

# THE ORYX

*The weekly newsletter of Windhoek International School*

## FROM THE DIRECTOR

### Covid-19

On Wednesday, the Board of Directors and the Senior Leadership Team met to discuss the threats posed to the school community by the coronavirus.

Although it has not (as far as we know) reached Namibia yet, we would be foolish not to prepare for the restrictions that may be put in place were an outbreak to occur here.

In an extreme case, the school may be closed. Preparations are therefore being made to allow teaching to continue online. Further details will follow but it is likely that we will practise later in March by having all students and teachers remain at home for a day to discover how effective these measures may be. (This is already happening in many schools around the world.)

The Board of Directors has also insisted that all staff inform the school if they are travelling abroad over the imminent holiday. (If a case of Covid-19 were to be confirmed in the future, it could be helpful to know who has travelled where.) ***It would also be very much appreciated if parents would inform the school Office if they (or their children) anticipate travelling abroad next week.***

Advice to avoid certain countries ("travel advisories") have already been widely published and are updated regularly. It is worth checking these before travelling.

The school will also hold an information evening on **Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> March** at 6 pm to provide parents with the latest update and to take questions. A representative of the US CDC (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention) will be on hand to take questions.

### Being a Board Member in an International School

It is common for the board and senior leadership to bring in an outside consultant periodically to conduct a workshop on governance in international schools. The reality is that very few people who join school boards really know what their job is (and is not). It can be helpful to spend a day running through role plays and case studies to help all parties understand their responsibilities and competencies.

In September 2018 we brought in Dr. Chris Muller to conduct such a workshop. (He also facilitated the meeting of parents, board, and staff that was held in October 2019.) He is coming again to lead a governance workshop on **Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> April** from 9 am to 4 pm.

Chris was born in Namibia but has worked internationally for many years including spells as the Director of the American International School of Lusaka and of Bonn International School. He has also worked in South Africa, the UK, France, Tanzania, the USA, and Romania.



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## Dates to Remember

### March 2020

- **06:** End of Term 3
- **16:** Start of Term 4
- **21:** Independence Day
- **22 - 27:** Festival of the Arts

### April 2020

- **08:** Gr. 4 - 11 Parent Eve.



Facebook



Instagram



Twitter

WIS parents who think they might be interested in serving on the Board of Directors in the future are welcome to attend this workshop. Please indicate your intention to join us by writing to [nominations@wis.edu.na](mailto:nominations@wis.edu.na).

**Peter MacKenzie**

## PRIMARY PRINCIPAL

### Assessment Conferences

Thank you to all the parents who attended the Assessment Conferences this week. I hope you found the conversations with the teachers to be informative and helpful as to how to support your child's learning for the final term of the school year. Student-Led Conferences will be held near the end of the semester where your child will have the opportunity to share his/her progress with you.

### MAP Tests

The MAP tests were completed two weeks ago. The Family Report explaining your child's results will be sent by early next week to Grades 1-5 parents who have had their children's conferences. It is important to remember that the purpose of MAP is to show growth over time. For those who would like more information about MAP, I will be offering two **information sessions** on **Thursday, March 19**. The morning session is from **7:30 - 8:30** and the afternoon session is from **12:30 - 13:30**. These will take place in the Multi-Media room.

### Assemblies

One of the aspects of our weekly assemblies is Special Recognition where we recognise children's participation in activities outside of school. If your child has participated in a tournament, competition, recital, etc. please send your teacher or me an email with a brief explanation, along with a picture if you have one. These need to be received by noon Thursday for your child to be recognised at that week's Friday assembly.

May the next week's school holiday be healthy, restful and relaxing and quality time spent with your children.

**Regards,  
Beth Smith**

## DTS tournament

On Sunday 1 February, the U/8 team played in the rescheduled DTS tournament.

DTS always organises excellent tournaments and the children had a chance to play the best teams from Windhoek. Congratulations to all the WIS players who took part!



**Thomas Jackson-Read**

# Coronavirus

Dear Parents & Guardians,

Our children might be asking questions about the Coronavirus, which causes a flu-like disease called COVID-19. Please discuss the information linked [HERE](#) with your children.

It is geared for younger kids and could help to reduce any anxiety they might have about this illness which is dominating global news right now.

At school, our teachers are reminding our students to wash their hands well and frequently, to cough safely into their elbows, not to touch their faces (this a hard one) and not to put markers, pencils and other items in their mouths as others might do the same. This is standard practice for preventing the spread of disease. We also ask you not to send your child to school if he/she is not well.

