



MALEK FAHD ISLAMIC SCHOOL

ABN: 41003 864 891

KNOWLEDGE IS LIGHT & WORK IS WORSHIP

www.mfis.nsw.edu.au

23 December 2021

Dear Parents/Guardians,

Assalamu Alaykum WRWB,

This is the final Newsletter for the year and what a challenging year it has been for you all. I've been so impressed and proud of the way everyone met the challenges of this pandemic. In particular, Year 12 as they worked through their final year of schooling much of which was through remote learning.

There is no doubt COVID-19 has left an indelible mark on the world and on our lives, and indeed this is the case for MFIS. We were forced into remote learning, Year 12 Trial HSC examinations were undertaken remotely, and end of school celebrations were postponed. Many events including, a significant number of school excursions, sporting events, community service initiatives, and Umrah were all cancelled. Yet our faith has ensured that we have come out of the pandemic stronger, with greater resilience, care, and compassion for each other. COVID-19 has meant that we learnt to do things differently. This included the delivery of lessons, meetings, drop-off and pick up times, Kindergarten and Year 7 Orientation Days as well as Year 10 Work Experience, and the list goes on.

However, despite a protracted delay, I'm delighted we were able to complete HSC examinations, Year 6 Graduation celebrations, end of year assemblies, including the special assembly at the Greenacre campus to acknowledge and celebrate Year 12 students as they completed their 13 years of schooling.

The School's response to COVID-19 was of a very high order. It was a significant team effort from the entire staff, led by a very efficient, hard-working, and focused Executive team.

We acted swiftly to a new way of teaching, learning, and communicating. Staff, students, and parents rose

NEWSLETTER



to the challenges presented to us. We adapted our communication by having lessons through Microsoft Teams, social distancing, hygiene, hand sanitizer, students accessing technology from home, new student routines, student self-regulation, organisation, and commitment to learning whilst learning remotely.

Our IT staff played a significant role in preparing students and staff for remote learning, setting up systems for lessons to be taught virtually. Teaching, communications, meetings, counselling, and Friday Sermons were all delivered on Microsoft Teams. Staff made regular telephone contact with students. Returning to normal operation itself was interesting and a challenge as we attempted to foster a normal school environment, including new drop off and pick up routines for all campuses.

We are conscious and concerned of the potential impact on academic growth for the younger students, and to this end, a Covid recovery plan has been put in place to commence in 2022 for Kindergarten to Year 4 students.

Curriculum

In 2021 we expanded the curriculum delivery offering Opportunity (OC) classes for Year 5 students at the three campuses along with additional streaming in Mathematics, English, Science, Arabic and Islamic Studies - Year 7 to 10. In this way students will be in the level of ability that best suits their academic needs. We now have Acceleration Programs for Mathematics and Science starting in Stage 5.

With a focus on moving forward, this year there have been significant changes to enhance the operation of the School. The decision to have a Coordinator of Literacy has proved beneficial to the growth of literacy in our students.

Islamic Pedagogy

Islamic Pedagogy is a central component to the next five-year strategic plan. In 2021 the School continued working with Professor Abdalla of the Centre of Islamic Thought and Excellence (CITE) at the University of South Australia on the implementation of our Islamic Pedagogy program in the School. We have embarked on professional development for all staff. A number of teachers have now completed short courses and Post Graduate Certificate level courses through the university.

Wellbeing and Counselling

Malek Fahd leads the way in counselling and welfare support. Wellbeing initiatives and weekly homeroom bulletins used by primary and secondary across the three campuses enhance our students' mental, spiritual and physical wellbeing. I am delighted the staff are working hard behind the scenes to assist our students.

The school counsellors, ably led by Ms Masri, are doing an amazing job in supporting the needs of students

Community Service

Due to COVID-19, the planned events for the School and engagement in community services reduced significantly. Despite this a number of fundraising and awareness raising activities still took place and included: Jeans for Genes, NSW Cancer Council, Daffodil Day, Pink Ribbon Day, Food and Blanket Drive for Syria, NAIDOC Week, Harmony Day, sponsoring four orphans, maintaining nine water wells in other parts of the world.

