



From the Principal — *Resilience, confidence and praise*



When we think about what we really want for our children, it is our desire that they be happy, successful and productive contributors to our society. To do so, they need to be able to deal well with the challenges and demands they will face each day. Drs Brooks and Goldstein, who wrote *Raising Resilient Children*, state, "Resilience embraces the ability of a child to deal more effectively with stress and pressure, to cope with everyday challenges, to bounce back from disappointments, adversity and trauma to develop clear and realistic goals to solve problems, to relate comfortably to others and to treat oneself and others with respect." A resilient person is one who has developed the ability to cope with change and adversity. He or she is emotionally strong and secure in character and abilities.

One of the dangers we face as parents is that, in our desire to do the best we can for our children, we can overindulge and /or over protect our children and, as a consequence, they are unable to cope when things go wrong or they do not get their own way. Boys especially are good at a learned helplessness. They practice this early on their mothers! They soon work out if they do things badly or look hopeless enough, someone is likely to do it for them. Girls, on the other hand, tend to do the opposite, they tend to do too much or try too hard to do exactly what was asked, often because they don't have the confidence in their own abilities.

Another danger is that we believe we need to praise our children constantly, even when what they do is wrong or a poor effort. We do this because we want to build up their self-esteem. Children know when what they have done is worthy or not. The difficulty in constantly praising is that this false praise does the exact opposite to what we intended. It encourages children to give less than their best because they know it will be accepted. Their self-esteem ends up being built not on rock but on shifting sand.

A better way to build self-esteem, and so resilience, is to provide opportunity for children to build skills. I call this the opportunity cycle. When children acquire skill, they grow in confidence because they know they can do a particular thing. We all know as adults how good it is to accomplish a task or master a new skill and it is no different for children. The praise we give they know has been earned and reinforces the sense of accomplishment and confidence.

When children have confidence they will then seek out more opportunities to grow and learn, and so the cycle goes on. In doing so, they become resilient because they have the skills and support to face life's challenges

For more information, I thoroughly recommend the following website for ways we can encourage our children to be more resilient.

<http://www.raisingresilientkids.com/>

UAE Day

What a lovely day we all had last week to celebrate the 40th anniversary of the UAE. Thank you to all families who gave

us so much support, through so many wonderful donations. I know many of these families prefer to remain anonymous so may I just say, your generosity was greatly appreciated by us all.

At the end of my speech, I commented that Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan had said,

"Nobody can live the present without recalling the past. It is from history that we learn and acquire excellence."

When I reflect on this I encourage us all to celebrate the past and be thankful for all that has happened. Without the foundation laid in the past, how we would make the most of the opportunities today? It is important not to waste our talents and skills. Finally, we need to plan for the future so that others may have even more opportunities than we had.

End of term

Term finishes on **Thursday 15 December 2011** and resumes on **Sunday 8 January 2012**. We farewell Ms Julia Shadid and Ms Rashida Samji in the ELC, who are returning to Australia and Canada respectively while, in the Secondary School, Mr Carlos Lopez, Ms Caroline O'Donnell, Ms Georgina Colclough, Ms Kristine Doyle and Ms Helen Carson are all returning to Australia. We thank them all for their efforts for the students.

I trust all families have a peaceful and restful break.

Dr Roderick Crouch
Principal

Learning Social Skills at the Early Learning Centre

Our aim at the Early Learning Centre (ELC) is to ensure all children develop the social skills required to understand the causes of their feelings and the qualities of a friend. As we continue to investigate our inquiry topic **Ourselves**, the students are learning more about themselves, their families and, more importantly, how to make friends.

It is through social play that our students have a chance to practise getting along with other children and to learn new skills. It is through play that children learn about themselves and where they fit in the world. There is no doubt that friendship builds community which is a goal in all classes at the Early Learning Centre. We emphasize that in a classroom we learn and work together as a learning community. In Assembly we discuss how to be kind to each other and how to help our classroom friends.

We are teaching the children appropriate social skills. Children need to learn the basics of social interaction: how to say hello, good morning, answer a question with a sentence and not just a word, use eye contact and the importance of letting a person finish what they say before speaking.

Student Wellbeing Program



As part of our student wellbeing program we implement the program **Stop, Think and Do**. As children become aware of how to clarify their feelings – **STOP**, how to find answers – **Think**

and **DO**, how to make decisions and act they learn valuable lifelong social skills. The important qualities of self-control, self-esteem, self-confidence as well as respect, independence and responsibility

are developed as result of the practice of appropriate social skills.

