



THE ORYX

The weekly newsletter of Windhoek International School

FROM THE DIRECTOR

International Day - Thank you!

Thank you so very much for everyone's contributions to the 2023 International Day! Everyone I've spoken with during and since this past Saturday's big event have called this year's International Day the "best vibes" and "most fun" school event they've had in a long time. It was wonderful to see our entire community come together to celebrate and take pride in our own and each other's cultures and traditions. Thank you for your volunteerism!

I LOVE WIS!



2023 Board Committees

During the March Board Meeting, the WIS Board of Directors drafted an ambitious agenda of goals and objectives for 2023. Much of this work will be accomplished within committees. If you would like to contribute in some way to one of these committees, then please review the draft [purpose, priorities, and membership of these committees](#) and then express your interest in this [committee interest survey](#). If you wish to lend a hand, then Ethan and/or the Committee Chair will then reach out to you during the month of April.

2022-23 Parent Survey Results

In December the school circulated an Annual Parent Survey. The results of this survey are [linked here](#), along with an executive summary and a list of actions which have arisen from the survey. This year's initial survey is an affirmation that parents appreciate the great things happening at WIS. The survey is also a useful tool for identifying our next priorities. Thanks for your feedback and support!

Sincerely,
Ethan Van Drunen

PARENT INFORMATION PORTAL
Click here for more information

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Dates to Remember 2023

- **17 March**
End of Term 3
- **20 - 24 March**
March break
- **21 March**
Independence Day
- **27 March**
Term 4 Starts
- **30 March**
Parent Workshop
- **4 April**
IBDP Parent morning
- **7 - 10 April**
Easter Weekend (School closed)



STAFF 2023 - 2024



Jenna Brown

Let me introduce myself, my name is Jenna Brown, and I am currently a Grade 4 homeroom teacher. It has been a great year so far. I have really enjoyed getting to know the students, the community and my colleagues.

It has been very inspiring to work with talented and passionate educators at WIS. For the past 17 years I have taught every grade level from early years to grade 7 in four different countries, namely South Korea, South Africa, Cote d'Ivoire and currently Namibia. I truly believe change and growth is a necessary part of life. Taking a step out of the classroom to help facilitate teaching and learning has always been an aspiration of mine. I am excited to take on the role of PYP and Literacy Coordinator position for the 2023/2024 academic year.

With the collaboration of all educators, I hope to build an outstanding literacy program and to continue to navigate the PYP with steadfast goals in place. I look forward to spending constructive and meaningful time with the learning community and the parents. Strong relationships are at the heart of effective learning, and as a mother and an educator I understand just how important this is.

Thank you again to the WIS community for affording me this wonderful opportunity.

"Education is not preparation for life: education is life itself" ~ John Dewey

PRIMARY PRINCIPAL

Dear WIS Community,

I am really delighted with [the WIS Principles](#) recently approved by the WIS board, which articulate our values: what we do, how we do it and why. These make me proud to be part of WIS. The People Principle states that *'We are proud of our diversity of culture, language, race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, belief, tradition, ancestry, and socio-economic status. We want our learners to cultivate a strong sense of self. We recognise that each person holds multiple identities and has a unique personal story to tell.'*



I am therefore equally delighted with our Learning Enrichment Team, who have put the WIS People Principle into practice by organising a string of events for Neurodiversity Celebration Week.

What is neurodiversity?

Neurodiversity is a term used to describe the natural variations in brain function and cognition among human beings. Neurodiversity encompasses a wide range of conditions that affect the brain and nervous system, including autism, dyslexia, ADHD, Tourette syndrome, and many others. These conditions are not abnormalities or diseases, but rather represent different ways of processing information and experiencing the world. People who are neurodivergent have unique strengths and challenges that can enhance or hinder their ability to learn and interact with others.

Neurodiversity Celebration Week is a worldwide initiative that challenges stereotypes and misconceptions about neurological differences. It aims to transform how neurodivergent individuals are perceived and supported by providing schools with the opportunity to recognise the many talents and advantages of being neurodivergent, while creating more inclusive and equitable cultures that celebrate differences and empower every individual (<https://www.neurodiversityweek.com/>).

