



EMIRATES
HILLS

Secondary School Newsletter

13 January 2023

2022-2023



Head of Secondary Message



Hello all,

I want to begin by wishing you and your family a healthy New Year. It has been such a sad and difficult start to the year as the school lost two of our wonderful students.

Arun, our graduate of 2019 sadly left us just before the New Year. He was such a warm hearted individual, who was known for his funny one liners and ability to make all around him feel positive and happy. His magnetic character and personality meant he had an abundance of friends. He will be missed dearly.

Diza, our Year 9 student was taken from us just after the start of the New Year. The school was rocked by the news. She was known throughout school, being part of the original dance group and a lead in the most recent production. She will be remembered by all who had the pleasure of meeting her for her wonderful nature and drive to take part in all she could. I will never forget that beautiful smile.

May they both rest in peace.



Arun Sushmeta Pancholia

April 09 2001 - December 29 2022




Diza Dhir


December 14 2008 - January 5 2023




REMEMBERING DIZA




Diza will always be remembered for her warm and bright smile that lit up any room she walked into. She was the epitome of fun; she was always vibrant and full of energy. She loved to joke, prank and just have fun with her friends. You couldn't help but be in a good mood anytime you spoke with her.



She was an integral part of our school. An incredible dancer, she won Innoventures Got Talent 2021 dancing with her good friends Tara and Shanessa. She was fantastic in her role as the 'Granny' in the school musical this year.



She faced adversity in her life at every turn. Her unwavering strength and positive outlook on life is something I am going to carry with me and try to live by for the rest of my life.



The outpouring of love, stories and memories from staff and across all year groups just shows the impact Diza had on the entire school student body here, and how dearly she will be missed

Good Bye Diza
From your favourite HOY
Mr Stephen Cleary



The Raymee Grief Center

The Raymee Grief Center provides free one-on-one Grief Consultations and Grief support groups for individuals and families who are affected by grief. Run by therapists at The LightHouse Arabia, the center can help you to understand what to expect from grief, how grief can impact you, and how to heal you and your family.

<https://www.lighthousearabia.com/services/raymee-grief-center>

Teen Tribe Online Support Group

Teen Tribe is a bi-monthly support group for teens aged 13 to 16 years of age who would like to get together with others and talk about the stressors they are currently facing in their lives.

<https://www.lighthousearabia.com/events/teen-tribe-online-support-group-9>

Adult Grief Online Support Group

The Adult Grief Support group runs Online via Zoom. The group is open to adults ages 18 years and above, who are grieving the death of someone significant to them.

<https://www.lighthousearabia.com/events/adult-grief-online-support-group-17>



@lighthousearabia

Key Information

Wednesday 18 January

Year 12 & 13 Mock Examinations End

This is the final day of our mock examination schedule. We would like to thank all students and parents for helping make this process smooth and successful!

Thursday 19 January

Outdoor Cinema

All year 6 & 7 students are invited to join us for an outdoor screening of 'Spiderman: Into the Spideverse' in the Quad, starting at 17.00. All proceeds will be donated to GIVE. Please see the advert in this newsletter!

Friday 20 January

Year 7-10 Mid-year (MR) Reports Issued

Reports will be issued through the iSAMS Parent Portal. Please contact helpdesk@diadubai.com if you are unable to access this platform.

Monday 23 January to Friday 27 January

Year Level Focus Groups

Focus Groups are a scheduled opportunity for interested parents to discuss their experiences with Heads of Year and a member of SMT, and to give their feedback, both positive and otherwise so that we are informed in our future practice.

Please see emails for specific information and a Microsoft Form to provide questions/concerns ahead of time. The meetings below will be held from **08.00 to 09.00** on the following dates:

Year 7: Monday 23 January

Year 8 & 9: Tuesday 24 January

Year 10 & 11: Wednesday 25 January

Year 12 & 13: Friday 27 January

We are changing how we communicate with you!