Should a student complain of cold & flu symptoms, diarrhoea or vomiting, or have a temperature, we will immediately ask that such a student be taken home.

If you have questions or concerns please contact me.

**Illustration credit:** *Malaka Gharib is an NPR editor and the author and illustrator of [I Was Their American Dream: A Graphic Memoir](#).*

## Travelling during Coronavirus outbreak

Members of our WIS community who are traveling out of the country during our break next week, especially to countries that are affected by the Covid-19 outbreak, should please take every precaution to keep themselves safe. On your return please monitor your health status for any symptoms that might indicate that you are ill in order to be checked by your doctor and hopefully rule out Covid-19. Please keep sick children at home and keep the school informed of any relevant health information. Asking you to comply with these steps is part of our plan to keep our students in particular and our community in general safe from infections like Covid-19. Do consult with your travel agent on the latest updates regarding safe traveling.

**Sharon Gorelick, School Nurse**

## SECONDARY PRINCIPAL

**Students - be connected and interested in your learning - parents stay connected and up to date with your child's learning**

There are many opportunities at WIS where we give students and parents the opportunity to be actively involved in learning and to be informed about all the different things we are doing at school. In the coming weeks, there are a number of events that should be valuable for both students and parents - and the whole community for that matter to be involved in and to inform themselves about.

On **18 March 2020**, we are hosting an information evening for the community about the **COVID-19 virus**. It is important that we prepare for eventual school closure, but also that we have credible information about the virus and its spread. The information session is facilitated by the school in collaboration with the CDC (please see Mr. MacKenzie's article in this newsletter for more details).



On **19 March 2020**, we have **Learner Led Conferences** for Grades 6 - 9 and **Three-Way Conferences** for Grades 10 - 12. This is an opportunity for parents who have children in Grades 6 - 9 to get a glimpse of what their child is doing in the different subjects. For parents in Grades 10 - 12, this is an important opportunity to discuss your

child’s progress with her/his respective subject teachers. One of the key factors of a child’s success in school is the relationship the child and her/his parents have with the teachers. Mutual support and understanding is something that is invaluable in a child’s education.

**7 ways to instill a LOVE of LEARNING in children**  
by Big Life Journal

- 1 HELP CHILDREN DISCOVER INTERESTS AND PASSIONS**  
Talk to your child about what he is doing, reading, watching, and learning. Expose him to different experiences like museums, theatrical performances, zoos, etc. Help him check out books on a variety of topics from the local library.
- 2 PROVIDE HANDS-ON EXPERIENCES**  
If your child is learning about aquatic animals in school, take him to visit an aquarium. If he’s studying a certain artist, take him to a museum to look at their work. Try to find hands-on, engaging experiences for your child. Make learning an adventure.
- 3 MAKE LEARNING FUN**  
Even seemingly dry subjects can become more fun through songs, academic games, scavenger hunts, or creative activities. Incorporate art projects, music, or creative writing into just about any academic subject. Use “brain breaks to disrupt the monotony or difficulty of a lesson.
- 4 DEMONSTRATE YOUR OWN PASSION**  
Be a great role model for your child by enthusiastically exploring your own interests and passions. Show that YOU are passionate about learning. Talk to your child about what you’re learning: the challenges, the excitement, how you’re applying what you’ve learned to your own life, and so on.
- 5 FIND YOUR CHILD’S LEARNING STYLE**  
Children have their own unique learning style, or a type of learning that is most effective for them. There are three main learning styles: visual, auditory, and kinesthetic. Determine which learning style best suits your children or students and help them learn more effectively.
- 6 HAVE DISCUSSIONS, NOT LECTURES**  
When your child demonstrates curiosity by asking a question, do your best to answer it. You can also expand the conversation by asking open-ended questions yourself. Begin your questions with, “Why,” “How,” or, “What would happen if...?”
- 7 BE SUPPORTIVE AND ENCOURAGING**  
Have reasonable expectations for your child, and be supportive and encouraging when your child struggles or fails. Help him learn from these experiences, and don’t put excessive pressure on him to make straight A’s or be an exceptional student.

biglifejournal.com

On **8 April 2020**, we will host our monthly Parent Information Evening. The theme for this evening will be **Digital Citizenship and technology**. We will be addressing online safety and Edmodo. We will also speak about a new plan for the use of devices across the school. This parent evening is for parents who have children in **Grades 4 - 9, but everybody else is welcome to attend**.

