

This is the second edition of our newsletter to parents. We had planned to make publish a newsletter every two weeks but due to high work demands we will need to move to monthly editions only for the time being.

Thank You

As Head of Primary, the welcome I have received from the community has been amazing; I am very grateful for the many gifts I have received. Last week while on carpark duty a mother stopped her car and gave me a cup of water; this proves what I am saying to all my friends, the RAK community is amazing.

Car park.

On October 8 the board chair and I met with members of the municipality and senior police officials to discuss the current car park situation. I reiterated all your suggestions and insisted that we have a second exit to the carpark. We have been promised that a solution will be drawn up and come into effect very shortly as well as investigating



some more substantive longer term changes.

However, it is disappointing that despite lots of publicity and lots of verbal reminders, a few parents/drivers choose not to abide by the rules of the car park. There are three main issues:



1. Leaving the car to get bags out of the trunk/boot when dropping or picking up. When this happens the time it takes to collect and drop off takes a longer amount.
2. Dropping off or picking up from the grey zone - we want the traffic to flow smoothly - when cars stop here then the traffic comes to a standstill.
3. Leaving cars unattended and blocking in cars. Sometimes cars try to leave but they are unable to do so because a car has blocked them in and the parent or driver has gone inside and left the car unattended.

However, I have FANTASTIC parents. Some of the mums and dads park across the road and walk quite a distance to collect their children - you know who you are - THANK YOU. I also have some parents and drivers who follow the rules in the morning and in the afternoon - again THANK YOU.

While we are waiting for the changes I ask that parents please abide by the current rules for the carpark even if this means you have to walk a little further. I make the promise that I will continue to work hard to improve the situation in the carpark and ask for your continued support and understanding.

Welcoming Culture

We believe that we have been successful in changing the culture. Every day we hear children, parents and staff welcoming one another and we hope to continue until everyone feels welcome.

Another Success

We have seen a massive change in the number of children arriving on time for learning - we have been impressed by the way parents have responded and ensured their children are at school on time and ready to begin their learning. Please remember that children arriving after 8.00am cannot enter the classroom without a late note which can be collected from reception.



Our plans for the new media room in the library

Next Target

Our next target area will be children leaving early. We are concerned that some parents are taking their children early to avoid the rush in the carpark. However, early leavers are impacting the learning during the final learning period of the day. We are concerned that children that continue to leave early will have their learning disrupted, for sure when a child leaves early the other children in the class are disturbed and hence their focus is interrupted.

Morning and Afternoon Routines

Thank you to all our parents and caregivers who have worked with us this week to help make our arrival and departure routines work smoother.

We always welcome feedback and thank you to those parents who have come forward with suggestions to make these routines even better.

Our Yr 6 student leaders have also put forward a suggestion, and from Sunday October 4th, if class teachers have written permission from parents, Yr 5 & 6 students will be permitted to make their own way to meet their parents at the end of the school day. Permission slips went home on Wednesday 30th September to all Yr 5 & Yr 6 parents.

Heavy Bags

We continue to work with our staff and our parents to solve the problem of the weight of the school bags that our young children are carrying each day.

As a staff we have agreed that:

- Home learning folders go home on Sunday and do not need to come back to school until Thursday
- Communication diaries will go home every night and should come back to school each day for parent - teacher communication
- Arabic, Islamic and Social Studies books - these will now be kept in the Arabic, Islamic and Social Studies classrooms rather than the children taking them to home room each time, and should not be going home each night.
- Arabic, Islamic and Social studies home learning will be sent home in a home learning folder or on the classroom blog and the textbooks will not need to be going home each night.

Thank you for your ongoing support on this matter.

Arabic

As a school we are determined to find ways in which we can support and improve Arabic across the primary school. We have talked with our staff about focusing on teaching and learning. While tests are important they should not be the focus. We give tests to see what the child can do or cannot do. If we only focus on the test then we are not focusing on ensuring the students really understand their language. Tests or assessments are ongoing and again, the only purpose of a test/assessment is to determine what the child can or cannot do. The results of the test then provide good teachers with the information they need to change their teaching programme so that the students can improve. We have arranged for a consultant PYP workshop leader and one of the leading Arabic teachers in the UAE to work with our teachers to support them on improving the quality of Arabic in the school.

Our Home Learning Policy : Excerpts from the Home Learning Guidelines

The purpose of Home Learning is to support, enhance and extend the work done in school during the day and to provide practice in key concepts and methods.

As the PYP is an inquiry based programme, we aim to be setting open-ended, investigative home learning assignments, rather than worksheets, filling in the blanks or 'busy work'.

