of the world.

Congratulations Viktoria!!

Mrs. Teresa Araújo

Afternoon Activities

Mini-Soccer for Girls kicked off (ahem) to a great start this week.



We had six girls on Tuesday with Coach TK but the word has spread and more have since joined! Please let Catherine (reception@wis.edu.na) know if you would like to sign up.

Knitting Club

The knitting club received a bag full of yarn and other knitting goodies from the Aochamus family.

The knitting club would like to thank family Aochamus for their friendly gesture and will make good use of the yarn.

Michelle and Kaye

WIS Swim Gala

The Inter-House Swimming Gala will take place on 15 September 2018 at WHS. All students from Grade 1 - Grade 12 are welcome to participate. You are welcome to sign up your child by filling in the Google form linked below:

[ENTRY FORM](#)

(un)Sung Herstories and Kids in Action is calling

Want to have a great year of learning, exploring and creating?

Come join (un)Sung Herstories where we will dive into aspects that impact girls and women that often stay in the shadows. We will shine a spotlight on local, national and international issues and women/girls to deserve them. We also will learn about each other and ourselves. The group will be lead by Masiyaleti Mbewe, a talented and creative young female artist and author and will have a level of support by Heather Ross. For middle school, it will meet as scheduled from 1:45-2:45pm in Mr. Tom Jackson-Read's room. We also would like to invite any interested 9th-12th graders to join us at 2:30-3:30pm for a continuation of it.

Want to learn about social issues around Namibia and step in to make a difference? Kids in Action is also looking for new members. For middle school, we will meet at 1:45-2:45pm in room 45. We have already started in on some great discussions and ideas. We also are welcoming for the older grades to join us at 2:30-3:30pm. Mr. Fitzpatrick is bringing in the grade 11 and 12 (See Mr. Fitzpatrick's article for more ideas), but we would love to see some grade 9 and 10s there as well.

Let's step in to make this world a better place and at the same time we enhance our own lives and experiences!! TEAM - Together Everyone Achieves More!!

Heather Ross, WIS parent

Grade 11 and 12 students collaboration

WIS parent Ms Heather Ross to plan for ways to empower the disadvantaged in Namibia



On Thursday, WIS parent Heather Ross made an inspiring call for action to all 37 of the WIS Grade 11 and 12 DP students (see photo) and she addressed four important service-learning opportunities. Firstly, involvement in supporting Windhoek International School's 'sister school' in rural Kavango West. Kanuni Combined School sits on the banks of the Kavango River and has multiple challenges leading to one of the worst drop out and passing rates in the region.

Our aim is to change that through building meaningful and sustainable changes. Secondly, a project to learn about and tackle a huge barrier for female students to go to school. The lack of reusable menstrual pads. They just recently started local production in Kavango and it would be a goal to find ways to explore that every girl child at Kanuni gets reusable pads. Next, to learn about, support and be in solidarity with young people living with HIV (possibly exploring strengthening their teen clubs in Windhoek and with a couple of identified clubs in Kavango). Lastly, the array of ways WIS DP students could mentor, be-friend and support disadvantage youths living on the streets (sadly a growing real problem in recent times) of Windhoek were reviewed.

Concretely, it was agreed that those interested in any of these and particularly the profoundly moving, important and significant work with street kids would participate in the Tuesday afternoon service-learning after school club known as 'Kids in Action' in Mr. Fitzpatrick's classroom – Room 66. WIS DP students wish to express appreciation to Ms. Ross for sharing these wonderful options for 'giving back' a hallmark of an IB education as CAS (Creativity, Activity and Service) are a key core element of our holistic education at WIS in the DP.

Rick Fitzpatrick

Student Council!

Meet your student council representatives from Primary School up to Secondary school for the 2018 - 2019 Academic year!



Primary Arts