Presentation Days

During the last 2 weeks of term, I had the pleasure and privilege of attending end of year Presentation Days, 7 in all. During each of the presentations I have taken the opportunity to reflect on the academic year and provide an insight of the many directions, in keeping with the strategic plan, the School is moving forward in 2022.

The Presentation Days have provided me with the opportunity to thank all the staff, teaching, administration and maintenance staff, curriculum, wellbeing and pastoral co-coordinators, Heads of Campus and Mr Dib, Ms Khan, Ms Kassem, Acting Head of Campus Ms Charmand, the Sheikhs at each campus and the Executive for their dedication and leadership to ensure the best of education and care is afforded the students.





Vertical/Horizontal House System

During the year, the School completed a review of the Pastoral Care system. In line with Strategic Plan 2018-2021, at Greenacre, the House System will be introduced in 2022. The four boys and four girls traditional sporting house will be expanded to develop students with a lot of mentoring and peer support considering the academic, social, and emotional wellbeing of every student.

The horizontal structure of Year advisors six for boys and six for girls will be kept for additional cohort support needed every day and they will continue with the grade assemblies and announcements. More information will be forthcoming early 2022 from Mr Ahmed, Deputy Principal, Pastoral and Community.

The Beaumont and Hoxton campuses have a new Pastoral Care Coordinator who will support secondary students in looking after their welfare and run appropriate programs to assist the Head of Campus and Deputy Head of Campus, counsellor and teachers manage and support students better as numbers grow at those campuses.

Facility Improvements

During the year we have undertaken significant improvements to the facilities at each of the three campuses. At Hoxton Park: it was the commencement of works for Stage 3.

Hoxton Park Stage 3

We are delighted to announce that the much-anticipated new building for Hoxton Park Stage 3 will be ready for the academic year 2022. The new building

comes with 7 new general classrooms, 4 seminar rooms, each with operable walls to divide the rooms into 8 smaller rooms for better teaching and learning strategies, a huge state of art library and 2 modern science labs. The building also features a cafeteria style canteen with seating arrangements. The students will also enjoy the huge outdoor play area including 2 modern multipurpose courts including basketball and netball options. The courtyard will include generous seating arrangements for the students to enjoy during breaks.

We are enrolling now for K-12 and limited places are available. Please act now to avoid any disappointment. Please contact the administration office now to enroll your child.



Beaumont Hills

I am super excited to announce that the School has received Council approval to increase enrolment by another 75 students. The Beaumont Hills campus is growing significantly, and we are enrolling now for K-12 for 2022 academic year. 2 new classrooms have been added to accommodate the increase in demand. We had the installation of new Hall with offices, completion of the word works, installation of the external stairs, laid turf and synthetic turf. Places are filling fast so please act now to avoid any disappointment. Please contact the administration office now to enroll your child.

Greenacre Secondary Classrooms refurbished and painted; upgrading of air conditioning units, new office spaces and a new meeting room were constructed.

School Academic Reports

Semester 2 Academic Reports have been posted out to parents for students in K-10. These reports will focus

on the achievements of students in Semester 2 this year. As the bulk of the semester was conducted in a remote learning format these reports will be different from the usual reports with no academic grades or marks being recorded. Instead, a detailed comment from teachers will be provided along with grades for their efforts and participation in remote learning and class activities. Thank you to all staff for preparing the final reports.

99 Names of Allah

Many of our Kindergarten students have successfully memorised the 99 names of Allah. During the final weeks at Greenacre Kindergarten these students were presented with a special trophy acknowledging this significant achievement. Congratulations to you all.



Textbook Lists

Parents have been advised of the textbook list requirements for 2022. A list may also be found on the School website.

Year 7 Orientation

To help with the transition from Primary into Secondary schooling, an orientation program for Year 7 students will be held at each campus at the beginning of 2022. The program will encompass school structure, subject familiarisation, study skills, school discipline policy, anti-bullying, resilience, team building and more. Details of the orientation days will be advised by the Heads of Campus early in the new year.

