

THE ORYX

The weekly newsletter of Windhoek International School

FROM THE DIRECTOR

A New Year

WIS is embarking on its 27th year of providing a world class education to the internationally-minded community of Windhoek.

We start the new school year in very good shape and with every reason to view the future with confidence.

Substantial work was done on the campus over the break, the most visible example of which is the new (much larger, much better) PTA Centre at the east end of the car park. We have also begun a major renovation programme to replace classroom fittings that were rather tired and the delivery of 400+ chairs is only the start. The auditorium, too, has received a lot of attention and the entire lighting and sound system has been replaced. Lastly (for now) work is about to start repainting the whole Portuguese Language and Cultural Centre.

To a degree these improvements are cosmetic but the importance of a clean, attractive and inspiring environment should not be underestimated in the context of providing a first class education.

But, of course, what really matters is the quality of education we are delivering and here, too, the signs are good.

Our annual IGCSE results came in yesterday and we are maintaining a very impressive 68% A*-C grade average for the third year running. Moreover, 26% of all grades were A or A*. Successful IGCSE results open a number of doors but our preferred next step is...

The IB Diploma. Our results this year were outstanding – the best in the school's history. The pass rate was 100% (the worldwide IBDP pass rate is 80%), our average score was 35.2 (the worldwide average is 30), and three students gained 40 or 41 points – achievements that put them comfortably in the top 5% of students worldwide.

In the last two years our graduates have entered prestigious universities including the University of British Columbia, Edinburgh University, Newcastle University, the University of Toronto and many others. And it may be worth pointing out that these students have gained immediate entry rather than having to spend a year taking a foundation course.

You can read more about the benefits of the IBDP and university entrance [HERE](#).

I introduced our five new teachers to the community in June and I am no less pleased to welcome **Hedwig Heyn** who joined our Finance Office this month. We also have three new Teacher Assistants – **Elsie Andreas** (Year 5), **Elizabeth Cloete** (Year 1C), and **Victoria Hamukoto** (Year 1A). All are very welcome. Let me wish everyone in the WIS community a successful and memorable year!

Peter MacKenzie

PRIMARY PRINCIPAL

Welcome to the new academic year; a special warm welcome to all of our new students and their families. I always enjoy seeing the smiling faces and how excited the children are to be starting school again. As I've visited each of the classes this week, I have seen engaged, enthusiastic and happy learners, who are already confident in their class routines.



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Dates to Remember

August 2017

- **15: Board Meeting**
- **21: Toddlers - Year 2: Back to school Night**
- **22: Middle School: Back to school**
- **23: IGCSE/ IBDP: Back to school**
- **24: Year 3 - 6: Back to school Night**

This week is an important week in the school year as it's a time for the children to make connections socially and emotionally; to have input into the class agreements and how the classroom is designed; to take part in the various get-to-know you activities; and to learn what the teacher's and TA's expectations are for the year. While these things may be viewed by some as unimportant and that missing a few days at the start of the school year doesn't matter, I would argue that it does matter.

Children who miss any part of the first week of school miss out on some of the social and emotional aspects, which can't be made up. In addition, in this first week the teachers begin assessing the children to see what they know and what might be areas of focus during this first term. When your child misses school, it not only impacts him/her, but also the rest of the class and the teacher. While there are extenuating circumstances that may prevent children from returning to school on the first day of the new academic year, most of the reasons for returning late could be avoided, such as wanting a few extra days of holiday. When planning your holidays for this year, and for next July, please make every effort to ensure that your child is present at school on the days set by the calendar.

At the end of the last school year, we reviewed the Primary timetable and decided that more time was needed for lessons in the morning before the first break. Therefore we've adjusted the first break time from 8:45-9:00 to 9:25-9:40. The children now have three lessons followed by First Break, three lessons followed by Second Break, two lessons then dismissal.

As the new year gets underway, here are a few reminders and requests:

Primary School Hours

The school day for all Primary students is from **7:20-13:30**. Please do not collect your children before the bell rings at 13:30. If on the rare occasion you need to collect your child before dismissal, please be sure to sign your child out with Ms Catherine in Reception.

Parking

In the interest of safety for all, please park only in the designated areas. Do not park on the zebra crossings, where there are painted yellow lines, or words indicating "no parking". A rule of thumb: If there are not painted white lines on either side of your car, then it is not a parking space. Keep in mind that there are usually parking spaces near the PLC. With the afternoon activities beginning next week, it should be easier to find parking spaces.