At WIS, we strive to create an inclusive and supportive environment for all students, regardless of their neurodivergent status. We believe that every student has the potential to succeed and thrive, and we are committed to providing the

resources and accommodations necessary to make this a reality. Here are some other ways in which we support neurodiversity at WIS:

Professional Learning

At the start of the year, we held a staff information session about neurodiversity and strategies for supporting neurodiverse children in the classroom. WIS has a Neurodiversity Professional Learning Community that meets to discuss research and teaching practices and advises teachers on ways to support neurodiverse children.

Systems

Our action-based Child Study meetings held once a week explore individual strategies for specific children. Our Learning Enrichment Department is available to support both teachers and students in identifying and addressing any needs that may arise.

Curriculum, teaching and learning

One of the most important aspects of embracing neurodiversity is helping children learn about their brains. By understanding how their brains work, children can better understand their strengths and challenges and develop strategies to overcome any obstacles. This knowledge can also help children develop a sense of self-awareness and self-advocacy, which can be invaluable skills as they progress through their academic and personal lives.

Please don't miss the following upcoming **community event** next week (see flyer):

Virtual presentation and Q&A session with a leading scholar and practitioner in the field of child and adolescent psychiatry: Dr. Simon Pickstone-Taylor. Based out of South Africa's Neuro Diversity Centre, Dr. Pickstone works with youths, schools, and families. The presentation will cover neurodiversity, gender, and inclusion, as well as ways that schools and families can support all adolescents in our community.

Warm regards,
Marcelle van Leenen

NEURODIVERSITY, GENDER, AND IDENTITY WORKSHOP

A WIS Parent Workshop with Dr. Simon Pickstone-Taylor
of the Neurodiversity Centre, South Africa

As part of our WIS Neurodiversity week, we are pleased to be hosting this hour-long virtual presentation and Q&A session with a leading scholar and practitioner in the field of child and adolescent psychiatry. Dr Simon Pickstone-Taylor is based out of South Africa's Neuro Diversity Centre, where he works with youths, schools, and families. The presentation will cover neurodiversity, gender, and inclusion, as well as ways that schools and families can support all adolescents in our community.

[Click here for the GoogleMeets link](#)



Wednesday, 30 March 2023
18:00 - 19:00

WITH

DR. SIMON PICKSTONE-TAYLOR

ABOUT SIMON PICKSTONE-TAYLOR, MBCHB

Dr. Simon Pickstone-Taylor grew up on a farm near Boland in South Africa, and is a General Adult Psychiatrist and Child & Adolescent Psychiatrist who is based at the Neuro Diversity Centre in the Franschhoek Valley of South Africa. After the experience of an undergraduate medical degree from Cambridge, a medicine degree from University of Cape Town (UCT), a fellowship in Child & Adolescent Psychiatry from the University of California, and seven years of experience working for the National Health Service in the UK, Dr Pickstone-Taylor then returned to South Africa in 2011 to specialize in Autistic Spectrum Disorder, Gender Diversity and Identity, and Psychiatry at UCT. He is a member of the World Professional Association of Transgender Health. He works with schools on neuro-diversity, gender diversity, child protection, and inclusive support.



SECONDARY PRINCIPAL

Real life experiences for students to explore their skills and competencies

This past week, we have had a few events that our students participated in where they were able to experience real life situations.



On Monday, the 13th we were invited to the Commonwealth Day Celebrations in Parliament under the theme:

'Forging a sustainable and peaceful common future', which combines the active commitment of member states to support the promotion of peace, prosperity and sustainability. A group of 7 students from Grade 5 - 10 attended this celebration. The celebration focused on the youth and the role the youth plays in creating a sustainable future and more equity in the world.