Kindergarten Orientation (Students Only)

The Kindergarten orientations provides our future kindy students a glimpse of formal school life. These are an important part of the transition to school

allowing staff to gauge the learning capacity of each child. Teachers will also use their knowledge and skills to cater for the needs of students be it academic or social. Seeing the new students walk into the classroom and immediately engage with the planned activities impressed everyone. It is very important for parents to understand that teachers cannot be chosen for students, rather staff will use their observations and knowledge of the children to provide the best possible outcome for the students. It is unfortunate but due to COVID-19, parents will not be allowed on campus. Students will be dropped off at the respective School Hall to gather. Parents will be advised with further details closer to the date.

Administration Office Hours of Operation

During the school holidays, the operational hours of the Administration Office for all campuses will be from 9am to 2pm. Please note, all offices will be closed during the shutdown period of 2 weeks from 24th December to 7th January and reopen on Monday, 10th January 2022.

Re-Enrolment Forms

All parents are reminded to submit their child/ren's Re Enrolment forms to the Administration Office as soon as possible to secure their enrolment for 2022.

School Fees

We appreciate that it was a difficult year for our School community and acknowledge the wonderful efforts of everyone to adapt to this new and challenging way of life. We are pleased to announce that the School Board, at its meeting on Friday 3rd December 2021, approved a 10% discount on tuition fees for Term 4, 2021.

Thank you to all the parents who have fully paid their 2021 fees. A 10% credit for Term 4, 2021 fees will be applied to your child's tuition fees account and carried forward for 2022. For those who are yet to clear all the outstanding fees, please take advantage of the discount and ensure that the fees are fully paid by 24 December 2021.

In addition, the School Board has introduced further discounts in 2022 for "upfront full year fee payment" and "sibling discounts". However, the School will also strictly adhere to the new Debtors' Policy which requires all fees to be paid within the two weeks of each new Term. Nonpayment will result in referral to the Debt Collection agency and cancellation of the student enrollment.

Upfront Payments

5% discount for payment of full year fees at the beginning of year in Term 1. The condition for the upfront payment is that there will be no fees outstanding for previous Terms and the upfront payment for the full year needs to be paid in the first 2 weeks of Term 1. No discounts on full year fees payment in Term 2 or 3.

Sibling Discounts

5% discount applies to the 2nd sibling only
10% discount applies to the 3rd sibling only
15% discount applies to the 4th sibling only
20% discount applies to the 5th sibling only, and
25 % discount applies to the 6th or 7th sibling only.
Sibling discount is only applicable if the fees are paid within the 2 weeks of the term.

Please ensure that the Fees are paid within the 2 weeks of the Term as the school will strictly adhere to the policy for outstanding fees.

2022 School Term Dates

Please be advised following are the dates of schooling for 2022. These dates have been published on the school website.

Term 1 - Monday 31st January to Friday 8th April

Term 2 - Wednesday 27th April to Friday 1st July

Term 3 - Tuesday 19th July to Friday 23rd September

Term 4 - Tuesday 11th October to Friday 9th December

School Uniform Shop

All parents are requested to purchase uniforms online via <https://www.midford.com.au/school-shops-online>
No walk in is allowed and payments are to be made online or over the phone. For online purchase:

- Select Malek Fahd Islamic School Uniform Shop from the online School Shops tab
- Register a new account - the unique school pass phrase: Malek1989 will be required.
- Add your personal information, create a username and password

Should you require further information or details, please feel free to contact 0498 518 916.

School Returns 2022

I wish you all a safe and happy family time during the holiday and I look forward to welcoming you back in the 2022 academic year on Monday 31st January 2022.

