

From the Principal — *How our choices reflect what we value*

“It is the nature of mankind to rise to greatness if greatness is expected of him”

John Steinbeck



Last year I was fortunate to hear a speech from an African-American Rhodes Scholar, Wes Moore, about the importance of making good choices. He was introduced by the Mayor of Philadelphia, Michael

Nutter. Mayor Nutter also spoke of his own schooling. He had won a scholarship to a catholic boys high school, but to attend it, he had to walk (or run) each day through a part of Philadelphia controlled by gangs. So each morning, as his parents were unable to drive him, he had to decide between catching the fast train and then running two blocks; or possibly being late on the bus, but only having to run one block. Each day he had to hope he could negotiate his way through the gangs and not provoke some form of attack. Yet he did not miss a day of school other than for illness, such was the importance of his education both to him and his parents.

It started me thinking – how much do we value our education? The answer to this question is the fundamental reason VISS exists, as VISS was founded on the basis of providing children with an opportunity to excel and be leaders by offering a more innovative and balanced approach to education. As parents, by enrolling our children, we demonstrate the value we place on education because we desire to give our children the best opportunities we can manage.

Last week at the secondary school assembly I challenged the students about whether they were able to keep going or whether they simply gave up when things became difficult. The answer to this question reflects the children’s attitude and approach to school and school work, which in turn reflects the value they place on their education. Quite simply, do they keep going when things are difficult? Do they make the most of the opportunities before them?

These are questions that are worth discussing with your children before the parent teacher interviews next week. When I reflect on the effort of the Student Representative Council, or see the happy faces entering the school each morning, or talk to the school captains, or visit classrooms, or show visitors around the school, or watch the interactions at lunchtime across the school, or listen to students speak on assembly, there is no doubt that most of our boys and girls are making the most of all the opportunities and so valuing the importance of education.

International Baccalaureate

I will be attending the International Baccalaureate (IB) Heads of School conference this week in Singapore. This conference is held every two years and brings together the principals of IB schools from across the globe. It is a good opportunity for us to form links with other international schools beyond the UAE. At VISS we are currently seeking authorisation so that we can introduce the IB Diploma Program from next September for our senior students. Last weekend seven staff spent their weekend at IB training courses as part of our extensive preparation.

After the conference I will be in Australia for several days interviewing prospective staff for positions that will become available in January.

Parent Teacher Interviews

Separate letters have gone home from each school (ELC, Junior School, Secondary school) concerning the parent teacher interviews. If you have not seen it, please check your child’s bag!

The dates are as follows:

Early Learning Centre

- Monday, October 17
- Tuesday, October 18
- Wednesday, October 19

Junior School

- Sunday, October 16
- Tuesday, October 18

Secondary School

- Sunday, October 16
- Monday, October 17

For more details, please refer to page 4.

Chickenpox

We have had a number of cases of chickenpox in the Junior School. Attached is a parent information pamphlet from the Ministry of Health.

Australian health regulations state that anyone with chickenpox should be excluded from childcare facilities, schools or work for at least five days after the rash first appears or until dry scabs have covered all spots. Please do not send your child back to school for at least a full week after you have seen the first spot.

Dr Roderick Crouch
Principal



From the Head of Junior School —

Developing Resilience: A Partnership between home and school



Our first four weeks in the Junior School at VISS seem to have flown by so quickly as learning here is fun. The students have been involved in a range of interesting and challenging activities.

When visiting the classrooms it is great to see the enthusiasm and the focused faces as students listen to a story, are involved in an activity on the interactive whiteboard, solve a maths problem with equipment, sing a catchy song, create a special piece of art work, develop confidence in the water at swimming lessons, learn a new Arabic letter or word or write something special.

When students return after the holidays, there are some children who naturally cope with some of the challenges of school, such as change, disappointment, teacher guidelines and minor social issues. These are the students who are naturally resilient or have learnt resilience. Other students need assistance from home and school to nurture and develop resilience. In the Junior School at VISS, we need to work together with parents to help children become more resilient.

Resilience is a very important attribute for children and adults in our ever changing world. It is the mental toughness and confidence that enables us to deal with disappointment and challenges.

Michael Grose, an Australian child psychologist says,

“Resilient kids share four basic skill sets- independence, problem-solving, optimism and social connection.”