Dates to Diarise

August 21 - Back to School Night for Toddlers-Year 2
 August 24 - Back to School Night for Years 3-6
 October 4-5 - Primary Conferences
 October 9-13 Mid-Semester Holiday
 November 11 - International Day



Thank you all for your contributions to a smooth beginning of the school year. I look forward to a positive and successful year ahead.

Regards,
Beth Smith

What's going on the in the PYP?

"Who We Are!"

An inquiry into the nature of the self; beliefs and values; personal, physical, mental, social and spiritual health; human relationships including families, friends, communities and cultures; rights and responsibilities; what it means to be human.



Dear WIS community

Welcome back to old and new families to another exciting year in the [Primary Years Programme](#) - 2017-2018!

Who are we? What is this PYP thing all about? Well let's see if we can scratch the surface...

At WIS the Primary Years Programme is an inquiry based, holistic and student-centred programme. When looking at the overall transdisciplinary theme of "Who We Are", in the context of our school, here is a short descriptor to connect you:

- What is inquiry based? It is about triggering learners curiosity. Inquiry is a form of active learning that starts by posing questions, sharing prior knowledge, exploring problems or scenario in a real world context. Rather than simply exploring facts or knowledge learners are making connections, drawing understandings from each other, the

teacher becomes the facilitator and the guide.

- The whole development of the child is an important factor within the PYP: Social & emotional development, physical development, cognitive development and an individual sense of well-being. All these are touched on within the PYP programme.
- Our WIS community is fostered with a sense of family, embracing differences and the melting pot of culture and values that makes us WIS. Learners are developing a sense of international mindedness, they are encouraged to take social responsibility and develop the traits of the IB Learner profile.

This term at the beginning of the year for Unit of Inquiry 1, all year levels are focussing on the Transdisciplinary theme of "Who We Are". This is a fabulous unit for learners, teachers and families to set the tone of a collaborative learning community at the beginning of the year. A lot of time is spent in the first term getting to know each other, establishing how we work together as a class community and a school community and there is a focus on where I fit as an individual. Throughout classrooms you will see a lot of social connections being made, students and teachers collaboratively creating their classroom agreements, reflecting on what their expectations are and how they can work together.

PYP teachers have taken a lot of time and energy preparing the learning environment and are now taking time ensuring the students have input into how they want their learning space to be.

Next week parents will be receiving the Unit 1 PYP Newsletter posted on the class level blogs, which will give you more information as to how you, as a parent, can get involved in your child's learning. Please remember to subscribe to your child's blog.

Please refer to the [LINK](#) to gain more information on the Primary Years Programme. Welcome to all!

Kind regards and yours in collaboration

Avril van Zyl - PYP Coordinator

Moments that make it all worthwhile...

(An occasional series)

The following e-mail was sent by a 10 year-old WIS student to her teacher. The student is not a native English speaker. Think about the learning that is taking place here on so many different levels.

June 2017

By e-mail

Dear Ms. [Teacher],

I am very sorry to bother you at this hour with a topic as silly as this, but while I was writing I have come across the concept of pity and compassion.

I saw some would rather be shown compassion than pity, and some go as far as to loathe being pitied.

I read an article called "Do Not Pity Me" but sadly I did not exactly understand the whole article. But, I have understood a bit about the difference between showing pity and showing compassion.

Pity: Feel the sorrow that was caused by someone else's misfortune.

Compassion: Definition of pity, but show greater commitment and a want to be personally involved.

So basically Pity is merely feeling while Compassion is actually taking action.

I sent this email to check by you to see if my definition was correct because I do not want to write about something I am not sure about.

Sincerely

[Learner]

SECONDARY PRINCIPAL

Welcome to a new year and new journeys

We have started the academic year 2017-2018. At each beginning, one reflects on past experiences and tries to learn what to do better or what to keep the same.

At the end of the last academic year we discussed a few areas in Secondary School that need to be reviewed. At the moment, we are busy looking at our reports. A lot of work goes into report writing and we are often not sure if our message comes across to parents. One question I was asked numerous times during the past holiday is: "Did my child pass?" I was surprised to say the least, because when you have your children at WIS we assume that you are aware of our approach and the way we do things. But, that does not seem to be so clear. At WIS a child does not pass or fail. We monitor the child's progress and in discussion with the parents we will decide what is best for the child and his/her potential. We might then discuss that it would be better for a student to repeat a grade to have a chance to consolidate, catch up and possibly mature to be ready for the next grade.