We have received a lot of great feedback from the parent body around the level and frequency of email communication. As a result, we have decided to revisit our approach to try and streamline the communication sent.



Our new approach will only apply to Years 7 - 11 (MYP). We feel that the nature of the Diploma Programme (Years 12 & 13) necessitates separate, and perhaps more frequent, communication to ensure the best opportunities for our students.

In the MYP (Years 7 - 11) we will attempt:

- All year-level communication will be streamlined into one email each week.
- This email will encompass all subjects and any special events or programs that will occur in the week(s) ahead.
- A glimpse of events and programs will still appear in the weekly newsletter - this email is designed to reduce the amount of curriculum information sent to parents.
- The email for Years 7, 8 and 9 will be sent by Ms. Susan McMechan (Assistant Headteacher) and the email for years 10 & 11 will be sent by Mr. Michael Norton (Deputy Headteacher).
- This approach will be reviewed over the coming weeks and we will seek your feedback as we trial this new system.

2022-23 Whole School Priorities

Opportunity

FemPower @ DIA

At DIA we strongly value STEM education as it embodies so much of the IB philosophy: hands-on learning with real-world applications; cross-discipline thinking; and applying knowledge creatively. STEM learning uses scientific and mathematical concepts in ways which are interesting and fun. However, females remain underrepresented in STEM-related careers which is why FemPower, our girls-only STEM group, was formed. We want to reward and empower our younger female students in STEM-learning and hopefully encourage and inspire them to consider developing their potential in this area.

We are proud to boast around 10 other STEM CCAs for students to enjoy; however, now in its second year, FemPower offers something a little different. Assisted by Mr. Shaffaf and Ms. McMechan, it is an invitation-only group of female students from Years 7 to 9, who have demonstrated excellence in Mathematics and Science, and runs throughout the year, separate to the regular CCA programme. Students design and participate in challenges and competitions (such as the Year 6 Girls' STEM Day in the Summer Term) and compete in events such as the International STEAM Olympiad, coding competitions and the iOS Design Challenge. Last term, they developed their engineering skills in a workshop ran by Dyson and have plenty more enriching and exciting opportunities to look forward to, including field trips, this term.



Gulf Debate 2022

Please join us in celebrating with two of our students - Avni Dixit and Aditya Banerjee - who participated in the recent Gulf Debate League Competition. Their team placed first in the Junior Category as Shield Division winners! This is another example of DIA students seizing opportunities to showcase their skills and compete at the highest levels!

Pictures with Avni and Aditya is their teammate Erin from Dubai English Speaking College. Well done all!



2022-23 Whole School Priorities

Teaching and Learning

The Teaching and Learning Team, led by Lead Practitioner- Renda Kayali, hosted Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) this week to discuss Action Research conducted over the Winter Break.

Secondary Staff are working on developing and refining their Pedagogical approaches to enhance teaching and learning in the classroom. Our PLCs allow all staff to build collegial relationships across multiple subject disciplines.

Secondary Staff will also be helping each other evaluate their practice by conducting peer observations of lessons to help determine how successful their new pedagogical initiatives are.



2022-23 Whole School Priorities

Opportunity: College Counselling



The College Counselor, Ms. Rachana Sippy held a meeting for our Year 11 Parents this week to help inform them about the university application process. Ms. Sippy shared some tips to help build students' university application profiles. Also, she reiterated some of the key subjects which are pivotal for specific career pathways. Year 11 Parents please make sure you have completed the Post-16 Subject Selection Form by January 15th.



subject options
form Yr 11 & 9

[CLICK HERE](#)



2022-23 Whole School Priorities

Wellbeing: Meet the Pastoral Team!



