

Let's protect their future and keep our loved ones healthy



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news from the trunk

Thursday, April 9, 2020



STAY HOME



WASH YOUR HANDS WITH SOAP FOR AT LEAST 20 SECONDS



AVOID CROWDED PLACES



WEAR A MASK



PRACTICE SOCIAL DISTANCING



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Superintendent's Message

Dear KAS Community,

Firstly I would like to thank you for your support during these first few weeks of online learning. It is only thanks to your cooperation, either via ensuring there is internet or explaining instructions to your children, that we are able to deliver the online program. Please know it is much appreciated. Our faculty has closely monitored attendance. Congratulations everyone on a successful first few weeks!

Here at KAS (and virtually throughout the world) Faculty and support staff are also working hard to support student learning in many different ways. For example:

- IT staff were on campus for a whole week to support parents with technical questions and distributing IPADS to student from Kindergarten to Grade Three. This was to ensure our lower elementary students are able to complete their online work and interact with their teachers.
- School phones are fully functioning and on call during working hours. Please feel free to call during office hours if you have any queries (+249 155770105/107)
- Parents are being contacted on a daily basis as needed by faculty and office staff. We want to know how we can support your students with their learning- be it technical, academic or social/emotional issues.
- Teachers continue to meet and collaborate during this time; always with a focus on optimizing learning for students

As I have looked into a full range of classes this week via Classe and Seesaw I have seen students engaging both with the material and also with their teachers. It is also very clear how much everyone misses each other. I believe the Whereby meetings (although sometimes challenging with internet) have proven very valuable at keeping the human connections alive.

In spite of our good online attendance and work achieved, we are constantly looking at areas to improve in order to better support students and parents. We are approaching this in two ways:

1. We have sought feedback from all community members – parents, students and teachers. In total 49 parents, 63 students and 35 faculty members completed the survey. The leadership team and IT team are reviewing these results immediately so we can celebrate the successes and improve where we can.
2. Conferring with colleagues at other international schools (many of whom have been practicing online learning for months now) and with the Office of Overseas Schools (US State Department). I am also happy to let you know that KAS has been part of many virtual meetings, with over 100 international schools to constantly ensure we are adopting the best practices available.

I am sure you, like many of us globally, are finding it difficult to deal with the uncertainty of the current situation. I wanted to share the article below with some ideas for dealing with this current reality.

<https://www.wellandgood.com/good-advice/sad-about-coronavirus/>

Please do always get in touch with any comments, questions or concerns.

Best wishes,

Bridget Davies
KAS Superintendent
bdavies@krtams.org

Letter from the Middle & High School Principal

Dear Parents and Students,

As school closures due to the COVID-19 continue to affect millions of students and their teachers worldwide, KAS continues to be dedicated to delivering a quality program for all its students.

Needless to say, that our teachers and students would much prefer to be in class on campus, but since we cannot, it is very impressive how the KAS faculty, students and parents are doing their best to make online learning a success. We understand that online learning is a unique learning experience that is very different from a normal day at school. Some students thrive on the independence and self-pacing of online learning while others find the time management of an independent learning environment a challenge.

Middle and high school students are required to check all their classes on Classe on a daily basis during weekdays. **Please note that this does not mean that teachers will post new work for students daily.** However, we believe that this daily online teacher-student interaction will help students learn faster and more efficiently. During these daily interactions, students will be able to ask questions and teachers will be able to provide feedback. Every class will also have one online meeting with their teacher once a week following the schedule that has been shared.

Considering the current situation in Sudan with frequent power cuts and unreliable Wifi, students are not required to check their classes on Classe at a specific time. Students can check in on Classe at any time during the day. We are sure that these once-a-day check ins will help students feel supported in all their classes. We also completely understand that students cannot always attend the scheduled Whereby meetings due to different circumstances. If students miss a meeting they are strongly encouraged to get in touch with their teacher later on.

We are committed to continuing to partner with parents to support our students' learning while they are at home. Thank you for filling in the survey that was sent. Your opinion really matters to us and we will use the feedback that we have received to further improve our program. I would like to thank all our students and parents for their commitment to making our online learning program a success.

I would also like to thank our entire KAS staff especially our teachers, counselors and teaching support staff for their continued dedication to our students. I couldn't ask to work with a better team of professionals. I am confident that our students will have every opportunity to be successful with the online program and support that has been put in place. Please remember that you can always contact the teachers or myself through Classe or by email with any questions or concerns you may have.

My thoughts are with all our students and families at this time. I know I speak for the entire KAS staff in saying that we look forward to the time when we will all be together on campus again.

Susan Boutros
Middle & High School Principal

A Message from the Early Childhood & Elementary Principal

We have all heard of mind, body and spirit and we usually look at them as separate entities. However, they are all connected and all depend on each other to create the whole person. I would like you to think of mind as our cognition or our ability to learn and think our body as our physical body and our spirit as our emotional being. I am going to tell you a story of how all three of them are connected and when one of them is not performing well it effects the other two.