The Commonwealth is a voluntary association of 56 independent and equal countries. It is home to 2.5 billion people, and includes both advanced economies and developing countries. 32 of our members are small states including many island nations. Our member governments have agreed to shared goals like development, democracy and peace. Our values and principles are expressed in the Commonwealth Charter. The Commonwealth's roots go back to the British Empire. But today, any country can join the Commonwealth. The last two countries to join the Commonwealth were Gabon and Togo in 2022. (<https://thecommonwealth.org/about-us>)



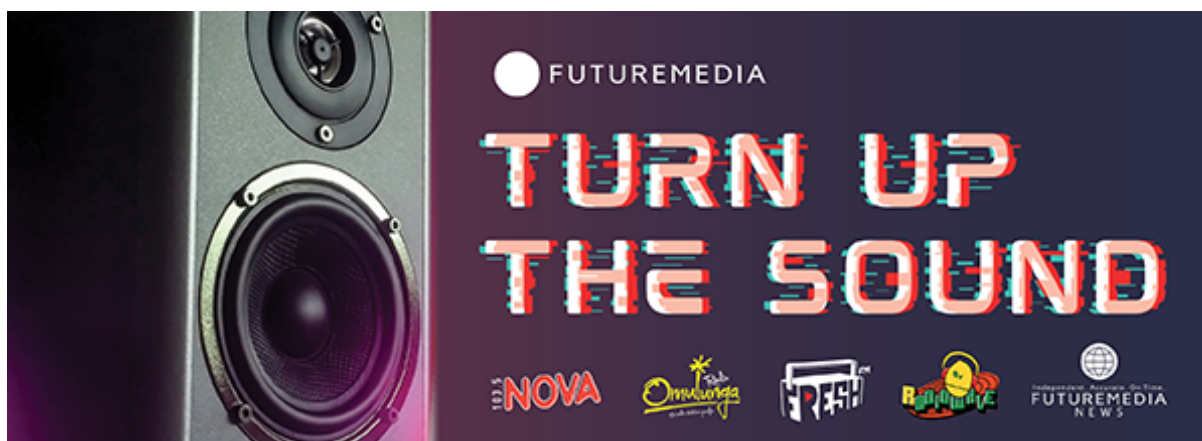
The Commonwealth was formed initially with countries that were former British colonies. The Commonwealth was formed initially "to foster international co-operation and trade links between people all over the world. Namibia joined the Commonwealth in 1990.

At the Commonwealth Day Celebrations, several countries from around the world who have missions in Namibia were in attendance: Namibia, Tanzania, Botswana, South Africa, Malaysia, Zambia, India, and Zambia.



Some student voices about attending the event:

- *One thing I was interested in was how they created unity. It was fun to try the different cuisines from different countries, and learn about it. It was a wonderful experience there. It was a good opportunity to go there. (Sarthak Kumar - Grade 7)*
- *The Commonwealth day celebration was a very fun way of being immersed in different cultures by tasting all types of delicious delicacies from across the world. (Kaino Munda - Grade 10)*
- *Commonwealth Day was a wonderful experience. It brought together a diverse and inspiring group of individuals from numerous cultures worldwide. It served as a poignant reminder of the world's necessity to continue striving for an ideal future and how the youth of today can play a crucial role in contributing to this goal. (Mathew Varghese)*



On Friday before International Day, Naeem and Isabella, two of our Senior Student Council members, were invited to Radio Wave to talk about International Day. Listening to the interview made us proud and listen in awe. We were fascinated by the confident and eloquent way both spoke to the moderator about our school, International Day and their roles in the Senior Student Council. [HERE](#) is the interview - it is worth taking the few minutes to enjoy and appreciate your students' contributions.

On Thursday, our Grade 6s presented their end of unit projects in a celebration of ancient civilisations. Once again, it was refreshing to observe their confidence and the diligence in preparing for this presentation.