Conclusion

This is the final Newsletter for me as your Principal. It has been an honour to serve in the role as your

Principal. During my five years much has been achieved and below is an extended stumbling of the achievements of growth during this timeframe:

MFIS KEY Achievements 2017 - 2021

Beginning of 2012, the School encountered difficulties with the Commonwealth and State over funding issues. The crisis point hit in 2016 and the new / current Board was formed. The task was to bring all governance and compliance matters in line with The Act. A week after I signed the contract in 2016 Ms Miriam Silva called to tell me the news of that funding had ceased. So, I came to the school, not knowing if the school would be existing in six months. Student numbers were 2250, Kindergarten to Year 12 across three locations, and the operation executive team was a skeleton. There was one Deputy Principal, Mr Ahmad, no business manager, no facility manager; no Head of Greenacre Secondary Campus; no Executive Assistant. The IT system had significant issues.

Those that lead schools, know this scenario is not ideal. But this is a fact of no funding. Everything was placed on hold including Hoxton Park Stage 3 building project which had been due for completion in 2014.

A great number of achievements have taken place since 2017. The following provides a summary of these.

Governance

- Restoration of Commonwealth Funding
- Successfully managed five-year full re-registration and re-accreditation of the School - a significant achievement as the School was on a yearly registration since 2012;
- Receiving financial statement from the School's auditors without any reservations - the first in many years.
- Appointment of a Compliance Officer
- Reviewed and updated all policies and ensured compliance is maintained
- Successful completion of the 2017 – 2021 Strategic Plan

Curriculum

- Changing the Direction of the philosophy of the school to a comprehensive school
- Working closely with the Centre of Islamic Thought and Education at University of South Australia to review and introduce Islamic Pedagogy.

- Introduction of academic streaming of English, Mathematics, Science, Arabic and Islamic Studies.
- An increase in subject offerings across all campuses, including VET options
- Introduction of gifted and talented programs, including OC classes in Year 5 and acceleration programs for students in the secondary school
- Strengthened reporting process for each child, including reporting through parent portal.
- Significant investment in learning support, increasing staff from 5 to 22 in the 5-year period. Introduced further curriculum programs including Athletics, Minilit, MULITLIT Reading Tudor Program;
- Introduced standardised and comprehensive ALLWELL assessment of all students in Years 2, 4, 6, 8, 10 testing, allowing teachers to better cater for student needs.
- Significant increase in the co-curricular program including swimming carnivals, cross-country, sporting gala-days and a number of other programs across the three campuses
- As a response to the COVID-19 pandemic the School successfully adapted to remote learning for Kindergarten to Year 12 with detailed plans for COVID recovery now in place for 2022
- In the past two years a number of curriculum reviews have been undertaken, including: Arabic, Islamic Studies, Library services and literacy leading to many improvements
- Introduction of Homework Help Hub across secondary campuses
- Introduction of a comprehensive regime of scholarships to recognise students and their academic, religious and all-rounder achievements.
- Appointment of a Head of campus at Greenacre, Director of Innovation and Professional Practice and Director of Faith and Australian Islamic Identity
- Appointment of Deputy Heads of Campus to support each Head of Campus to efficiently lead their respective campus
- Significantly increased the student care staff, with the appointment of multiple counsellors, Heads of Wellbeing, Learning Support Coordinator and a Careers Advisor
- Enhanced middle management staffing
 - Primary and Secondary Curriculum Co-ordinators
 - Literacy Co-ordinator
 - Assistant Heads of Mathematics and English
 - Counselling Co-ordinator and a significant increase of Counsellor team
- Ensured all staff had access and continued with their professional development and goal setting
- Introduction of a mentoring program for staff as well as a leadership mentoring program for Co-ordinators, Heads of Department and Executive.

Staffing and Professional Development

Dr John Bennett and I spent time working on building the management structure we have today to ensure sustainable support and growth for students, staff and the operation of a very large school on three separate sites. Almost all appointments have been internal appointments.