RAKA PYP MATTERS

Our focus is on the teaching and learning within the classroom and thus Home Learning should be an extension of this rather than involve lots of repetition.

All Home Learning should be able to be completed by the child independently.

Home Learning:

- is an opportunity for our students to develop responsibility and independent learning skills;
- should be manageable by the student and the teacher, with the aim of consolidating tasks and experiences that have taken place in the classroom;
- should be designed to be completed independently by the student and is practice/ consolidation or reviewing understanding;
- should be in line with the philosophies of the PYP and be orientated around inquiry, investigation, application of skills and critical thinking;
- should be marked and returned to students and parents in a timely manner;
- is not intended to be 'busy' work or consist of all worksheets.

Home Learning should be set over a week allowing children to manage their time and afterschool activities.

Each week home learning should include a weekly overview which is provided to parents, with the aim of outlining the following:

- on which day Home Learning will be sent home, and which day it is expected back at school;
- an estimate of 'how long' each task should take;
- the tasks for English language (including writing, reading and spelling);
- the tasks for Arabic language Home Learning;
- the tasks for Islamic Studies Home Learning;
- the tasks for Social Studies Home Learning;
- the inquiry or tasks for Mathematics;
- the investigation or tasks for the Unit of Inquiry.

Students should be encouraged to complete Home Learning tasks with care, thoughtfulness and with pride.

The duration of Home Learning should be in line with the School Policy.

KG2 - Y1 Max 30 minutes/night including investigations, reading, and Arabic practice

Y2 - Y4 Max 40 minutes/night including investigations, reading, and Arabic practice

Y5 - Y6 Max 50 minutes/night including investigations, reading and Arabic practice

Reading may include English, Arabic and Mother Tongue and may be silent reading or reading with parents.

RAKA PYP MATTERS

Lanyards

You will notice that members of the leadership team within RAKA are now wearing a blue lanyard with their school ID. We will be introducing lanyards for all staff within the school so you can easily recognise: the leadership team, teachers, teaching assistants and administration staff.

We will also be introducing lanyards for parents (caregivers/nannies/drivers); the purpose of the lanyards is to further support the tightening of our school security. There will also be lanyards for visitors and contractors. Anyone that does not have their lanyard will be asked to sign in and take a visitor's lanyard.



Leadership Team



Administration Team



Teaching Team



Teaching Support Staff

New Staff Member

Mr Dene Ramsden has joined our staff as the new Year 5 teacher. Mr Ramsden has taught in the UK and most recently within Australia. If you see Mr Ramsden around the school please make him feel welcome.

Facebook

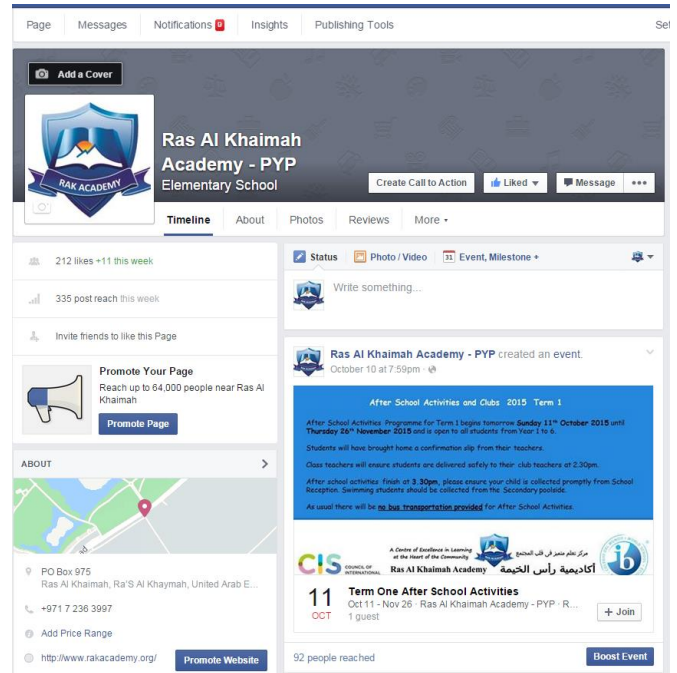
We have successfully launched our RAK Academy PYP Facebook page our statistics show that the majority of parents in the Academy have accessed our page. If you do not have Facebook please start an account, this will enable you to receive updates when we make changes to our page.

