



PARENT INFORMATION PORTAL
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August 2021

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- **08:** CIS Virtual Exploration

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- **08:** End of Term 1
- **11 - 15:** October break



THE ORYX

The weekly newsletter of Windhoek International School

FROM THE DIRECTOR

Dear WIS Community,

You made it to the end of the first week of school! I am sure that, for many of us, the week began with the bundle of nerves that often comes with the first day of a new school year:

- Students worry about whether their teacher will like them and whether they'll be able to make new friends.
- Parents worry about whether the teacher will be a good fit to help their child grow and thrive.
- Teachers worry about whether they'll remember new names and whether they can set the right tone for the school year.
- Administrators worry about whether they'll be able to balance all the competing priorities and requests.

While the nature of our worries may differ, by Friday, we are all wondering the same thing: Is it the weekend yet, so I can sleep in!?!?

My hope is that we can also enter into the well-earned weekend with this shared belief: *I can flourish at WIS by simply being myself. I belong here.*

We want WIS to be a school that is systematically structured to ensure that all individuals in the community feel known, cared for, trusted, challenged, and encouraged to make a difference. To realise this, we must, at all times, presume the positive intentions of those around us.

So what is our vision for the kind of school that WIS will become? What matters most? How will we build solid foundations in our interpersonal relationships so that when challenges inevitably arise, we are well-equipped to meet the challenge - and to rise above it? As the new WIS Educational Director, I would greatly value your input as we begin setting priorities and identifying strategies for these coming years at WIS.

Towards that end, please take a moment to fill out the survey linked here: [What is our vision for WIS? What are our core values?](#)

Please also consider coming to a community meeting that will be held at 6pm on 17th August.

The current plan for this meeting is as follows:

1. Meet at the Small Field (where the Primary Registration occurs) starting at 6pm.
2. If we are more than 100 people, we will split into two contiguous venues.

3. We will then begin the Special Meeting of the WIS PTA. This meeting call was circulated on 31st May 2021 and includes a request to consider formally dissolving the **PTA** in its current form (see the WIS PTA Constitution [here](#)). At this meeting, we will discuss and determine next steps on the 30th April [resolution](#) that was previously circulated. I hope that this deliberation and vote will be constructive and forward-looking.
4. Following the resolution agenda item, we will use the initial feedback from the vision and values survey, linked above, to begin a consultative process towards furthering progress towards a school-wide ethos and system that is inclusive, welcoming, and representative of the entire WIS community.

What matters most to me at this meeting is not just what we do, but *how* we do it. As I have said before, I believe that schools should be an image of the society we wish to create. And I have come to understand that this vision of a better world must start with change from within. It starts with each of us working together to listen, reflect, and then work to become our very best selves.

From observing classes and speaking with students, parents, and teachers this past week, it seems to me that our community can enter into this first weekend of the 2021-22 school year with the satisfaction of knowing that we are off to a great start. I look forward to seeing many of you on Tuesday as we continue building something great here at Windhoek International School.

Sincerely,

Ethan Van Drunen

PRIMARY PRINCIPAL

Dear WIS Community,

One of the hallmarks of an inquiry approach to teaching and learning which is inherent to the IB Primary Year Programme, is that questions are used to drive students' learning. Questions can give a compelling reason to learn. 'Where do bears go in winter?' will likely generate more interest than 'we will study about hibernation.' 'Why are there so many people hungry in the world?' will generate more vigorous debate and learning than 'we will learn about the poverty cycle'. When students are taught to ask powerful questions, teachers can design experiences that will inspire great learning.

New beginnings are an opportunity to ask questions and I am a strong believer in modelling the type of pedagogy we would like to see in the classroom. In starting my position as Primary Principal at WIS, in collaboration with Ethan and Maggie, some questions to guide our own learning have been:

- How can we build on the good work that has happened at WIS?
- How can we create goals in a way that is inclusive and allows all members of the school community, even our youngest learners, voice, choice and ownership?

Kath Murdoch, a well-known educational inquiry expert who I continue to learn from, says that as educators:

"...we are culture builders. And this culture determines the way our children come to see themselves as learners and how they see learning itself. If we truly want to build a culture that nurtures curiosity, agency, courage and compassion – we have some important questions to explore from day one."