Here are some things you can do to encourage your child to develop positive and healthy friendships

- Encourage your child to talk with you about his or her friendships.
- Be sensitive to friendships that may involve negative activities or put-downs of other students.
- Encourage your child to show appreciation when a friend does something thoughtful or helpful.



Mary Azer,
Director, Early Learning Centre

Parents Association News

“VISS is the best school in all of UAE!”

Congratulations to VISS for a memorable UAE National Day 40th Anniversary Celebration. A huge thank you to VISS administration and teachers and staff who prepared and collaborated beyond their classroom duties to make the event a glorious day for our students and parents alike. It is incredible the amount of time and effort it takes to accomplish such an event and we are blessed to have so many dedicated staff and educators at VISS who are committed to making every day a special day for our children.

Our Parent volunteers really came through and I thank them for the generosity of their time and hard-work and “can do” spirit which makes our school community work together for the better of all.

Our teachers and staff at VISS really deserve all of our respect and admiration for their commitment and professionalism with the students and the effort they put forth **each and every day** so that our children have the best education and experiences no other school can offer. VISS UAE National Day event demonstrated their dedication to that vision.

If I may take the liberty to say on behalf of all VISS parents, congratulations and **thank you** to all our students, educators, administrators, staff members, assistants and volunteers for this celebration.

So I agree with the voices and smiles of parents and students seen and heard on VISS National Day Event, yes, “VISS is the best school in all of UAE.”

Donna Alkasey
Parents Association

Parents Association Coffee Morning

Next coffee/tea morning will be held Monday, December 5th at 10:30 a.m. in Senior School, Room SU8, (enter Gate 1). Please join us. See you then.

VISS Swimming Academy Holiday Program

Over the 3 week holiday break, we will be offering a Learn-to-Swim Holiday Program during the week of 18 – 22 December and 2 – 5 January. Structured lessons will be conducted during this program. Students will be allocated to a group according to their ability and will participate in one lesson, each day, for the week. All lessons will run for 45 minutes and students will be engaged in a range of activities depending on their level.

Costing of lessons will vary depending on the week. The rates are as follows:

Week 1: (5 lessons) 250dhs

Week 2: (4 lessons) 200dhs

If you are interested, please pick up a note from the ELC, Junior or Senior School offices. Places are limited, so please ensure you complete the form on the note and return to the school as soon as possible.

Lauren Neumann
Academy Coordinator

What’s Happening in the Junior School

Library News

All library books and Take Home reading books must be returned to the library before the holiday break. This allows Ms Reshma to do a stocktake on books to

ensure we do not lose any books. We are developing a wonderful collection of fiction and non-fiction books in the Junior School Library. Good quality books are expensive and many of these books are sourced and sent from Australia, so the staff work diligently to look after this valuable resource.

Monday 12 December

Grade 5 involved in UAE Clean Up Day

Thursday 15 December Junior School Assembly at 1.40p.m.,

Hosted by Grade 1. We ask that all parents attending to be seated before the assembly commences so the students performances will not be interrupted.

Thursday 19 January Junior School Assembly at 1.40p.m.

Hosted by Grade 5

Jan Senior

Head of Junior School

VISS Swim Squad

On Saturday, 26 November, nine girls from both the Junior and Senior School participated in the Annual Winter Gala at Sharjah Ladies Club. When first entering the complex, the pool is rather daunting as it is a 50 metre pool, double the length of the VISS Pool. We started the day with a terrific 50 metre butterfly race from Prue Crook, where she won her heat, but just missed out on a medal. This was followed up by outstanding performances by Shania Scott and Tamsin Crook. Shania swam extremely well, winning a bronze medal in butterfly, breaststroke and backstroke and a silver medal in freestyle.

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Grade 8 and 9 camps to Dibba, Oman

All Grade 8 and Grade 9 students will be participating in a 3 day camp in late January 2012 to Absolute Adventure in Dibber, Oman. This is a camp site that the school has used before for Grade 4 and 5 camp last year and is one we are very happy with. It will be valuable experience that will enrich students wellbeing and challenge them to try new skills. This is a compulsory camp for both year levels as there will be no alternate program being run by the school during this time. Below are the timings and activities that each grade will be involved in:

Grade 8

Sunday 22 of January to Tuesday 24 of January 2012

Rock Climbing, Abseiling, Mountain Biking

Grade 9

Tuesday 24 of January to Thursday 26 of January 2012

Basic Survival Skills – Finding water, Cooking, Building Shelter, Orienteering

Forms will be sent out in the coming days will all paper work and money to be returned by Thursday 8 of December 2011.