Communication

We want to reiterate the different ways in which we communicate and purpose behind each tool. The school's website (which will hopefully be updated soon) is designed for prospective parents and staff. Our Facebook page is designed to communicate whole school events and to share in some of our highlights. Finally, we have our Blogs - this is the way teachers will communicate with you about what is happening inside the classroom. Please also remember you can email any of your children's teachers our emails are:

firstname.surname@rakacademy.org

If you need to make an appointment to speak to a teacher you can also email Ms Rama rama.jbawi@rakacademy.org We ask that parents do not try and speak to teachers face to face without an appointment especially in the morning and at the end of the day. If there is a private urgent matter that requires a conversation with the teacher please speak directly with Ms Rama and she will make the arrangements.



Meetings with Teachers

As Head of Primary I have been meeting each teacher individually to understand who they are, their strengths, areas that require development and understand their professional goals. Once I have finished meeting each teacher I will then observe them teaching in the classroom. Through observations and discussions we can monitor the quality of the teaching and learning within the school.

Professional Development

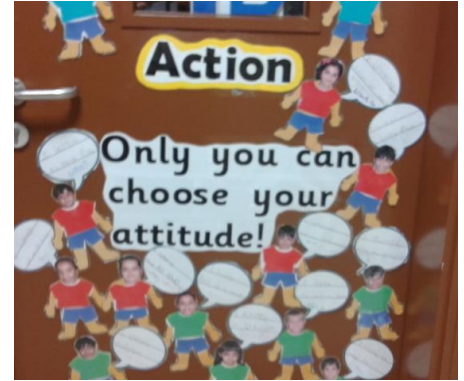
We have had staff away attending professional development including attendance at the IB Regional workshops by Ms Valerie and Ms Rachel in Dubai. Mr Steven was in Jordan training to be a Team Chair for the Council of International Schools. We have also sent our Physical Education teachers on a First Aid course. As a school we know it is important to continue to develop our teachers and leaders to ensure we are ensuring best practice.

Pastoral Matters

We are busy implementing our new behavior policy in line with the PYP philosophy. We want your children to feel safe and valued in school, be that the playground or the classroom. When children feel safe and happy their learning is facilitated.

We are encouraging children to make the right choice because it is the right thing to do. Children at primary age are busy learning, and how to manage themselves and their relationships within a community larger than home is one of those learning processes. Our job is to support them in this journey.

We are striving for independent young people who are to become citizens of the world, this involves taking responsibility for themselves and considering the rights of others.



What does this look like in school?

Our behavior policy encourages children to make the correct choice. Making a good choice means that children are experiencing the best school has to offer. However, children are learning and therefore they make mistakes, sometimes, whilst their maturity levels are developing, their frustrations are vented in ways that are not appropriate in the wider community.

When this happens, it will initially be dealt with by the teacher. Children will be asked to reflect on their actions, think about ways they could fix the problem and consider ways that they would handle a similar situation in future. The purpose of this is that they are encouraged to learn by their mistakes.

If children are making a series of poor choices then parents will be informed with an ATTITUDE ALERT so that we can work together to help children make better choices.

Some incidents, where safety is compromised, will come to the attention of the Deputy head. In these cases parents will be informed directly with an attitude alert and invited into school.

A serious incident will go directly to Mr Steven.

In each case we will employ a logical consequence approach to helping children fix their mistakes. This would be for instance, if a child drops litter on the floor they would be asked to pick up litter.

We will always aim to correct the behavior, not criticize the child.

How can you support at home?

Our policies are based on research and on the Love and Logic methods. You can find parenting tips on YouTube by typing in Love and Logic to the search bar or follow this link. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rPnrggGSoY0> It is very easy to shout at a child when they misbehave. Research shows that the children remember the feeling associated with being shouted at but don't learn how to deal with their mistakes. Love and Logic is about giving responsibility back to your child. 'You lost your lunch bag? Too bad, how will you fix it?'

RAKA PYP MATTERS

If your child does bring an attitude alert home we always refer this back to our learner profiles. Often it is a matter of respect to others. Hitting, name calling, hurting is not respectful of others and we need to teach tolerance and respect.

These are not a quick fix to a school issue, these are life long lessons for international citizens of the future.

This month's parent tips

At a glance you may have already heard of Pause, Prompt Praise or the 3Ps as it is sometimes called. These three catchy words, Pause, Prompt Praise describe a simple technique that, used well, will support your child to practise his/her reading and to develop more reading confidence. The principle of Pausing - then Prompting - and then Praising is very useful to remember and apply anytime your child is reading aloud to you. Teachers and trained tutors often use a more structured version of this principle but the following tips can help you to try out it when reading with your child at home. The 3Ps technique is best used when your child is reading and 'gets stuck' on words that they can't read or are new to them. When your child encounters words that are difficult for them to read, the 3Ps technique will allow him/her the opportunity to have another go, self-correct, or if needed, find out (be told) what the problem word is.