Year 7 – Donna Campbell

I have been teaching in Dubai for 6.5 years (my fourth year in DIA), and taught for 7 years back home in Glasgow, Scotland. One of my main roles as Head of Year 7 is to ensure the students have a smooth transition between primary and secondary school. This involves meeting them in Year 6 and forging a relationship with them as early as possible, and providing them with the tools to help them be as prepared as they can for this new stage in their education. Additionally, once they arrive in secondary school, my main focus is the wellbeing of the students. It is my upmost priority to ensure they are happy and safe in school and getting the most out of this wonderful experience in DIA EH.

2022-23 Whole School Priorities

Wellbeing: Meet the Pastoral Team!



Year 8 – Amy Dowling

My name is Amy Dowling. I've been teaching for six years now, three at home in Ireland and three in the UAE, this is my second at DIA. I'm continuing in a pastoral role this academic year in a larger capacity as Head of Year 8. I'm also a member of the Humanities department, teaching MYP Individuals & Societies and Moral, Cultural & Social Studies. My role is primarily a nurturing and supportive one, aiding and leading the Homeroom teachers with assisting the students throughout the year, in addition to working alongside Mr. Leacy, in looking after the pastoral needs of our Year 8 students.



Year 9 – Stephen Cleary

My name is Stephen Cleary, I am a DP and MYP Mathematics teacher. I am also Head of Year 9. I have been living and teaching in Dubai for 7 years now. This is my fourth year here at DIA. It is my second year as Head of Year.

In my spare time, I am a keen golfer. Quite a few of us teachers play Irish sports Hurling and Gaelic Football together outside of school. Training for these sports and playing matches is what I like to do in my free time.

2022-23 Whole School Priorities

Wellbeing: Meet the Pastoral Team!



Year 10 – Naveen Tyagi

Hello everyone. I am Head of Year 10 and have been with this cohort since the start of Year 8. I have been in DIA since 2019, teaching English to the full range of MYP and DP students. Prior to this, I was previously a Head of Year and English teacher in the UK for over 10 years. This year I have also coached the Under 16 Boys football team.



Year 10 - Shannon Meehan (A-HOY)

My name is Shannon Meehan and I am from Ireland. I am currently teaching Media at the school along with supporting the wellbeing of the students as Assistant Head of Year 10. I have been at DIA for two years now and have enjoyed getting involved in many aspects of school life: The Musical, Duke of Edinburgh and Coaching the U19 Girls Football team.

2022-23 Whole School Priorities

Wellbeing: Meet the Pastoral Team!

Year 11 – John Aboaja



As Head of Year 11, it is my pleasure to be in my fourth year with this cohort. I am passionate about guiding and supporting the students under my care and have witnessed their development since my arrival at DIA in 2018. Alongside my pastoral responsibilities, I am also a Mathematics teacher with 15 years' experience teaching in both the UAE and my home country, the UK. Outside of school, I enjoy playing basketball, watching my beloved Manchester United and attempting to golf. Other interests include coaching and each year coach multiple school teams.

Year 11 - Jennifer Agacy Schokhman (A-HOY)



My biggest motivation being Assistant Head of Year is to see the smiles and happy faces of all Year 11 students. Our aim holistically is Student Wellbeing, and we take this very seriously. Making our environment, our school that welcomes and cares for everyone wherever they be from.

My job is easy because we already have so many of you think alike and that's what makes DIA exceptional and Outstanding in every way.

2022-23 Whole School Priorities

Wellbeing: Meet the Pastoral Team!



Year 12 – Dollour Toma

Changing lives of individuals and education were my passion since I started my secondary school education. I was awarded BSc Hons in Mathematics Education before working as a Mathematics Teacher and Head of Mathematics for 5 years in Egypt. In 1994 I moved to the UK, and completed a PGCE at the Institute of Education in London in 1998. I taught the British Curriculum Programme for 17 years, including the Oxford and Cambridge & Royal Society of Arts (OCR) Advanced Level Mathematics Curriculum for 7 years. Also, I held the position of Subject Leader for Mathematics, in a secondary school in London, for 10 years. I have been teaching the IBDP and MYP Mathematics Programmes since September 2016 and I held the post of Head Of Year for the last 3 years. As well as the teaching career, I have long experience in Hotel Management.