WIS has a different approach to most other systems, especially to the traditional approach where you teach facts and content. You expect students to learn what you teach them and reproduce this knowledge. Here at WIS, we expect our students to take initiative in their learning, to be pro-active. Since this is not an approach that is commonly known by all students and parents, this is something we might need to explain a little more.

WIS has an inclusive approach, which means that children with varied abilities will be accepted at WIS as far as we can accommodate their needs and we support children to achieve to their potential. This approach, however, needs to be a collaborative approach where all partners in the educational situation invest their energy: the child, the parents/the home and the school. If not all of us play their specific part, this approach cannot work successfully.

WIS has taken on the ATL (Approaches to Teaching and Learning) approach from the International Baccalaureate. This approach focusses less on conveying facts and content, but more on skills that children should acquire in order to become independent learners and take charge of their learning themselves.

The key approaches to learning are:

- Thinking Skills
- Communication Skills
- Social Skills
- Self-Management Skills
- Research Skills
- If we can equip our young learners with these skills, we will have succeeded in preparing them to be pro-active and successful lifelong learners.
- "In the traditional teacher-centred, content-focussed transmission model of teaching and learning... assessment focusses on the products of learning rather than the how and why of student learning." (Anderson, 1998)

Regards,
Maggie Reiff

ATL skill categories	Students develop this skill cluster...	When they...	Control questions:
Thinking skills	Critical thinking	Analyzing and evaluating issues and ideas	How can students think critically?
	Creativity and innovation	The skills of invention – developing things and ideas that never existed before	How can students be creative?
	Transfer	Utilizing skills and knowledge in multiple contexts	How can students transfer skills and knowledge among disciplines and subject groups?
Social skills	Collaborating	Working effectively with others	How can students collaborate?
Communication skills	Communication	Exchanging thoughts, messages and information effectively through interaction	How can students communicate through interaction? How can students demonstrate communication through language?
Self-management skills	Organization	Managing time and tasks effectively	How can students demonstrate organization skills?
	Affective skills	Managing state of mind	How can students manage their own state of mind?
	Reflection	(Re-)considering what has been learned; choosing and using ATL skills	How can students be reflective?
Research skills	Information literacy	Finding, interpreting, judging and creating information	How can students demonstrate information literacy?
	Media literacy	Interacting with media to use and create ideas and information	How can students demonstrate media literacy?

PTA Welcome

Dear SLT, teachers, parents & students.

A very warm welcome on behalf of the PTA to the new families. We wish you a fantastic and rewarding year at WIS. Welcome back to the families returning to this fantastic school.

My name is Sandra Camilo-Giroud, the current PTA Chairperson. I have two lovely daughters at school, Camila is starting year 4 and Charlotte starting Year 1.

They enjoy every minute of their learning journey at WIS, and we as parents are very happy too, to see them blossom. As a parent here at WIS, I became involved with the PTA 5 years ago.



What is the PTA?

The PTA is made up of all parents or legal guardians of students enrolled in the school as well as teachers employed at the school.

That means that everyone who is a parent or a teacher at Windhoek International School is automatically a member of the PTA.

That also means that you have all the rights and responsibilities of a person affiliated to a great cause such as the Parent & Teachers Association.

By constitution, there is an executive committee of the PTA elected on an annual basis.

This committee is made up of 12 members from the parent community, a primary school representative, a secondary school representative as well as the Senior Leadership Team.

The Purpose of the PTA as defined in its constitution is to engage in activities, projects and programmes that will contribute to the improvement of the school.

We work closely with the WIS Leadership Team in order to help them achieve the school's annual work program, by providing support to teachers & students in their various curricular programs in order to help WIS to continue to be a school of excellence and a leader in all of its programmes.

This support takes many forms. A few examples are:

- Fundraising activities such as the Raffle, by far our biggest fund raising initiative.
- The Funds raised by the raffle allow us, the PTA to support the students in their extracurricular programs as well as the various social events that take part at WIS during the school calendar year.
- We support the teachers Events committee on their programs such as Book week and International day
- We support the junior and senior student councils with their fun and charitable events.
- We support The IBDP farewell event, as well as the teachers when the need arises.
- The funds collected, allow us also to support new families, by holding regular social events.
- In order to help the new families to settle, and mingle easily in Namibia and at WIS.

To summarise, the PTA is a lot of fun with a conscious effort to build a stronger, receptive community, and its indeed a win-win situation.

A strong community, a helpful community, creates a healthy environment where our children will blossom. So please do join us, by volunteering a few hours of your valuable time, experience and company.