Mr. Iain

Outdoor Education Organiser



Tamsin swam her heart out and received a silver medal in backstroke. All swimmers performed extremely well, but were up against some very tough competition. It

was wonderful to see the sportsmanship these girls displayed, cheering on their own team, but also giving encouragement and cheering those from other teams who needed some extra support.

A big congratulation to the following swimmers: Yasmine Kojak, Shania Scott, Daniela Arriaga Penagos, Tia Scott, Prue Crook, Tamsin Crook, Tamara Garcevic, Ranya Bayzan and Amar Abel Monem.



Lauren Neumann
Swim Coach

Rewards



Rewarding students for achievements on tests, projects, speeches, and activities is a very

important task. Consistent use of rewards helps build morale and motivation. Students like to see their accomplish-

ments praised. Here are some of the unique students in Islamic studies who have been rewarded for their hard work.



Khaled Amasy



Grade 5 Dibba Camp – 22/23 November 2011

This year most of the grade 5 students went to the North Star Camp near Dibba, on the east coast of the UAE, as part of our Physical Education and Personal Learning programs. We left at about 8:45 a.m. on Wednesday 22nd November in school buses and took about two hours to get to Khor Fakkan beach for lunch. We arrived at the camp at one o'clock and settled in to our cabins, six to a room, and then explored the campsite.

After this we began our four activities; two on the afternoon we arrived and two the next morning. They were mountain biking, orienteering using a GPS, aquatics and rafting. The last two activities were at the beach of the resort opposite. We were split into two main groups and rotated through the activities.

After dinner we did a night walk and observed the stars in the very clear sky. We slept well after an exhausting but fun day.

The staff at camp looked after us well and the cook provided yummy meals with seconds if we wanted them. We played games at camp including soccer, volleyball and table tennis.

We left camp at about midday on the 23 November, arriving back at school just in time to go home.

Everyone who went to camp had a great time.

Tariq and Fayyad – Grade 5B

GPS Orienteering

When we went G.P.S. Orienteering it was so much fun and exciting. We had to take a G.P.S. and press a few buttons

to set a course. We went into the wadi surrounded by the mountains and we had to find markers by using G.P.S. It wasn't hard when you worked out how to use the G.P.S.

Grade 5 camp was awesome!!!

Fatima M—Grade 5A

Mountain Biking

At camp we went to mountain biking and it was exciting when we rode the bikes.

The people who were teaching us were talkative and enjoyable. The mountain biking was spectacular and awesome. It was one of my best times of my life.

Yusuf A – Grade 5A



Raft Building



Raft building was very entertaining because Prue was rolling a massive out-of-control blue barrel and it ended

up in the shallow water. There was lots of laughter when it happened. It took lots of team work, confidence and getting along to build a raft. We made our raft out of four barrels, four ropes and two long wooden sticks. At the end of raft building Miss Hazel sang us a spectacular song. It was very enjoyable.

Insiya – Grade 5A

GPS

We had to search for numbered tickets which had been set in the GPS. When

we found everything it felt really cool and I felt as though I had really achieved something because I did not think I was resilient enough to find them with my group.

Yazen – Grade 5A

Rafting

Raft building was amazing. I liked the part when we got on the boat, it was extremely hard. The

knot miss hazel taught us was exciting to learn. I enjoyed it when we were rolling the barrels and jumping on the boat was fun to, but when I jumped off the boat I did a belly flop. It was painful.

Faris—Grade 5A



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2011 Formula 1 Etihad Airways Abu Dhabi Grand Prix

Recently some lucky students in grade 5 won tickets to the Formula 1 Grand Prix at Yas Marina Circuit as a result of being involved in the "F1 in Schools" project for our next Inquiry topic.

At the Grand Prix it was very noisy! You had to wear ear plugs when the F1 cars were racing. There was also a snack bar, a salon, a place you could design your own car and pretend to drive a real car. You could also check out what first class on Etihad Airways is like.

We had tickets over the four days, and watched the support races and qualifying races as well as the Grand Prix on the Sunday. The person who came first was Lewis Hamilton in a Mercedes. We went on the pit lane walk on Thursday and saw them changing the tyres.

There were concerts at the end of each day and the people playing were Britney Spears, Paul McCartney, the Cult and Incubus.

It was a lot of fun!!!