There once was a young boy who lived a happy life. He grew up in a happy loving home with siblings of who all were supportive of each other. This boy would go out often and play in the neighborhood and easily make friends and get into typical mischief as young children usually do. This young boy had a positive outlook on life and tended to live in the moment. He was involved in team sports and spent many afternoons at practices for soccer and baseball. He was never the best player on the team but was always one of the best, able to make select teams and play well under pressure. Academically he was not best student but he managed to learn new things and earn good grades throughout school. With a little more effort he was capable of achieving better grades.

This was the life this boy lived growing up all the way through high school. When he went to college he stopped playing sports and being active and started social distancing himself from others that had a positive influence in his life. He grew disinterested in school and eventually had to leave college. Now a young man he continued on his path with little interest in making himself better and continued to live an unhealthy lifestyle where he eventually he became overweight and generally depressed with himself.

This went on for several years until one day he ran into a person that asked him to come and play a sport he once played when he was younger. He decided to go out and participate where he found that he was good and people appreciated his company. He enjoyed spending evenings out at the ball park just hanging out with people and getting to know others. His confidence grew and he started to understand that he needed to take care of himself. So he joined a local gym where he dedicated himself to losing weight and trying to eat healthy. His hard work started paying off for him he lost weight and continued to excel in sports he once played as a child. His self confidence grew and started wanting a little more out of life. But there was still something missing.

With this new self confidence and healthy body he started wanting

more, but what was missing. One day it became clear he needed to educate himself more. He enrolled in the local community college where he found he could be successful. He continued to take courses and set a goal for himself. He started going after his goal and enrolled in a major university. He worked hard getting good grades; he continued to take care of his body and became a leader within his classmates that were enrolled in the same degree. He eventually finished something he started over ten years prior and was very proud of his accomplishments. He went on to be successful in his career choice.

It is important to note how one entity affects the other. Each body, mind and spirit affected each other and spiraled down. He then worked hard where the synergy of three came together to help him achieve his goal. As we deal with our current situations of being isolated from friends, locked in our own homes, and distanced from our friends it can become easy for us to follow this same path this young man did. As we go through this difficult time remember to stay in contact with your friends, stay active and continue to keep your mind engaged. Our mind, body and spirit are all connected and depend on each other.

Jeremy Albright
Early Childhood & Elementary Principal

Saying of the Week

A bunch of fives is a slang term for a fist, especially one used for punching. The fives are the four fingers and the thumb. The phrase appears in print in 1825, in Charles Westmacott's satirical novel *The English Spy*: "...came up to the scratch and floored many a youkel with their bunch of fives."

However, 'a bunch of fives' derives from early boxing terminology. The 'scratch' referred to in Westmacott's story is the line that boxers were brought up to, to face each other at the start of a match. The early 1800s saw the invention of the boxing glove, which later became mandatory under the Queensbury Rules in 1867. In the 1820s bare-knuckle fighting was still commonplace and the 'fives' were the weapon of choice.

Minette van der Bijl
High School English Department

A Message from the Student Support Services

Dear parents,

As we enter our last quarter of the academic year, the COVID-19 pandemic has forced us to change many aspects of our current lifestyle, including how we educate our children. Switching to an exclusively online educational format can be confusing, stressful, and overwhelming for students, parents, and teachers alike. To help with this transition, Student Support Services staff in the Learning Support, English as an Additional Language, and Counseling departments are also adapting our approach to ensure online learning activities are accessible, appropriate, and engaging for students, and that they have the skills to manage academic expectations and maintain their wellbeing. In line with our commitment to child protection and safeguarding, KAS is making use of guidelines for online learning suggested by the International Center for Missing and Exploited Children (ICMEC).

Learning Support (LS) staff and English as an Additional Language (EAL) teachers across divisions are working closely with teachers, children, and parents. In the Elementary School, LS staff and EAL teachers are using platforms, apps, and websites such as Classe365, SeeSaw, Epic, Zearn to adapt and supplement activities provided by grade level teachers to meet the unique needs of each learner. Each SSS staff member has her own Whereby room and is regularly available to meet students for individual or small group instruction, at scheduled times and by appointment. SSS staff are reaching out to parents offering support and suggestions to help them engage their children and manage in this new online learning format, as well as manage their own challenges this change may bring to their daily lives.