As always, we are a busy place. But in the interest of your child’s wellbeing, it is important that you are well informed and up to date with his/her learning and the school’s processes in this regard.

Regards,  
Maggie Reiff

## Learner-Led Conferences in Secondary School

On March 19th, 2020 the Secondary School will be hosting its first Learner-Led Conference Day. Parents will have an opportunity to relive the life of a Middle School and/or Grade 9 student (for 75 minutes at least!). The concept for this day is for parents to better understand how their children are learning in different subjects. Parents will get an insight into their child’s understanding, their child’s passions and how their child learns. This is also a way for learners to be more invested in their learning and develop a growth mindset. Learners need to be involved in conversations about what they enjoy, what their interests are and what gives them moments of pause. These conferences are designed to promote a culture of engagement, growth and get learners more involved in planning their own learning.



What are the roles of the participants in LLC's?

- The **learner** leads a conference with their parents. The students select an activity from the subject, then they prepare themselves to teach it, explain it and lead their parents through it.
- The **parents** participate in the activity their child is teaching them. The parents will get an insight into how well their child is understanding a given concept, get a sense of their child's Approaches To Learning skills and also get a feel for how their child is performing in a certain class.
- A **teacher** is present and simply facilitates the resources, the room and the schedule.

What are some of the benefits of LLC's?

- Increases parent engagement
- Increases learner engagement
- Parents actively participate in their child's learning
- The learner puts their Approaches to Learning skills on display
- Increases student agency

Why is it called a "conference" if the parent does not talk about achievement with the teacher?

If parents are engaging with Edmodo, engaging with the Criterion Rubrics and engaging in the Assessment AS a Learner process, the overall achievement level of their child should already be known. This is why these LLC's are not focusing on achievement. We want the focus to be on the learning that happens.

A definition of the word conference is a formal meeting of people with a shared interest. Both the parent and the learner are meeting in the learning setting and this meeting is an opportunity for the parent and learner to share in the common interest of the child's education. The parent will experience their child's enthusiasm for learning and have an opportunity to get a glimpse into the classroom.

There are many different variations of Learner Led Conferences. This is how LLC's will operate here at WIS.

1. Together Learners and Parents will select a block time to attend.
2. Together Learners and Parents will select which subjects to attend (see subject choices below).
3. The Learner will lead the Parent through the four 15 minute sessions.

Below are the available block times. Each grade level will be limited to 6 students per block time.

Please note that there will be no normal lessons for students on the 19th. Students will come to school with their parents for the LLC and then return home.

|                                    |
|------------------------------------|
| <b>Blocks of the Day</b>           |
| <b>Group 1: 7:30 - 8:45</b>        |
| <b>Group 2: 9:00 - 10:15</b>       |
| <b>Group 3: 10:30 - 11:45</b>      |
| <b>Group 4: 12:30 - 13:45</b>      |
| <b>Student Numbers</b>             |
| <b>6 Per Block per Grade Level</b> |

The subject choices for the LLC's are as follows:

1. Maths or Sciences
2. Art or Drama
3. Languages or PE or Business (Option for Grade 9s)
4. English or Social Studies (History or Geography for Grade 9s)

The rooms for the sessions will be:

| Rooms   | Maths | Sciences | Art | Drama | Languages | Social Studies | PE | English | Business | History | Geography |
|---------|-------|----------|-----|-------|-----------|----------------|----|---------|----------|---------|-----------|
| Grade 6 | 71    | 71       | 42  | 70    | 50        | 73             | 74 | 72      |          |         |           |
| Grade 7 | 63    | 51       | 42  | 70    | 50        | 73             | 74 | 72      |          |         |           |
| Grade 8 | 63    | 51       | 42  | 70    | 50        | 73             | 74 | 72      |          |         |           |
| Grade 9 | 63    | 60/62    | 42  | 70    | 50        | 65             | 74 | 75      | 64       | 66      | 65        |

Each session will last 15 minutes, there will be a 5 minute passing time between sessions. If a parent has more than one child in the Secondary School, the parent has an option to sign up more than once. It will be on a first come first served sign up basis. Sign-ups go live Friday March 6th at 2 pm via Edmodo through the WIS Secondary School Group.

Grade 10, 11 and 12 students will have 3-way conferences to discuss exam preparation. A link to these sign-ups will be communicated from WIS Reception on Friday as well.