All these are testimony that our Definition of Learning is accurately describing how students at WIS learn and grow: *"Learning at WIS is a journey of inquiring, discovering, and experimenting while developing understanding and acquiring new knowledge, skills and concepts. In the process, the learner constructs meaning by making connections and applying these in daily life situations. The learner realises individual potential through continued reflection and exploration. The learning environment is multi-sensory, collaborative, enjoyable and encourages international-mindedness."*

It is fantastic to see, observe and experience our students in their classes, but also in environments where they get taken out of their comfort zones and have to apply their learning in different contexts.

**Regards,
Maggie Reiff**

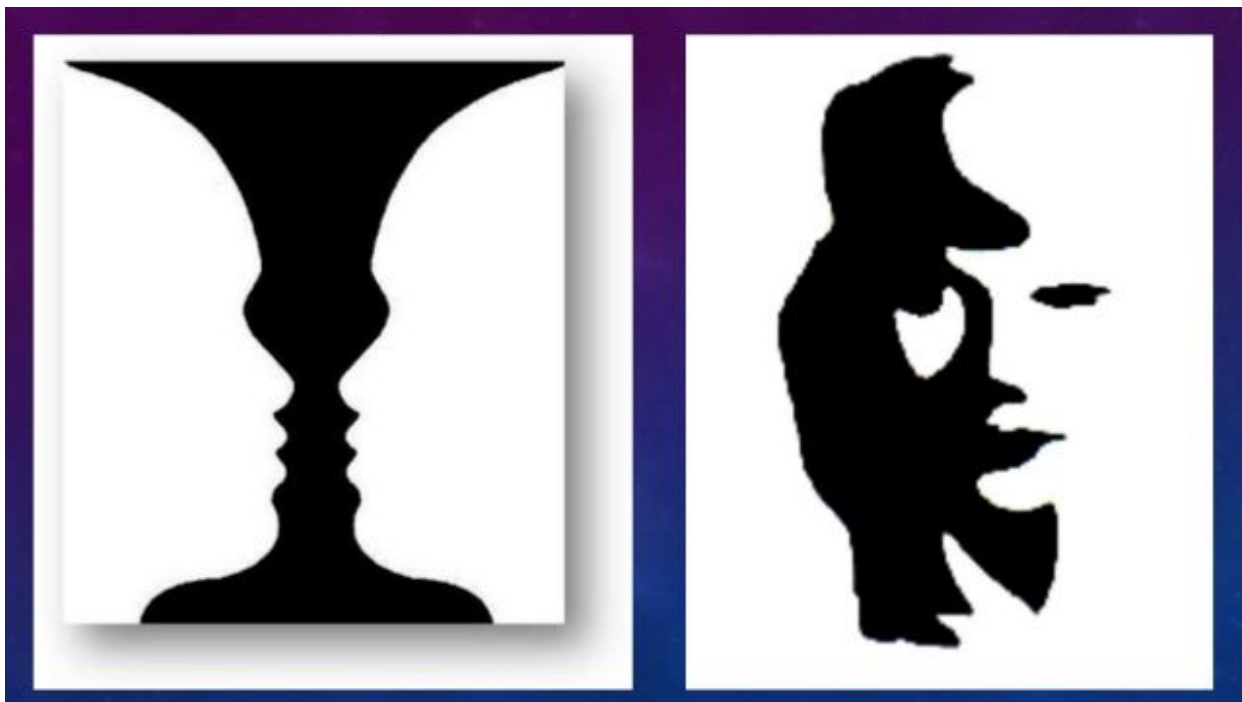
This is Neuro-Diversity Week

13 – 17 March 2023

Neurodiversity is a term that refers to the rich diversity of human minds and is an undeniable aspect of the biodiversity that is found in human beings.

The way we talk about our children is how they will talk about themselves. We are in a position of power to influence whether a student flourishes in our care by not making them feel stigmatised, excluded and alone.

Choose the respectful language that validates a child's identity. Students are not the sum of their deficits. If we are the language that becomes students' inner voices, let that be the one that raises them up, using neurodiversity-affirming language which preserves their sense of self and intactness. gives them confidence and fosters pride.



We all see things differently!

Kathleen for LED

Regular readers of the Oryx will know all about the LFL Football League that WIS and DTS hosts on Friday between 3:00 and 6:30.