So with this in mind, during our first (virtual) assembly this week, I will introduce [What We'll Build by Oliver Jeffers](#). As teachers revisit and unpack the book in the Homerooms, students will be encouraged to have a voice in building our school community. How do we build great relationships? What are the skills and dispositions we need to build for learning? What programme of learning will we



Inspired by Kath Murdoch's blogpost [What will we build? An Inquiry into culture building inspired by Oliver Jeffers.](#)



build that nurtures our interests and passions? How will we learn about the world around us? What can we learn from the outdoors? What does it mean to work together and care for each other? If you would like to help your child generate ideas to add to our collective thinking by continuing the discussion at home, please contribute to [this Padlet](#).

My first weeks at WIS, albeit remotely, have been highly positive. WIS is clearly a place of learning, belonging, growth, and support for students, families, and community. Together with our dedicated team, I look forward to making the upcoming year a positive and rich experience for children in the Primary at WIS.

Watch today's Primary Assembly [HERE](#).

**Warm regards,
Marcelle van Leenen**

 [Read the PYP Newsletter for August **HERE**.](#)

SECONDARY PRINCIPAL

A warm welcome to the WIS community!

It has been a strange holiday that almost did not feel like a holiday for many of us. However, suddenly, it's time to start something new - the 2021-2022 school year. Welcome back to all our families and a special welcome to those of you who are new to our WIS family. We are happy to start the new school year with all of you and wish that this academic year will be one that is filled with great new initiatives and exciting challenges for all of us.



New beginnings are scary for many of us. However, they have something that drives our creativity and curiosity. New beginnings are always an opportunity to reset, start something new or build on great foundations.

With the new year, we have some exciting plans in the secondary school that I want to share. Our IBDP students are going to share some of their projects with the community. They have been creative and innovative in their quest to explore opportunities for CAS (Creativity, Activity and Service) which is an inherent part of the IB Diploma Programme. Watch out for contributions from '[Feed the Herds](#)' and '[Sauceyaesthetics](#)'.

On the 8th of September, our high school students will have the opportunity to participate in the '[Exploration Day - Africa](#)' hosted by the Council of International Schools (CIS). So far around 15 schools from across the African continent and 40 universities from across the world have indicated their commitment to participate in this event. It is an opportunity for our students to meet university admissions officers personally and get some excellent exposure to first class tertiary education opportunities.

With all this said, and connecting with Marcelle van Leenen's introduction to the new year - we have the opportunity to explore, to engage and to contribute to our community and society as a whole.

My wish for this year is that we all make use of this opportunity in our WIS community and the wider community in a positive way.

**Regards,
Maggie Reiff**



W.O.R.D.

All Secondary students must have a reader for W.O.R.D - W.O.R.D. happens once a week for the whole of Secondary during Block H. Homeroom on week 1, Tuesday and week 2, Friday.

Students are encouraged to read a book for fun and for entertainment. We want to instil the LOVE for reading with our students.



Live Panel: Thank you

Dear Penda A. Naanda, Carlos J. Fernandez Garcia, Taimi Shejavali, Sara Hoyer, Dr. Belinda Bruwer, Thuba Sibanda, Maria Huudu-Eli Hiwilepo, Ethan Van Drunen, Sam Shivute.

We are thankful that you took the time on Tuesday to share your inspiring stories of success with us. It was great to see that it is possible to find your passion, achieve your potential and be successful. Throughout the course of the IBDP we will remember your uplifting words and positive mindsets to accomplish our goals.

You all seem to have accomplished so much in your life. Some of you are CEOs, team leaders, politicians, activists, coaches, mentees, directors, pilots and/or graduates. Most importantly though, you have all figured out how to lead a well-balanced life. We hope that when we are at the same points in life as you are, we will be able to say the same. Thank you again for sharing your journeys of success.

To watch the Live recorded event, [CLICK HERE](#).

**Sincerely,
IBDP class of 2023**

CAS Project: PADucation

PADucation was a service I created to raise awareness and eliminate the shame around menstruation conversations. I grew up with an unspoken taboo for everything related to human sexual reproduction. I have four sisters, but felt ashamed to talk about menstruation because of the secrecy and shame that it carried within my culture. It was only until I got older did it occur to me that this "taboo" shouldn't have to be. The science behind it has to be one of the most fascinating of all processes in the human body. I never got the period talk and first heard of it from friends that had had the conversation already. Being unaware of menstruation was the case for many friends and classmates because of our cultures and although we spoke of the science behind menstruation in school, it was never about the real-life what *we see and feel during that time of the month conversation*. I thought that might be the case for a few of the younger girls in school for whatever reasons it may be and thought it was time to break the shame chain and start the conversation. Which then led to the six days of Period talk.