What can we do to support and nurture these skills?

Independence : We need to encourage children to do things on their own, such as carry their own bag, dress themselves, find something they have lost or tidy up their own toys or books. Encouraging children when they make a small step toward being more resilient will be a great help.

Problem Solving: We need to model and teach children how to solve problems and then step back and allow them the space to problem solve themselves.

When confronted with a problems ask your child to:

- ⇒ Define the problem first. This is very important.
- ⇒ Work out a way to solve the problem
- ⇒ Have a go at solving the problem
- ⇒ If the first try doesn't work, try another way.

For some children, you will need to work through the above steps with them by finding the teachable moment when they have an issue and then gradually step back so that they are in control.

Optimism: We need to be a role model, encouraging children to see the positive side of an issue. As Dr Rod said at the Parent Information Night, **“Turn a challenge into an opportunity”**.

Some children tend to see any small problem as a catastrophe. As adults, we

need to help them rationalise and see that it is a minor problem that can easily be solved by thinking through a solution, persisting or looking at it more positively.

Social connection: We need to encourage children to make new friends, not just one friend, but several different friends so that if one friend is absent or there is a disagreement, they have a choice of friends to play with them. Problem solving will also help them deal with social issues.

Albert Einstein said, *“If I had one hour to save the world, I would spend 55 minutes defining the problem and 5 minutes solving it.”*

Defining the problem is the first and most important step in solving it!

The **You Can Do It Program** which has been introduced and implemented in the Junior School, supports personal development and resilience in students. The keys of the program are

- Getting Along
- Organisation
- Resilience
- Persistence
- Confidence

Our first few weeks at school have focused on **Getting Along** and **Organisation**. I am sure your children will be able to talk to you about these skills. These skills will help them in managing challenges.

We look forward to working together to develop strong, confident, resilient individuals at VISS.

Jan Senior
Head of Junior School



From the Grade 1 classrooms...

The Grade 1 students have had a wonderful first few weeks and are settling into school beautifully. The students begin each day with the Oral Language Program, which allows them to consolidate their skills in all areas of the curriculum. This program is especially beneficial for improving English language learning by developing the speaking and listening skills of each student. In addition to the classroom program, students have enjoyed participating in Arabic, Islamic, Physical Education, Music and Art classes. Special days such as the Teddy Bears' Picnic Day last week, makes Grade 1 extra fun!!!



The Grade One Team



UAE National Day at VISS

This year, UAE Day is a very special celebration for all of us living in the UAE. However, it will be a particularly prominent celebration this year as it is the 40th Anniversary of the UAE. This is an occasion not only to reflect on the country's history, but also to look ahead to the exciting opportunities of the future.

Our UAE celebrations at VISS will be held on **Thursday 24 November**. The committee, consisting of parents, teachers and students, will ensure that UAE day at VISS is a memorable event for the whole school community. Our next meeting is on Wednesday 12 October at 7am at the ELC. If you would like to be a part of UAE committee, please contact the ELC on 06/5993191 or email elc.school@viss.ae. We invite all members of the school community to be a part of the committee as well as attend our celebrations.

Mary Azer
Director, Early Learning Centre

What's Happening in the Junior School...

- **Sunday October 16 and Tuesday October 18 - Parent Teacher Interviews**

3.30 – 5.30 pm and 6:00 – 7:30 pm.

* No interviews between 5.30 and 6.00pm

This is an opportunity for you to share information about your child with the teacher and discuss his/her future learning goals. Please return your time choice slips immediately if you haven't done so already. You will be given a specific interview time. Interviews will be 15 minutes in duration and are by appointment only.

It is important that all parents are punctual for their appointment.

- **October 13 - Junior School Assembly** -hosted by Grade 3, at the Theatre in the Performing Arts Centre

- **October 12 - and October 26 -** After school, U11 Netball at VISS in the Gymnasium

- **October 27 - Celebration of Learning**

Please write this date in your diary. You will be invited into the Junior School classrooms to see your child in the teaching and learning environment. More information will be sent to you regarding the timing of this event. This will be a special time for you and your child. We look forward to seeing you on that day.