Year 12 – Diarmid Murphy (A-HOY)

As the assistant head of year 12, I have six years of teaching experience and hail from Ireland. My role involves providing leadership and guidance to my students in order to ensure their academic success. I am also dedicated to helping my year 12 students have a fulfilling and rewarding year, and am always looking for ways to support their personal development and growth. With my experience and dedication, I am confident in my ability to help my students achieve their goals and reach their full potential.



2022-23 Whole School Priorities

Wellbeing: Meet the Pastoral Team!

Year 13 – Daniel Murphy



My name is Daniel Murphy and this year I am delighted to be Head of Year 13. In what is arguably the most stressful and time-consuming year for the students, it is also excellent to be a part of their school journey as it culminates with their final IB exams. Prior to becoming a part of DIA Emirates Hills in 2021, I trained to become a teacher of Design Technology in the University of Limerick, Ireland, and worked in London, UK, for 7 years before joining a different school in Dubai. The Year 13 Homeroom tutors and I look forward to the many successes that remain for the Year 13 students in the final months of the academic year.

Zeina Kazak - Student Enrichment Officer



My name is Zeina Kazak and I am an English teacher here at DIA. My role within the team is that of Student Enrichment Officer - a role that primarily focuses on two areas of student life. Firstly, ensuring a sense of student belonging by coordinating the House System and all associated House Events. Secondly, ensuring that student voice is heard in school by overseeing our Student Council. I take great reward in being able to offer these opportunities to our student body.

2022-23 Whole School Priorities

Wellbeing: Meet the Pastoral Team!



*Declan Alvaro -
Student Care & Guidance Officer*

Further to my role as Head of Physics, a key part of my pastoral role is focusing on those students in Year 10 - 13 who may need a person to go to, when they don't really know where to go. Students who may be facing an issue, whether personal or academic, may seek out support by paying me a visit at any time. I also spend time liaising with the Assistant Head of Pastoral, Heads of Year, School Counsellor and the Inclusion Team to ensure that wellbeing and personal development of students is supported.





DIA PRESENTS

YEAR 6 & 7 MOVIE NIGHT

THURSDAY 19TH JANUARY

5PM QUAD

AED 20 INCLUDES
CRISP & DRINK

SIGN UP LINK



International Day
17 March
4pm – 8pm



Let's celebrate diversity, cultures,
food, art, music & dance

@DIA Emirates Hills

P A D I A

PASSIONATE ABOUT DIA 

DUBAI INTERNATIONAL ACADEMY
EMIRATES HILLS



Alumni Homecoming



Tuesday, January 3rd, we welcomed over 200 of our alumni students back to their alma mater and home for a wonderful night filled with memories and laughter.

Students who graduated as early as 2010 came back to meet with friends and teachers to reminisce over the good old times. It was great to see so many of our lovely past students back in school.





Want to know more? Visit
www.goodreads.com/book/show/60552718-teenage-dream to find out about the book!

YEAR 7 - 9 AUTHOR VISIT

EX-DIA student & author of
'Teenage Dream'

Varvara Krasneva



Rescheduled date!! All Year 7
pupils PLUS selected pupils from
8 & 9 based on Accelerated
Reader will meet the author!

When & Where?

- Monday 23rd
January 2023
- 12.15 – 13.30pm
- SS PE Hall

Buy a copy of 'Teenage Dream'
to bring and Varvara will sign
your copy!



Find out how you could be an
author too!

Available to buy in Kinokuniya,
on Amazon and direct from the
publisher:

Updated competition!! Win a copy
of 'Teenage Dream'! Simply scan
the QR code, ask a question by
WEDNESDAY 18th JANUARY and the
winner will receive a copy of her
book.



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Dream - Inspire - Achieve