I spent a little over a month planning the project, deciding on which grade groups to talk to and what to talk about, before finally, I sat before the Middle School girls getting to know them, sharing my experiences and learning from them. I had two days with each grade which was carried out over the course of three weeks. With a little bit of anxiety about the newness of things, Grade 8 girls and I kicked off the first conversation on 23rd March, and soon after I found myself in my very last conversation with the Grade 6 girls on the 22nd April.

The six days I spent with the girls flew by and had to have been the most interesting and insightful conversations I had in those three weeks. I shared not only my experience with menstruation but how the entire cycle works and the role that the different stages of the cycle have in our daily lives, hygiene tips and tricks.

On a separate day, I illustrated the different sanitary products and directions on how to use them and advised the girls on ways to find the perfect product for themselves.



The best part of the project probably had to be that it wasn't entirely a one-sided conversation, it would develop into a dialogue moments after we would get comfortable with each other and I learned quite a hand full of things from the girls themselves.

It was extra special because we created a bond through being able to relate to each other and not having the usual tension associated with menstrual conversations.

I got to work alongside Ms. Sharon, my project supervisor, to ensure that the school's child policy was followed to and she assisted me with the planning and the execution of the lessons.

I would like to take this opportunity to once again thank all the homeroom teachers that I had stolen two homeroom periods from and their efforts to assist me with carrying out the project as efficiently as possible.

I would also like to thank all the parents that trusted me with having a conversation on what is still perceived as quite a sensitive topic, with their daughters.

Iuze Limbo, Grade 12FD



Talaki, Tapiwa and Jerry reading for WORD in Gr. 8

Our IB Learner Profile for August is: **INQUIRER**

inquirer

An **INQUIRER** endeavours to develop their natural curiosity. They acquire the skills necessary to conduct inquiry and research and show independence in learning. They actively enjoy learning and this love of learning will be sustained throughout their lives. University faculties regularly note IB students' passion for discovery.

We will continue nominating students and teachers. Any student can nominate any other student and/or teacher. All nominations must be sent to ajvrensburg@wis.edu.na - nominations will be put onto the IB Learner Profile Site only if the reason/description that you send matches the profile. So please make sure that your nominations fit the profile - e.g. INQUIRER.

All nominations should be in by 20 August 2021.

DOING OUR BIT: Part of a larger group of WIS staff had their second vaccination shot early this week. Feeling relieved.



USED ITEMS NEEDED!

Do you have any of the following used items that you don't need anymore?

- glass jars (*jam jars*)
- second hand t-shirts
- magazines
- old shoes (*to be used as pots for planting*)
- objects for still life (*such as bottles, books, vase, statues*)

Please donate them to the WIS Primary School Art room!

WIS
WINDHOEK INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL



Mutt-Strutt

MUTTS and **PUREBREDS** alike are invited to our dog walk to celebrate our canine companions!

The SPCA Windhoek is excited to participate in a national dog-walk day taking place with your SPCAs nationwide.

The first **100 entries** will receive a hamper with goodies from Hills and Bravecto.

4 September 2021

TIME: 1st sign-in from 07:30 | 1st walk at 08:00
2nd sign-in from 08:30 | 2nd walk at 09:00

PLACE: Eagles Restaurant | Avis Damm

ENTRY FEE: N\$100

Due to COVID-19 pre-registration is required.

PLEASE NOTE: Any COVID-19 regulations and precautions at that time will be adhered to.



REGISTRATION!
Closes **3 September @17:30**
at the **SPCA Windhoek.**



DON'T HAVE A DOG?

Come anyway and walk one of the SPCA dogs
(pre-registration required)

Thank you to our Sponsors: All entries may win a hamper from Hills or Bravecto in a lucky draw!



Greenspace



For more information contact us: SPCA Windhoek | 145 Robert Mugabe Avenue, Windhoek | Tel: 061-238 654
Fax: 061-225 715 | Cell: 081-124 4520 Emergency (After Hours Only) | Email: info@spcawindhoek.org.na