By Tamsin and Vida – Grade 5B

Friday and Sunday were my favorite days. On Friday Lewis Hamilton was going so fast in the F1 car and also Britney Spears played in concert and I was VIP. On Sunday Lewis Hamilton won the Formula 1 Abu Dhabi Grand Prix at Yas Marina Circuit. I was so surprised that Lewis Hamilton won the race!

By Ayman – Grade 5A

The grade 5's won tickets to the Formula 1 racing, with a big thanks to Mr Graham. There were big concerts with Britney Spears, The Cult, Paul McCartney and Incubus. It was amazing.

By Prue Crook – Grade 5C



It was my first time going to watch F1 races and it was huge. When I won the tickets I was so excited! It was

the best experience ever! But it's kind of a rip-off. One bottle of water cost ten dirhams and a hot dog cost 50 dirhams. Everything was just so expensive! I went karting at the F1. I came third and it was awesome! I went to the F1 in Schools exhibit. I beat the guy that was showing us how to play. After that I went to F1 simulations.

By Abdullah K – Grade 5C

My favourite holiday was at the F1. I was so excited, but then in the car I felt bored. When I reached the F1, it turned into the best day of my life. I went car racing with toy cars. I lost the first time, but the second time I won. My mum wanted to join in too.

The next thing my mum had a surprise for me. My aunty came over. I loved it. My mum went to the grandstand with my aunty. I played with my brother in the art play area. I also saw Prue and Tamsin in there. We played in the Ladies spa together too. I had lots of fun!

By Vanessa Zeitouni – Grade 5C

The F1 was so much fun but at the same time so annoying and so noisy. People had to wear earplugs which are little orange things that go in your ears so the very loud noise doesn't appear to be too loud. After a bit there was a concert of Britney Spears. It was nice. There was a car with drawings of Red Bull which was very fast. Make sure you wear earplugs if you go, it's so NOISY!!!

By Danel Razapova – Grade 5C



The YAS F1 was a good experience for me but F1 cars are extremely noisy!

They didn't let you take any food in, but when you went inside a hotdog was

50 DHS! The ear-plugs were 30 DHS each! Before the race there were Mercedes driving around the track which was cool. But other than the rip-offs and noise, it was AWESOME!

By Abdullah M – Grade 5C



Grade 10 Enrichment Program

Adventure HQ Excursion

Our Grade 10 Enrichment Program class went to Times Square to participate in the high ropes and rock climbing course. We went on Wednesday the 23rd of November. We left at 12:45 and came back just before 3 o'clock. It took us an hour to get there and back. We were on the course for 45 minutes.

The aim of this excursion was to show our resilience skills and to take calculated risks. It was a very exciting experience for me and for most of the other students. We were all quite nervous and scared while going, but we were all happy and proud on our way back because we all took risks and showed resilience when we fell off the climbing wall or when we had to jump more than a metre across to the next platform on the high ropes course. It was a good experience overall and I can't wait until the next trip.

Alyina



The Amazing Maths Race



The 2nd Annual VISS Amazing Maths Race will be held on Tuesday the 6th of December. Last year's event was a great success, so we've decided to do it all again! The event will take place in the school gym, starting at 1.30 pm sharp. Dr Rod will be there to officially start the race. Students from grade 8 will compete in teams of 3 or 4 to complete a set of hands-on and written maths challenges, as well as physical challenges. Each station is set up by a team of grade 9 students who have chosen a country to represent, and who have worked hard to prepare these challenges. Competitors will receive a flag at the completion of each station (or country). The team to collect flags from all nations first wins!



Students have been working hard, not only to prepare for the race, but also to raise money for prizes. A bake sale was held on last week's VISS National Day Celebration and we are pleased to say that we have raised 2725 AED, all of which will go towards prizes for the students. We would like to thank parents for their contributions to the bake sale and students for their amazing sales and marketing skills in selling our sweet treats and juice boxes on Thursday.

All parents are invited to attend the race on the 6th of December and share in the excitement. For more information please email Kadous.hediah@viss.ae. We look forward to seeing you there.

Ms Hivin, Ms Emily, Ms Hediah

Dates for Your Diary

- **December 6**
Grade 8 & 9 Amazing Maths Race
- **December 18/2011 —> January 8/2012**
School Holiday
- **January 22/2012 until 24/2012**
Grade 8 students camp to Dibba—Oman
- **January 24/2012 until 26/2012**
Grade 9 students camp to Dibba—Oman
- **January 31/2012**
End of Semester 1