Introduction

Two important things to remember from the outset when using the 3Ps:

- The goal of reading is to understand (make sense) of what is read, so always keep this in mind when you are prompting and praising your child.
- Try to ensure that you are relaxed, interested and supportive, which in turn, will help your child feel OK when they make mistakes or just can't work out a word and need to be told what it is.

At home this technique will work best when your child is reading a text that is well matched to their reading level, that is, where your child can easily read most of the words in the text and only falters on occasional words. Before reading, make sure that you are both comfortable and can clearly see the text your child is reading.

DEAR EGNSLIH TEGAEHR,
AS LNOG AS THE FSRIT &
LSAT LTETER R IN THE
SMAE PALCE, U CAN SILTL
RAED TIHS.

SINCERELY,
SLPELNIG IS NOT TAHT
IPMRONTAT

ASDFGHJKLLOVE.TUMBLR.COM
VIA TWITTER

Is spelling important

Pause...

Once your child starts reading aloud carefully follow the text as they read. If (or when) your child comes to a word they don't know try not to jump in straight away and supply the correct word. Wait and give your child time to work out the word. In the first instance 'pausing' creates an opportunity for your child to try and self-correct or work out the word for him/herself.

Prompt...

If your child successfully supplies the word they have stumbled over it's a good idea to suggest that he/she goes back to the beginning of the sentence and re-reads the whole sentence again (to recap meaning) before reading on. If your child has not independently worked out the problem word, at this point you may intervene and prompt them with some quick, low-key suggestions about what they could do. Say things like:

- Try reading on for a sentence or two, miss out the difficult word and see if that helps you to work it out what it is.
- Look at the sound the word begins with, use that clue and think about what might make sense here. Look at the pictures and see if they give you a clue to what the word might be.
- Go back to the beginning of the sentence, re-read it and have another go at working it out. If prompts like these are not working, this is the point at which you simply tell your child the correct word.

After a short time 'prompting' say: - Would you like me to help you? or How about I tell you the word? You may even briefly explain the meaning of the word but then quickly prompt your child to continue reading. Try not to spend too much time prompting as your child will find it difficult to maintain the overall meaning of what they are reading.

Praise...

This is the easiest part of the process for any parent because it's something that comes naturally. Praise your child's reading efforts and successes whenever you think it is appropriate during the reading process. As well as praising their effort it is often good to tell them why. For example you might say: - Well done, I thought it was brilliant the way that you went back, re-read the sentence from the beginning and worked out that word you were having trouble with. - That was great reading tonight, I know I had to tell you a few words but you also worked out some pretty tricky ones for yourself. Well done.

Second Article - Why the PYP ?

Tony Wagner, a few years ago set out to find out exactly what companies expected from its graduates. I am positive you will find exactly what they want to be exactly what is provided by the PYP. Is the PYP preparing your child for the future - absolutely!

Read on.....

Even our "best" schools are failing to prepare students for 21st-century careers and citizenship.

In the new global economy, with many jobs being either automated or "off-shored," what skills will students need to build successful careers? What skills will they need to be good citizens? Are these two education goals in conflict?

To examine these questions, I conducted research beginning with conversations with several hundred business, nonprofit, philanthropic, and education leaders. With a clearer picture of the skills young people need, I then set out to learn whether U.S. schools are teaching and testing the skills that matter most. I observed classrooms in some of the nation's most highly regarded suburban schools to find out whether our "best" was, in fact, good enough for our children's future. What I discovered on this journey may surprise you.

The Schooling Students Need

One of my first conversations was with Clay Parker, president of the Chemical Management Division of BOC Edwards—a company that, among other things, makes machines and supplies chemicals for the manufacture of microelectronics devices. He's an engineer by training and the head of a technical business, so when I asked him about the skills he looks for when he hires young people, I was taken aback by his answer.

"First and foremost, I look for someone who asks good questions," Parker responded. "We can teach them the technical stuff, but we can't teach them how to ask good questions—how to think."

"What other skills are you looking for?" I asked, expecting that he'd jump quickly to content expertise.

"I want people who can engage in good discussion—who can look me in the eye and have a give and take. All of our work is done in teams. You have to know how to work well with others. But you also have to know how to engage customers—to find out what their needs are. If you can't engage others, then you won't learn what you need to know."