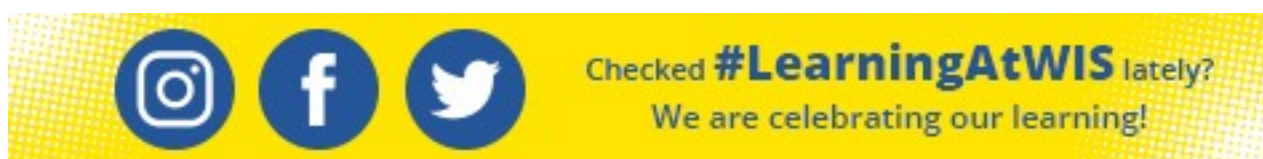
Here is some reading about Student-Led Conferences, why they are useful and how they are done in other schools.

[Edutopia: Having Students Lead Parent Conferences](#)

[Student-Led Conferences: A growing trend](#)

Video: [Student-Led Conferences: Empowerment and Ownership](#)

**Michael Parsons, Director of Teaching and Learning**



## Middle school Chromebooks

### A new computer is coming to Middle School!

WIS has employed a Bring Your Own Device programme for a few years. This allowed students to bring a device they were comfortable working on to school. It allowed students to bring a device they already owned. Devices are used as a tool that supports learning. The devices are picked up and used as and when needed just like a dictionary or a pencil.

We have had success with our BYOD programme which our teachers have shared in the Oryx, during parent meetings, staff working days and Tech Camp #Edu (a conference hosted by WIS to celebrate those who use technology as a tool for teaching and learning. Teachers in and around Windhoek are invited to attend and learn from us).

Our recommended device has been the iPad because of its portability and variety of apps applicable to teaching and learning. As with any other programme or system, after reviewing the BYOD programme, we realised that given the number and types of devices out there, we are better off picking one device for everyone to allow a more seamless fit into teaching and learning. With the advancement of technology, a new device better suited for education, the

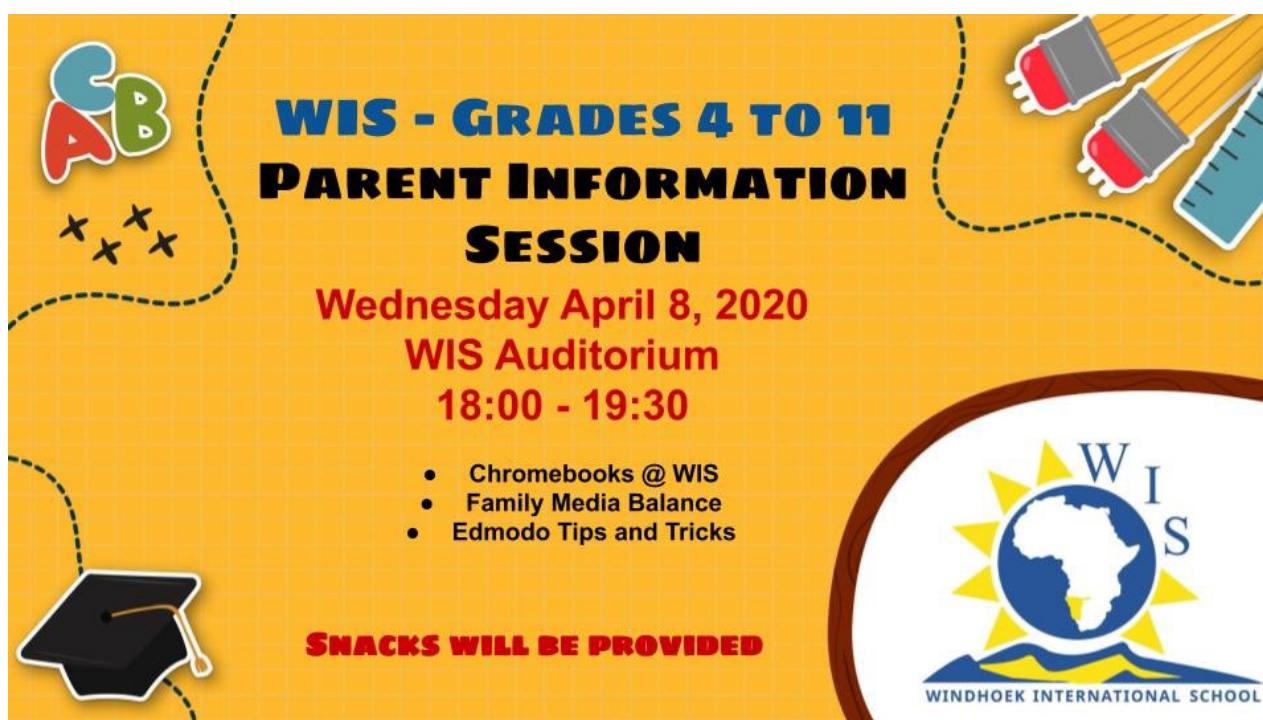


Chromebook, is becoming more accessible in Namibia.