The PTA nominations will be electronically sent on the 16th of August. The PTA team wishes you all, a great Year at WIS.

Sandra Camilo-Giroud - PTA Chairperson

Hiking the Fish River Canyon

“All men are equal before fish.”



The line above is a quote from Herbert Hoover. What did he mean by this? Truth be told, I have no idea. It is a very true quote, however, when changed to “All men are equal before the Fish River”.

While some people are content watching the beautiful sights Namibia has to offer, others are not, and will only be satisfied once they have been into the belly of the beast. Such was the attitude of 10 of our students, who spent 5 days during the holiday hiking the grueling 90kms know as the Fish River Canyon.

This is a difficult hike, clambering over boulders, struggling through the deep sand, crossing rivers at the risk of falling into the icy water, eating only what you can carry (bacon and eggs for some, 5 days of Rice Cakes and Two-minute-noodles for others....). And yet our students never failed to amaze, having positive attitudes all the way, facing the challenges head-on and generally having a real good time while seeing the canyon in ways others can only dream of.

Back to the original quote- standing inside the Canyon, watching the cliffs on both sides and sleeping under a sky of endless stars humbles a person. One feel small when faced with these majestic sights and develop a deeper understanding and appreciation of nature. I can only express the hope that more of our students will grab the opportunity to come along when we do this again. It is something you have to experience, not something that can be said in words.

Riegardt Smit

The Ministry of Home Affairs will come to WIS on Wednesday, 16 August, to do IDs for students who are 16 and older and do not yet have an ID. Students need to bring along a copy of their birth certificate. Please indicate if your child is interested in getting their Namibian ID done here at WIS.

Have you collected and displayed your 2017-2018 windscreen permit?



They are available free of charge from the School Office during normal school hours. You may have as many stickers as you have vehicles.

Approved WIS vehicles will be admitted to the school car park but vehicles without stickers will be stopped at the gate.

Please note that from **MONDAY 14th AUGUST** vehicles without this sticker **WILL NOT BE ADMITTED** to the school car park!



SPCA Windhoek
FNB Cheque Account
Acc#: 622 47 99 59 15
Branch code: 281 174
Old Power Station



Tel: 061-238 654
Cell: 081 124 4520 (EMERGENCY)

WIS PTA: ITEMS PRICE LIST



HOUSE COLOR T-SHIRTS: N\$ 120
(AVAILABLE FOR PRIMARY AND SECONDARY)

NAVY T-SHIRTS: N\$ 120
(AVAILABLE FOR PRIMARY)
NAVY GOLF: N\$ 160
(AVAILABLE FOR SECONDARY)

WIDE BRIM HATS: N\$ 150
(AVAILABLE FOR PRIMARY)

CAPS: N\$ 100
(AVAILABLE FOR SECONDARY)

SMALL BOTTLES: N\$ 100

HOODIES: sizes: 3 - 14: N\$ 250 | sizes: S - LX: N\$ 350

BAGS AND APRONS:

Chair Bags: N\$90 | Art Aprons: N\$50 | Library Cotton Bags: N\$150

PRIMARY WIS PACKAGE - ONLY N\$ 990

1x House T-Shirt | 1x Navy T-shirt | 1x wide Brim Hat | 1x water Bottle
1x Hoodie | 1x Chair bag | 1x Art Apron
1x Sponsored PTA/Westlane Spar Cotton Library bag

SECONDARY WIS SCHOOL - ONLY N\$ 900

1x WIS House T-Shirt | 1x WIS Navy Golf T-Shirt | 1x WIS Cap
1x WIS Water Bottle | 1x Hoodie
1x PTA/Westlane Spar/ Sponsored Library Cotton Bag



"RIDE TO DRIVE HOME THE MESSAGE THAT WINDHOEK NOW URGENTLY NEEDS A NETWORK OF DEMARCATED, PROTECTED CYCLE LANES AND ROUTES THROUGHOUT THE CITY."

FRIDAY - 08 SEP. 17

MEGACENTRE - KLEINE KUPPE
 15H00 KIDS RIDE - 2KM
 17H30 MASS RIDE - 8KM



Bring your Bike lights!

FREE ENTRY

Cyclists are asked to register in advance
 Online: <http://www.today.com.na/events/cycling-in-the-city>
 Forms Available: Bike Shops and info@namcf.org.

FREE ROADWORTHY BIKE CHECK!

LIVE BAND | REFRESHMENT | BASIC SKILL EDUCATION | KIDS FUN | LUCKY DRAW

