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Settling into the Junior School

Our first week has been a time for settling into classroom routines in the Junior School. Congratulations to all children and staff, we have had a pleasing start to our term.

When children move into a new school or classroom environment there is always a period of time for them to adjust to their new teacher and friends. It is natural that your children will find aspects of their new classroom different from their previous experiences and it may take time for them to feel completely relaxed. Your positive encouragement and reassurance is very important at this time.

This term our theme throughout the school is **Learning & Thinking**, with the key concept focus being Relationships.

Early Learning and Kinder - Learning through Play
Grade 1 - Learning to Learn - What helps me learn?
Grade 2 - Learning To Learn Together— How do

we learn the same as and differently to others? How can we help other people? Who can we go to if we need help?

Grade 3 - Learning to learn with friends - (Cooperative Learning) How do we learn together?

Grade 4 - Learning to Learn Cooperatively and Independently What are our responsibilities as a learner?

Grade 5 - Learners need to be organized What organizational skills do I need to be a good learner?

The children have to get to know their teacher and classmates and just like the players of a sporting team, the children have to learn and practice organisational and team work skills before they are able to work together to form the best learning team.

This week on Wednesday, September 10th at 8:00 pm, the planned Junior School Information Night for parents will provide information

about classroom procedures and will not be an individual interview time with teachers.

During the first few weeks, the teachers are assessing and observing the children in order to develop their Individual Learning Plans.

Junior School Art

All students must have a school art smock. In Art the children use many materials that could permanently stain clothing if they do not wear a smock. The art smock must be clearly named as it will be left at school to be used in their art and technology sessions.

Early Learning Centre (ELC)

When children are settled in their classes, parents in the ELC will be notified of an open morning in the Kinder and Early Learning Groups. You will be notified of the date. This morning will allow parents to observe their children in the learning environment.

Junior School Principal
Jan Senior

Harmony Quilt

Last school year, VISS celebrated International Harmony Day - a day promoting harmony between all peoples and nations of the world. Each of the foundation students and staff had the opportunities to make a special square to be sewn together as a Victoria International School of Sharjah Harmony Quilt. Under the co-ordination of Ms Carlene Matthews and Ms Robyn Lilburne the quilt was provided.

A special thanks to the Al Suwaidi Family for their support in sewing our beautiful harmony quilt together.

Also thanks to all our foundation families for their efforts and creativity completing their squares.

The quilt is on display in the Junior School Entrance.

From the Principal

It is a privilege to welcome all students, parents, teachers and staff for the 2008/2009 school year at the Victoria International School of Sharjah.

We have started the year now having use of our new Middle School, Early Learning Centre and Resource Centre. Within a few weeks we will also take over the Senior School, Main School Administration and the Senior Students Centre. Also within a couple of months we will have our Performing Arts Theatre, Community Sports Centre and Swimming Pool.

As of the first day, we have welcomed almost 300 new students and have many more undertaking enrolment assessments.

The School has also engaged a further talented group of teachers from Victoria and some additional excellent international teachers to reflect the proud multicultural mix found in schools in Victoria. A listing of all teachers appears in this Newsletter. We will also feature in coming weeks more information on individual teachers. This week we feature new teachers Peter Giles and Janice Burke.

Over the coming weeks the School will host a series of information sessions for parents.

The sessions will allow all parents to be briefed on the school's curriculum, program and a variety of organizational matters. There will be opportunities to meet informally with your children's teachers:

-Junior School Information Session 8:00pm on Wednesday 10th September.

-Middle and Senior School Information Session 8:00pm on Wednesday 17th September.

A week later on Tuesday 23rd September, the day will be devoted to Student-Parent-Teacher meetings to discuss Individual Learning Plans. On that day, normal classes will not be conducted and school buses will not run but students are expected to attend the meetings with teachers and a parent. More details and appointment times will be provided closer to the day.

Yours in Learning

Rob Blachford
Foundation Principal
Victoria International School of Sharjah

Upcoming Dates

*Junior School Information Session 8:00pm on Wednesday 10th September.

* Middle and Senior School Information Session 8:00pm on Wednesday 17th September.

*Tuesday, September 23rd Student-Parent-Teacher Meetings -Individual Learning Plans.

School Term Dates

The term dates for the 2008 – 2009 school year are as follows:

Term 1 – Sunday 31 August 2008 – Thursday 2 October 2008 (5 weeks) – whole of term one on Ramadan timetable times.

Term 2 – Sunday 12 October 2008 – Thursday 18 December 2008 (10 weeks)

Term 3 – Sunday 11 January 2009 – Thursday 9 April 2009 (13 weeks)

Term 4 – Sunday 19 April 2009 – Thursday 2 July 2009 (11 weeks).