In the Middle & High School, EAL teachers continue to support students in decoding the language of their courses to stay current and be successful with their assignments. LS staff offer support to all students in their courses, as they did when providing in-class support when we had classes in session on campus. To provide individualized attention to learners, MSHS staff have adapted a "mentoring" model of support where learners are paired with specific LS staff who will work closely

with them and their parents. Each MSHS LS staff member and EAL teacher has her/his own Whereby room where they are regularly available to meet students to assist them with assignments, at scheduled times and by appointment. SSS staff are staying in contact parents to help in engaging their children in online activities. In addition, SSS teachers and staff are helping students develop and use additional skills necessary to manage learning in this new format. We are shifting the focus of our Advisory lessons to address needs specific to learning online and coping with other challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic. We will continue to address mental and physical wellbeing, and also include topics such as online safety and etiquette, organizing physical spaces and time to be successful with assignments, and strategies to cope with the many uncontrollable challenges currently facing our students.

Changes forced upon us by the COVID-19 pandemic can feel overwhelming and unmanageable while we change our daily habits to ensure the health and safety of our loved ones. Online educational activities provided to your children are intended to engage your children with meaningful learning activities while working from home. The Student Support Services staff members are committed in assisting children and families in getting the most out of this experience. While the uncertainty of what the future may bring is ever-present, there is no uncertainty about the importance of your child's health, safety, and education to all members of KAS faculty. Please contact any member of the Student Support Services departments if you or your child need assistance being successful with online learning and thriving despite current challenges.

Wishing you and your family health and happiness,

Nicole Stacey

Student Support Services Coordinator

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Child Protection

As we have transitioned to distance online learning we are making sure we have the structures in place to keep your children safe and healthy. Therefore, we have updated our child protection guidelines for this context. In order to do this, we have consulted with International agencies such as International Centre for Missing and Exploited Children (ICMEC) and Council of International Schools (CIS).

Here below is a copy of those guidelines.

KAS Online Child Protection Guidelines

Introduction

These guidelines provide information on how Khartoum American School uses the Internet and social media and the procedures for doing so. They also outline how we expect the staff and students of KAS to behave online.

Aims

- To protect all students who make use of technology
- To provide staff with information regarding online safety and inform them of how to respond to incidents
- To ensure that KAS is operating in line with our values and code of conduct regarding how we behave online

Child Protection Principles of Online Learning

- Follow the KAS Safeguarding Policy and Procedures and professional code of conduct.
- Contact should be observable and interruptible.
- Maintain appropriate boundaries - avoid conduct that a reasonable person might question.
- Avoid being alone or causing someone else to be alone with a child
- Report child protection concerns to your safeguarding designate - Division Principal or Counselor.
- Ensure your personal social media is private and inaccessible to students.
- Seek educational solutions to educational problems.

Communication Guidelines to be observed during any digital or online contact with students

- All communication with students should have an educational purpose.
- Virtual synchronous sessions should be conducted in a place that is observable and interruptible.
- Communication with multiple students is preferred.
- All communications should be through school platforms as much as possible - Classe, SeeSaw and Whereby
- Adults are responsible for maintaining appropriate boundaries. This is not the job of the student.

Situations to AVOID online:

- Casual or intimate atmosphere: Intimate locations, casual dress, nicknames, private conversations, observational comments about home or family, oversharing personal details. On camera, an impersonal or blurred background is preferred and is less distracting for student learning. A professional tone is critical to maintain boundaries online.
- Changing platforms: Avoid the temptation to change platforms if communication is disrupted by technical difficulties. Reschedule the session instead.
- Unclear expectations: Ensure synchronous learning events are predictable, structured, and distraction free.
- Code of conduct violations: Meeting children on other platforms, taking photos or screen shots of students, out of program contact, favoritism, derogatory or sexist remarks, being under the influence of alcohol or drugs are grounds for disciplinary action or dismissal.

Netiquette

As part of KAS' mission and vision we value community and we are constantly looking for ways to replicate this virtually. Below is a framework that we have shared with students about how we all need to communicate online.

AS YOUR TEACHER I PROMISE TO...	ONLINE COMMUNICATION NETIQUETTE	AS A LEARNER I PROMISE TO...
Check my emails and Classe daily during the school week.	Behave online as you would to a person face to face: respectful and courteous	Check Classe daily during the school week.
Respond to course related questions during the week the task is given. If questions are pertinent to the whole class I will share with the rest of the class (anonymously if requested)	Remember you are talking to your colleagues or classmates- they are human and have feelings 😊	Complete all tasks set within the given time frame.
Post announcements and reminders once per week or more frequently if needed.	Check before you post. Always check whether a similar question to yours has been posted and answered on the discussion board to avoid duplicated messages and responses.	Work collaboratively if requested to do so.
Give feedback to any submitted work.	Do not write in all uppercase. ALL CAPS MEAN YOU ARE SHOUTING although you may not mean it.	Ask questions and seek clarification when necessary
Conduct at least one synchronous face to face per week during school hours	Use emoticons (emojis or emotional symbols :-), :-), :-(-, etc.) to indicate the tone of voice. It is often hard to tell the emotion of a text-based message. 😊	Attend any scheduled synchronous classes during school time
	Respect others. In all communication and discussion occasions, use your professionalism and talk to others with respect. Unsuitable messages will be removed.	