We are a Google Suite For Education School. We use Google Apps for document creation, editing, collaboration, storage and sharing. Our teachers are becoming Google Certified Educators in order to better understand how these tools support teaching and learning. Google Apps are native to the Chromebook.

We will be phasing in Chromebooks by grade level. In August 2020, each child in Grade 6 will be handed a Chromebook as a school device. Students from other grade levels will be able to opt into this programme. A levy will be applied to school fees to finance the device.

**We invite you to a Parent Information Evening on 8 April 2020 to find out more about the Chromebook programme.**



The flyer is for a Parent Information Session at WIS. It features a yellow background with various educational icons: a colorful 'CAB' logo, a graduation cap, a ruler, and a globe. The text is centered and reads: 'WIS - GRADES 4 TO 11 PARENT INFORMATION SESSION' in large blue and black letters. Below this, the date and time are given as 'Wednesday April 8, 2020' and '18:00 - 19:30'. The location is 'WIS Auditorium'. A bulleted list includes 'Chromebooks @ WIS', 'Family Media Balance', and 'Edmodo Tips and Tricks'. At the bottom, it states 'SNACKS WILL BE PROVIDED'. The WIS logo, featuring a globe and the text 'WINDHOEK INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL', is in the bottom right corner.

**WIS - GRADES 4 TO 11  
PARENT INFORMATION  
SESSION**

**Wednesday April 8, 2020  
WIS Auditorium  
18:00 - 19:30**

- Chromebooks @ WIS
- Family Media Balance
- Edmodo Tips and Tricks

**SNACKS WILL BE PROVIDED**

**WIS**  
WINDHOEK INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL

During that evening, we will also address some matters with regard to the responsible use of devices at home and at school and how we as parents and educators can ensure our children learn to use technology with thought and care.

Danai Maramba

**W.O.R.D.**  
Guess who is also reading during our  
scheduled reading lessons!



# WIS History Alive

## Guest Speakers on the 1956 Hungarian Uprising and Arab-Israeli Wars

Recently WIS historians in Grades 10 and 11 have benefited from two engaging and informative presentations.

Firstly, WIS community member; Ofer Babluki and Itzik Siton shared about their military experiences fighting in the Sinai with the Israeli Defense Forces. Secondly, Gábor Salamon, a Hungarian national and long-time resident of Namibia, described his family's experiences before, during and after the 1956 Hungarian uprising.

At the conclusion of each of these speakers' presentations, WIS students eloquently conveyed their sincere appreciation for the knowledge they had gained from learning more about these 20th century history events.



R. Fitzpatrick

# Animals By Night

SPCA Fundraiser

Performances by  
**Vaughn Ahrens & Savannah Collins**  
Featuring an Art Slam, Silent Auction & Live Auction!

Friday | March 27 | 19:00 till late | Goethe Institut  
Dresscode: From Casual to Fancy | Food and cash bar available!

**TICKETS: EARLY BIRD: N\$200\* | STANDARD: N\$250**  
*\* For early bird pricing buy your ticket before March 13, 2020*

Tickets available at the SPCA and [webtickets.com.na](http://webtickets.com.na)

For more information, please email [events@spcawindhoek.org.na](mailto:events@spcawindhoek.org.na)  
or call us on 061 238 654

This event is sponsored by:

Notice: If you are human and old enough to vote, come join us this evening!



## WIS Gala Sponsors

Dear WIS community,

On Behalf of the Development Committee, we would like to say thank you to our sponsors so far. Thank you so much for your support. Your partnership is highly appreciated!

Thank you to the parents and organisations who have already bought tickets or a table for this event. We only have 8 tables left, so please spread the word and get involved.

Together we can make a difference.



# Advantage.



**GALA DINNER AT HILTON**  
9 May, 2020 - Buffet Dinner  
19:30 for 20:00  
**RSVP by 27 April 2020**  
Business Casual  
Adults Only - **N\$500.00pp**

All proceeds raised will go to the development of the new sports courts.