- Move from 1 Deputy Principal to 3: Teaching and Learning; Pastoral; Operations
- Appointment of a Business Manager and IT Manager, IT Infrastructure Manager, Maintenance Manager, along with significant growth in IT staffing, Careers Advisor

Pastoral / Wellbeing

- Developed student welfare and wellbeing programs across the three campuses
- Introduction of Wellbeing and Welfare positions at Greenacre: moving from 4 welfare positions to a Homeroom system with 16 welfare positions. He has just completed the final stage of the pastoral care system of Introducing a Vertical House System and retaining Year Advisors
- Introduced a significant number of wellbeing and community service programs
- Significant fundraising and awareness raising of many worthy courses, for example sponsorship of orphans and water wells overseas
- Reintroduced Iftar and Eid celebrations across each campus
- Bringing all Campuses together under one room for Year 12 celebrations

Technology

- Major technology upgrade across the three campuses

- Restructure of the department introduced Head of IT; an IT Infrastructure Manager and increased the team to 6
- Brought technology to a sustainable operational level across three campuses
- Provided all staff with IT facilities; ensured all families had devices and network during COVID

Property and Facilities

- Oversaw the completion of Stage 3 at Hoxton Park – 2 Science labs; 7 general learning classrooms; lecture rooms, staff facilities, Library, cafeteria, two basketball courts.
- Development of a masterplan for Beaumont Hills and Hoxton Park.
- Significant refurbishment projects at Greenacre to enhance student and staff facilities.
- Both the Hoxton Park and Beaumont Hills campuses have seen significant facility improvement. This has including substantial refurbishment of buildings on both campuses along with significant investment in infrastructure to support future growth.

When I started at MFIS I made a commitment, which I have maintained during the last five years of building relationship with students and teachers meant being at each campus. So, I commenced and maintained weekly visits to every campus. Sometimes it meant seeing each campus in the same day – especially at the commencement of each term - about 80-100km distance. Visiting classrooms, chatting with teachers, regular meetings with Heads of Campus and their respective teams; introducing weekly briefings with campus staff, one-on-one chats. These simple acts of connectedness are vital to the operation of a school.

A lasting legacy is the substantial growth the School has undergone in the last 5 years despite the issues around funding. Student numbers have grown from 2250 to be 3150 when school returns in 2022. This is a testament to the strength of the School and its reputation within the community. All of these achievements would not be possible without the support of the School Board, my Executive and the entire school community.

Education is about lifelong learning. At Malek Fahd Islamic School it is about inspiring you to develop a passion for learning. It is about working hard, being a dedicated student, getting the best possible grades,

engaging in sport and a variety of extra - curricular activities. Thank you to all students for your hard work this year. Your positive response and engagement are the best way to say thank you to our Staff who work hard for you.

It takes a team to lead and operate the school. Thank you to all teachers, each Primary Stage Co-Ordinator, Heads of Department and Learning Support, the Pastoral, Wellbeing and Counsellors for all you are doing to ensure the success of each child. The Executive are an outstanding team with individual skills to complement the spiritual, educational, operation, wellbeing, financial, technological, facilities and compliance of School. I acknowledge the significant contribution of Sheikh Fawaz, Mr Hamper, Mr Ahmed, Mr Lord, Mr Ali, Mr Mukaddam and Ms Cato, together with that of each Head of Campus Mr Dib, Ms El-Ahmad, Ms Kassem, Ms Khan, Deputy Heads of Campus Ms Charmand, Ms Nachar, Ms Parker, Mr Shameem, Ms Mitchell, Administration Manager, Ms Shainaaz Ali, and my Executive Assistant, Ms Yasmin Haq and the to ensure all is completed.

In my final weeks at the school, I have received many gifts and such beautiful comments from students, staff, parents, and the MFIS Board. These will be cherished. Thank you to everyone who has supported me throughout my journey. I am humbled, grateful, and thank God for the privilege.

Thank you to the School Board, in particular former Chairs Ms Miriam Silva and Dr John Bennett AM and now Mr Moussa for their excellent governance and support, steering the School to a strong and sustainable future. I have appreciated the support and guidance over the five years. I commend them on the selection of Dr Zachariah Matthews to succeed me. I wish every blessing in the next chapter of this wonderful, and amazing school, Malek Fahd Islamic School.

Blessings and best wishes.

Kind regards,



Mr Bruce Rixon
Principal