

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ



The Sultan's School

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1st April, 2020

To All Members of The Sultan's School Community,

The current COVID-19 pandemic has left all of us in uncharted waters in so many respects, both personally and professionally, as we struggle to keep up with an ever changing situation. As I write the number of reported cases continues to rise hourly and it seems, according to the experts, the situation is, sadly, going to get worse before it plateaus and starts to improve.

Thankfully, the number of reported cases in Oman is relatively low and I think the authorities need to be given a great deal of credit for taking early proactive action, rather than reactive, which has been the case in numerous other countries.

Needless to say, the current situation is having a global impact on education. The latest figures from UNESCO suggest that more than 160 countries have implemented nationwide closures of schools and universities, which is impacting more than 87% of the world's student population.

Although we sincerely hope that schools in Oman will be able to open again soon, we must face the real possibility that the closure will continue for an extended period, possibly for the rest of this academic year. With this in mind, we are planning accordingly to ensure that students are given the appropriate materials and tasks that will allow them to continue to learn from the safety of their homes.

We are, however, fully aware of the demands this places on our teaching staff and the parents, especially those who have numerous children at the school in different year groups. We are also conscious of the fact that it is not practical, nor healthy, to expect teachers and students to be sat in front of a computer screen for six to eight hours a day. Fortunately, the school has a number of very effective virtual learning platforms (Firefly, Class Dojo etc.) that allows the delivery of teaching materials in a timely manner and allows students to work at their own pace without being entirely dependent on the computer. As we move forward we are planning to deliver work based on the adage that it needs to be 'meaningful but manageable'.

Meyer said that teachers can change lives with just the right mix of chalk and challenges. Although, in the 21st century, we may have now swapped chalk for interactive devices, there is still no substitute for a teacher inspiring a classroom full of students. This is something we still hope to be able to provide, through the power of the internet, as we move forward in the coming weeks and months. Should the school remain closed beyond 12th April, parents will be contacted through the appropriate head of section, curriculum coordinator/head of department and class teacher with more information.



On the 23rd March, the International Baccalaureate Organisation (IBO) and Cambridge International Examinations (CIE) announced that the forthcoming IB and IGCSE examinations set for this May and June have been cancelled. On the 28th March the IBO issued the following information about how the final results will be calculated:

We will be using vast historical assessment data to ensure that we follow a rigorous process of due diligence in what is a truly unprecedented situation. We will be undertaking significant data analysis from previous exam sessions, individual school data, and subject data.

CIE have stated that they will be issuing further information on 7th April.

Mr Charles (IB Coordinator) and Mr Mohammed (IGCSE Coordinator) have been in regular contact with both organisations and have been keeping students, parents and teachers updated on developments. In addition, Dr Adnan (University Counsellor) has been in contact with UCAS (the UK university admissions' service), the Common Application Service (for applications to the USA) and individual universities in Canada to keep them updated on the situation relating to our students. He has also been in contact with the Ministry of Higher Education.

On numerous occasions I have said that the education of an individual child is dependent on three, equally important and interconnected parts: the school, the parents and the child. In the coming days and weeks, there is little doubt that all three are going to need to work closely together to see us through these demanding times.

I will finish by asking everyone to stay safe, follow the government guidelines relating to COVID-19 and I hope to be able to see you, in person, in the not too distant future.

Kind regards,

Dr. Glenn Canterford
Principal