It's a development league for clubs to play and designed to support player development in a challenging and safe competitive environment.

We welcome clubs from Naankuse, DTS, ACFC, SWK, River Heights, St. Pauls, Gymnasium Delta and others.

WIS and DTS have taken the lead regarding support, administering and running the league in recent years and we are now excited to welcome BOKOMO as our new sponsoring partner.



More info to follow. We are super excited to kick this league off again.

Tom and The Coaching Team

¡Buena Onda! Viva Mexico!

On March 11th, 2023, Grade 8 students at Windhoek International School, represented Mexico in a successful International Day celebration. The event was organised to promote cultural awareness and appreciation among the whole WIS community.



The Grade 8 students spent weeks researching and preparing for their presentation. They created posters, artwork, and traditional Mexican crafts to display at their booth. They also prepared a traditional dance performance, which they practiced tirelessly to perfect, thank you Ms. Janna Soni for dedicating your time and skill to ensuring a memorable dance.

On the day of the event, the students arrived early to set up their booth and decorate the area with colourful banners and flags. They wore traditional Mexican clothing and greeted visitors with a warm welcome.

Throughout the day, the students shared their knowledge and enthusiasm for Mexican culture with their peers and teachers. Fun activities like hitting piñatas and face painting were available to all to take part in.

The highlight of the day was the students' dance performance, which showcased their dedication and teamwork. They performed a traditional Mexican folk dance with precision and energy, captivating the audience and earning a proper round of applause.

The Grade 8 students' hard work and dedication paid off, as their booth raised more than N\$ 8000. The event was a great success, promoting cultural understanding and appreciation among the school community.

The Grade 8 students' International Day celebration was a testament to the power of education in promoting cultural awareness and understanding. Their enthusiasm and dedication to representing Mexico were truly inspiring.

Thank you to all the parents who contributed and added to make this celebration a huge success!



Grade 8 teachers Angie and JP

Interview with Namasiku

Namasiku's recent performance at the Long Course National Gala was nothing short of phenomenal. Her diligence and commitment to training resulted in a medal haul of 8, that's in addition to the 6 medals at the previous short course gala. A short course gala is where the swimmers use a pool that is 25 meters in length. The long course is 50 meters!

During one of our IGCSE PE lessons, the Grade 9 students discussed aspects of sports development with specific reference to para-sport access and opportunities.

We discussed aspects of training and the huge time commitment that it takes to be a competitive club swimmer.

Namasiku explained that at some galas she competed with all the other children from across Namibia who swim and for some galas she entered into a special category for swimmers with specific needs.

At the Olympics the special category is known as the Paralympics. The term Para is an abbreviation of Parallel, this means that athletes with additional needs or who have a disability are able to compete in 'Parallel' with the able bodied

We enjoyed hearing about Namasiku's success, training, effort and what it takes to get so many personal best (PB) times at a gala.

Well done Namasiku!



UPCOMING PARENT WORKSHOPS

- ✓ **30 MARCH 2023**
Supporting Neurodiverse Learners

[Click here for the GoogleMeets link](#)



- ✓ **27 APRIL 2023**
The Science of Reading - *What you need to know as a parent.*
08:00 - 09:00 (WIS Staffroom)

- ✓ **1 JUNE 2023**
Digital Citizenship
08:00 - 09:00 (WIS Staffroom)





The poster features a background of bookshelves filled with various books. At the top center is the Windhoek International School (WIS) logo, which consists of a globe with the letters 'WIS' and the school's name below it. The main title 'LIBRARY Week' is prominently displayed in the center, with 'LIBRARY' in large blue block letters and 'Week' in a yellow cursive font. Below the title, the schedule for the week is listed, including dates, activities, times, and locations. Each day's entry is followed by the statement 'ALL AGES ARE WELCOME TO PARTICIPATE'.