Jan Senior
Head of Junior School



Personalised learning | Quality teaching | Excellence for all

Quran Club



Allah (SAW) says in The Holy Quran: "O mankind, there has to come to you instruction from your Lord and healing for what is in the hearts and guidance and mercy for the believers." (10:57)

Also, in a hadeeth narrated by Abu Uma-ma (RA), he said: I heard the Messenger of Allah (SAW) say "Read the Quran for it will come as an intercessor for its reader on the Day of Judgement".

We are pleased to announce that the VISS Quran Club runs in the Middle school every Monday from 3 till 4 pm .

The Club's main focus is for students to memorize and read the Holy Quran. We will also cover simple interpretation of meanings of the verses, reasons for revelation and Quran stories. Students will also learn many of the Prophet's most important traditions, manners and hadeeth; with training in the art of public speaking as well as learning and writing Islamic songs.

In the future, the Club will hold an internal school competition in the memorization and recitation of the Holy Quran. Students who participate will receive prizes and certificates of acknowledgement.

Further details will be made available as the competition date approaches.

If your son / daughter would like to participate in it please collect the participation form from the Secondary School administration and return it signed to Mr Khalid Amasy.

Khalid Amasy
Islamic Leader

News from the Early Learning Centre

ELC Celebration of Learning – Open Morning 27th October Parents are welcome to visit classes 8:00–10:00am

Mary Azer
Director, Early Learning Centre

Parents Association News

The PA Committee held its first Coffee Morning on October 3, 2011. Thank you to the parents who took the time to attend since it's been quite busy late-

ly with Parent Information Nights, classroom visits and signs ups in the various after school sporting and music opportunities VISS has to offer.

The turnout for Parent Information Night was an excellent example of the power of community which Principal Dr Rod spoke about in the last Newsletter.

Our coffee morning on 3 October was a great opportunity to meet personally our new Principal Dr Roderick Crouch and Mary Azer, ELC Director and we thank them both for their time in attending. It was a relaxed forum where we were able to discuss school updates, events and ideas for our children and the VISS community. We had a lovely time and enjoyed the chance to meet new people. We encourage you to come along to the next meeting to meet others who share your interest in making your child's school experience and education the best it can be.

VISS has begun to plan a UAE National Day Celebration in conjunction with the Parents Association. Since this year is a special year being the UAE's 40th Anniversary

we anticipate a special day in a UAE themed program in which the students, staff, parents and caregivers can share.



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From VISS Medical Centre — *Chicken Pox*

We welcome and thank Hend, Katy and Saika for their willingness to assist. Whether you have an hour to spare or an idea to share, we invite you to join us to be part of this worthwhile and important part of life at VISS and the power of community. For more details please see the separate note on the UAE National Day on the newsletter.

PA meetings will be held the first Monday of every month in the Senior School (enter Gate 1) beginning at 10:30. For those parents who wish to participate but cannot make day meetings, we're planning to be present at the Parent-Teacher Interviews later this month and holding an evening get-together in the near future. Look for the update on our activities, meeting dates in the Newsletter and e-mail.

We are very excited about the changes this year on the school's website and have heard positive feedback on the way the school has improved its communication via Newsletters, information handbooks and inquiry flowcharts. On behalf of all VISS parents, we truly appreciate the hard-working effort of Dr Rod, the Heads of School and Deputy Heads of School, teachers and staff in reaching this achievement for us all.

We look forward to seeing you soon. If you would like any more information, have any suggestions or can assist in any way please contact us via our school email, parents.association@viss.ae

**Donna, Eva
and Safiyya
Parents Association**

Is one of the classic diseases. It is caused by a virus (vericella). A child or adult with chicken pox may develop hundreds of itchy, fluid-filled blisters that burst and form crusts. Most cases of chickenpox occur in children younger than 10 yrs.



Risk factors

The risk of catching chickenpox is higher if you:

- Have not had chickenpox before
- Have not been vaccinated for chickenpox.
- Work in or attend a school child care facility.
- Live with children.

Note: People who have been vaccinated against chickenpox are usually immune to the virus. The same is true for anyone who had chickenpox in the past.

How does it spread?

Chicken pox can spread very easily to others. You may get chickenpox from touching the fluids from a chickenpox blister, or if someone with chickenpox coughs or sneezes near you.

When someone becomes infected, the blisters usually appear 10-21 days later. People become contagious 1 to 2 days

before breaking out the blisters. They remain contagious while uncrusted blisters are present. Even people with mild illness may be contagious.