Student Work Program Semesters:

Semester 1 – 31 August 2008 – 5 February 2009

Semester 2 – 8 February 2009 – 18 June 2009.

A more comprehensive calendar of dates and special events will be provided to parents through the School Newsletter and Website in the near future.

“The object of education is to prepare the young to educate themselves throughout their lives.”
Robert Maynard Hutchins

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Feature Teachers



Peter Giles was recruited to VISS from Brimbank College in Melbourne.

Peter has come from Victoria to teach Physical Education and Health at the VISS.

He has been teaching for the previous 20 years with students ranging from Grade 8 through to Grade 13. His sporting interests are baseball, football, tennis and golf. "I hope to play on as many courses as possible while here!!!!"

"I am looking forward to meeting as many families as I can during my stay with VISS and I hope that your child's experiences when doing Physical Education will be enjoyable and fulfilling. Looking forward to meeting you all."

Peter Giles



Janice Burke was recruited from Melbourne.

Janice was working at Westbourne Grammar School with kindergarten children.

Janice has worked in many different roles which have included managing preschools, teaching and working with families to help them with parenting.

"This opportunity was offered to me, so along with my husband we decided, lets head off to Sharjah to broaden our horizons and explore and meet new friends in this part of the world. Looking forward to being part of the community at VISS."

Janice Burke

For Your Information

School Buses

The school will take delivery of four new buses during September. When the buses are commissioned some of the current bus routes and drivers will change. We expect to create more direct routes to the school to cater for our growing enrolment numbers. Should you have any questions about the buses you may contact our Operations Manager, Mr. Shawki Khalil, or Bus Route Coordinator, Mr. Francis Danti.



Book Packs

Upon finalising enrolments parents have paid school fees and payments for uniforms, book packs and bus travels where required.

The book packs are now being distributed to students by their class teachers. If you have any questions about the books provided, please check with your Home Group Teacher.

Teachers at Victoria International School of Sharjah - September, 2008

Name	Main Duties
Alison Stewart	Grade 5 A, English Head Teacher
Amal Almashaiekh	Arabic
Badia Assafiri	Grade 7
Barbara Slusarczyk	Mathematics, Maths Head Teacher
Brett Scott	Library/Res Centre Manager, ESL
Carlene Matthews	Grade 6A, Learning Leader 6-8
Carmen Britnell	Grade 4C, Humanities Head Teacher
Christine Paynter	English, Learning Leader 9-10
Darren Gibbons	Literacy, Junior Physical Education, Learning Leader 4-5
Dhuha Al Feel	Early Learning Centre
Emma Crew	Maths/Science, Yard Duty Co-ordinator
Eng Riley	Maths, Timetables/Daily Program Manager
Gerardine Farrelly	Early Learning Centre Manager
Ghada Ali	Cultural Arabic & EL Arabic
Hala Aashour	Special Arabic & Kindergarten Arabic
Jane Cross	Grade 3 JC
Janice Burke	Kindergarten
Jessica Groher	Grade 3 JG
Jessica Walton	Grade 2 JW
Joanne Ryan	Grade 2 JR, Program Implementation Leader JS
John Donaldson	Grade 4 J, Student Council
Julia Shadid	Early Learning Centre
Kevin Mahoney	Music, Music Head Teacher

Name	Main Duties
Leslie Rauert	Manager Sport and Community Development, Physical Education, Student Leadership
Linden McCormack	Grade 1L, Assessment and Reporting Co-ordinator
Michael Vogue	Science/Maths, Science Head Teacher
Mohammad Shaath	Arabic/ Islamic
Muna Al-Zier	Early Learning Centre
Nicole Scott	Food Technology, Tech Studies Head Teacher
Peter Giles	Physical Education, PE/Health Head Teacher
Peter Rhodes	English, VCE Manager
Raj Boodhun	French, LOTE Head Teacher
Rashida Samji	Early Learning Centre
Rebecca Ponsioen	Physical Education
Reem Alashek	Special Arabic, French
Reshma Kudrolli	Early Learning Centre
Robyn Lilburne	Junior Art, Special Events Manager
Ryan McNeil	Grade 5 R
Sally Curwood	Grade 1S, Learning Leader 1-3
Samaher Antoun	Arabic Grade 1-6
Timothy Rahilly	Grade 1T, Publication Co-ordinator
Valda Rubio	Art, Art Head Teacher
Veronica Martin	Early Learning Centre
Vivienne Foley	Humanities, Program Implementation Leader MS