LIBRARY *Week*

MONDAY, APRIL 24, 2023
Game On! | 1:40pm to 3:00pm
Place: Secondary Library
ALL AGES ARE WELCOME TO PARTICIPATE

TUESDAY, APRIL 25, 2023
Book to Movie | 1:50pm to 3:30pm
Place: PLC (Auditorium)
ALL AGES ARE WELCOME TO PARTICIPATE

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 26, 2023
Book Fair | 11:00am to 2:00pm
ALL AGES ARE WELCOME TO PARTICIPATE

THURSDAY, APRIL 27, 2023
Science of Reading Workshop | 10:30am to 11:30am
Place: Secondary Library
ALL PARENTS/GUARDIANS AND CAREGIVERS ARE WELCOME TO PARTICIPATE

FRIDAY, APRIL 28, 2023
Books & Characters Day | ALL DAY
ALL AGES ARE WELCOME TO PARTICIPATE

DESIGN-A-YEARBOOK-COVER

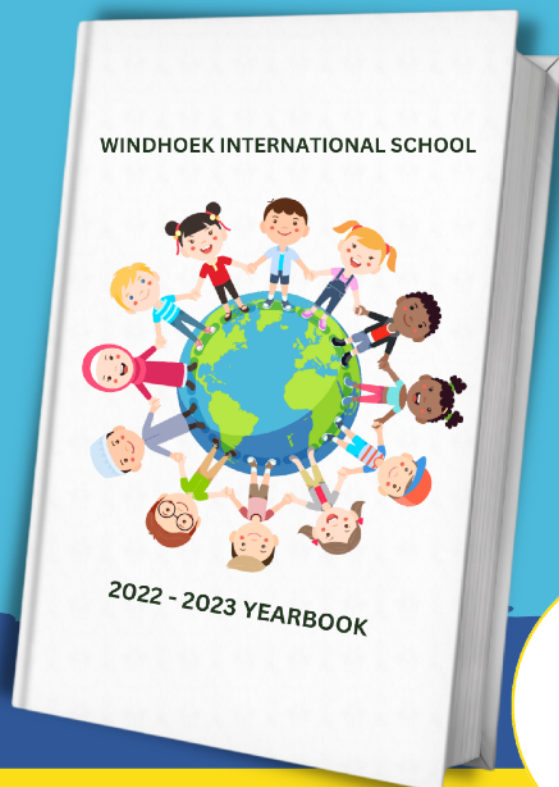
Grade 4 - 12 WIS Students are invited to create and design the WIS Yearbook Cover for 2022-2023!

THEME: "MANY FRIENDS, ONE WORLD"

DESIGN GUIDELINES:

Theme: *Many friends, one world. (This theme must be used.)*

1. Only open to Grades 4 - 12 WIS Students.
2. Page size must be A4, portrait layout.
3. The cover must be digital, either drawn by hand and then scanned in high resolution or designed with design software like Photoshop or CANVA. It can also be a photo, the photo must be your own photo.
4. The final file should be sent in .PDF, .JPG, or .PNG file format, files can be shared via CANVA or as PSD files. **Final designs can be sent to: jnel@wis.edu.na.**
5. Please add your full name and grade when you send the final design.
6. Submission deadline 31 March 2023.



*Prizes sponsored by the
MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENT COUNCIL!*

WHAT CAN YOU WIN?

1st Prize

Your design is the 2022 - 2023
Yearbook Cover!

N\$250 TYPO VOUCHER!

2nd Prize

Your design is on the first page
of the Yearbook!

N\$150 TYPO VOUCHER!

3rd Prize

Your design is on the last page
of the Yearbook!

N\$100 TUCK SHOP VOUCHER



**Students can use the art room #42 on Tuesday
afternoons from 13:45-15:00 for this project!**

Hello WIS community,

PYP Art exhibition

EY1/2 - Grade 5

Date: 14.03.- 31.03. 2023
Time: 7am - 3 pm
Mon - Fri
Place: **WIZ Art Gallery**
next to the Art room nr.41

h a p p y

HOLIDAY

hope you enjoy your vacation.

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