Symptoms

- A red, itchy rash, like insect bites, on the face, scalp, chest and back that may spread to all over the body.
- Small, liquid-filled blisters that break open and crust over.
- Fever (for 1-2 days).
- Abdominal pain or loss of appetite.
- Mild headache.
- General feeling of discomfort (malaise) or irritability.
- Dry cough.

The disease is generally mild in healthy children. In severe cases, the rash can spread to cover the entire body, and lesions may form in the throat, eyes and mucous membranes of the urethra, anus and vagina. New spots continue to appear for several days.

Some children who have had the vaccine may still develop a mild case of chickenpox. They usually recover much more quickly and have only few blisters (less than 30).

Complications

Although most cases of chickenpox heal without complications, sometimes medical attention is required. Call your doctor if any of the following condition develops:

- Fever higher than 39.5 degrees.
- A rash involving the eye an eye or eye pain.
- Dehydration, vomiting, or decreased fluid intake.

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- Signs of bacterial infection, which include the following:
 - ⇒ Blisters leaking a thick yellow or green fluid.
 - ⇒ Areas around a blister is red, increasingly painful, or swollen.
- Pneumonia (difficulty of breathing).
- Encephalitis (Inflammation of the brain)

Self care at home

Most cases of the chickenpox can be managed at home. Several treatments can be used to help ease the symptoms of an uncomplicated case of chickenpox.

- Cool-water baths every 3-4 hours, adding baking soda or uncooked oatmeal to the water to calm itching.
- Calamine lotion or cool compresses can be applied to the blisters.
- Trimming fingernails can help prevent infected when scratching the blister.
- A soft, bland diet if chickenpox sores develop in the mouth.
- Antihistamines such as diphenhydramine or hydroxyzine can be used for itching. Check with your doctor to make sure you or your child can safely take antihistamines.
- Acetaminophen or ibuprofen can be used to relieve mild fever.

Do not give aspirin to anyone with chickenpox because it can lead to serious allergic condition called Reye's Syndrome. Do not try to treat a high fever without consulting your doctor.

Prevention

The chickenpox (varicella) vaccine is the best way to prevent chickenpox. The vaccine has been shown to be 95% effective in preventing childhood cases of chickenpox. When the vaccine doesn't provide com-

plete protection, it significantly lessens the severity of the disease.

The Chickenpox vaccine is recommended for:

- Young children: They receive two doses of the varicella vaccine, the first between 12-15 months and the second between ages 4 and 6 years, as part of the routine childhood schedule.
- Unvaccinated older children: children aged 7-12 years who haven't been vaccinated should receive two catch-up doses of varicella vaccine, given at least three months apart. Children aged 13 or older who haven't been vaccinated should also receive two catch-up doses of the vaccine, given at least four weeks apart.

Pregnant women and infants younger than 1 year of age should not be vaccinated.

Article provided from the UAE Ministry of Health



Ministry of Health
United Arab Emirates

Vaccinations

During last year physical examination, I checked the vaccination cards of some students; and I have noticed that most of them are missing the following type of vaccinations such as:

1. Chicken pox vaccine in **two doses**.
2. Hepatitis A in **two doses**.
3. Meningitis vaccine.
4. Typhoid vaccine.
5. Flu vaccine yearly.

Dates for Your Diary

- **Parent Teacher Interviews:**
Early Learning Centre
 - Monday, October 17
02:00 to 04:00pm
 - Tuesday, October 18
02:00 to 04:00pm
 - Wednesday, October 19
02:00 to 04:00pm and 05:00 to 08:00pm

Junior School

- Sunday, October 16
03:30 to 05:30pm and 06:00 to 07:30pm
- Tuesday, October 18
03:30 to 05:30pm and 06:00 to 07:30pm

Secondary School

- Sunday, October 16
03:30 to 7:30pm
- Monday, October 17
03:30 to 7:30pm

- **October 12 and October 26**
U11 Netball at VISS in the Gymnasium

- **October 24**
Last day for Unit 4 students

- **October 27**
Whole School Celebration of Learning (Whole School Open Day)

I recommend that each child should take those vaccines, so please contact your Doctor to check missing vaccine. By doing this, we are all contributing to providing a healthy environment at school.

Dr. Thana Essa
VISS Medical Centre