I initially doubted whether Parker's views were representative of business leaders in general. But after interviewing leaders in settings from Apple to Unilever to the U.S. Army and reviewing the research on workplace skills, I came to understand that the world of work has changed profoundly.

Today's students need to master seven survival skills to thrive in the new world of work. And these skills are the same ones that will enable students to become productive citizens who contribute to solving some of the most pressing issues we face in the 21st century.

1. Critical Thinking and Problem Solving

To compete in the new global economy, companies need their workers to think about how to continuously improve their products, processes, or services. Over and over, executives told me that the heart of critical thinking and problem solving is the ability to ask the right questions. As one senior executive from Dell said, "Yesterday's answers won't solve today's problems."

Ellen Kumata, managing partner at Cambria Associates, explained the extraordinary pressures on leaders today. "The challenge is this: How do you do things that haven't been done before, where you have to rethink or think anew? It's not incremental improvement any more. The markets are changing too fast."

2. Collaboration and Leadership

Teamwork is no longer just about working with others in your building. Christie Pedra, CEO of Siemens, explained, "Technology has allowed for virtual teams. We have teams working on major infrastructure projects that are all over the U.S. On other projects, you're working with people all around the world on solving a software problem. Every week they're on a variety of conference calls; they're doing Web casts; they're doing net meetings."

Mike Summers, vice president for Global Talent Management at Dell, said that his greatest concern was young people's lack of leadership skills. "Kids just out of school have an amazing lack of preparedness in general leadership skills and collaborative skills," he explained. "They lack the ability to influence."

3. Agility and Adaptability

Clay Parker explained that anyone who works at BOC Edwards today "has to think, be flexible, change, and use a variety of tools to solve new problems. We change what we do all the time. I can guarantee the job I hire someone to do will change or may not exist in the future, so this is why adaptability and learning skills are more important than technical skills."

4. Initiative and Entrepreneurialism

Mark Chandler, senior vice president and general counsel at Cisco, was one of the strongest proponents of initiative: "I say to my employees, if you try five things and get all five of them right, you may be failing. If you try 10 things, and get eight of them right, you're a hero. You'll never be blamed for failing to reach a stretch goal, but you will be blamed for not trying. One of the problems of a large company is risk aversion. Our challenge is how to create an entrepreneurial culture in a larger organization."

5. Effective Oral and Written Communication

Mike Summers of Dell said, "We are routinely surprised at the difficulty some young people have in communicating: verbal skills, written skills, presentation skills. They have difficulty being clear and concise; it's hard for them to create focus, energy, and passion around the points they want to make. If you're talking to an exec, the first thing you'll get asked if you haven't made it perfectly clear in the first 60 seconds of your presentation is, 'What do you want me to take away from this meeting?' They don't know how to answer that question."

Summers and other leaders from various companies were not necessarily complaining about young people's poor grammar, punctuation, or spelling—the things we spend so much time teaching and testing in our schools. Although writing and speaking correctly are obviously important, the complaints I heard most frequently were about fuzzy thinking and young people not knowing how to write with a real voice.

6. Accessing and Analyzing Information

Employees in the 21st century have to manage an astronomical amount of information daily. As Mike Summers told me, "There is so much information available that it is almost too much, and if people aren't prepared to process the information effectively it almost freezes them in their steps."

It's not only the sheer quantity of information that represents a challenge, but also how rapidly the information is changing. Quick—how many planets are there? In the early 1990s, I heard then-Harvard University president Neil Rudenstine say in a speech that the half-life of knowledge in the humanities is 10 years, and in math and science, it's only two or three years. I wonder what he would say it is today.

7. Curiosity and Imagination

Mike Summers told me, "People who've learned to ask great questions and have learned to be inquisitive are the ones who move the fastest in our environment because they solve the biggest problems in ways that have the most impact on innovation."

Daniel Pink, the author of A Whole New Mind, observes that with increasing abundance, people want unique products and services: "For businesses it's no longer enough to create a product that's reasonably priced and adequately functional. It must also be beautiful, unique, and meaningful."⁴ Pink notes that developing young people's capacities for imagination, creativity, and empathy will be increasingly important for maintaining the United States' competitive advantage in the future.

Source: <http://www.tonywagner.com/244>

RAKA PYP MATTERS

Page | 13

Finally

The Primary Leadership Team are continuing to work hard to improve the rigor within the school. We greatly appreciate the support we have received to date and trust that parents will continue to support us as we work hard to improve the quality of the education your child's receives at the academy.

Kind regards

Mr Steven Thompson on behalf of the Primary Leadership Team