

NEWSLETTER



Dear Aspen Family,

As we move through this half term, it has been wonderful to see such a strong focus on positive transitions across the school, with students and families engaging thoughtfully with the next stages of their learning journey.

Last week's Year 9 into Year 10 IGCSE Options Evening was a real success, providing students and parents with the opportunity to explore subject pathways, ask informed questions, and begin making confident choices as they move into the examination phase of their education. Thank you to all staff who contributed their expertise and guidance on the evening.

مجتمع آسبن الأعزاء،
مع تقدّمنا خلال هذا الفصل الدراسي، كان من الرائع أن نرى هذا التركيز القوي على
الانتقالات الإيجابية في جميع أنحاء المدرسة، حيث يشارك الطلاب وأولياء الأمور بتفكير
ووعي في المراحل القادمة من رحلتهم التعليمية.



Your Opinion Matters

You said:

You want your child to be part of a truly global learning experience.

We did:

This week, our students collaborated with peers from around the world. Our Aspen Aspire Pathway (Gifted and Talented) students created and shared presentations with our sister ISP school in India, developing confidence, creativity and communication skills. In addition, our Secondary students connected with a school in Taiwan through a live video call, exchanging ideas and perspectives and gaining real-world international exposure.

لقد كانت أمسية اختيار مواد الصف التاسع إلى الصف العاشر (IGCSE) التي أُقيمت الأسبوع الماضي ناجحة للغاية، حيث أتيحت الفرصة للطلاب وأولياء الأمور لاستكشاف المسارات الدراسية، وطرح الأسئلة الواعية، والبدء في اتخاذ قرارات واثقة مع انتقالهم إلى مرحلة الاختبارات. نشكر جميع أعضاء الهيئة التعليمية الذين ساهموا بخبراتهم وإرشاداتهم خلال هذه الأمسية.

Looking ahead, we are very much looking forward to our Year 11 into Year 12 Sixth Form Pathways Event, taking place on Sunday 1st February 12pm to 2pm. This is a key milestone for our students as they consider their post-16 options, including A Levels, BTEC pathways, and future aspirations beyond school. We strongly encourage all Year 11 students and parents to attend, as this event will provide clarity, reassurance, and inspiration as students plan their next steps into Sixth Form and beyond.

We were also delighted to welcome our Year 6 students for a highly successful Year 6 into Year 7 Transition Taster Morning. Students engaged enthusiastically with specialist secondary learning, and this experience will now continue over the coming weeks as they access subject-specific lessons in Design Technology, Computer Science, Art, and Science, working with specialist teachers in our secondary facilities. These opportunities are designed to build confidence, curiosity, and excitement about the transition into secondary school.

ونتطلع قدمًا إلى فعالية مسارات الصف الحادي عشر إلى الصف الثاني عشر (السادس الثانوي)، والتي ستقام يوم الأحد 1 فبراير من الساعة 12:00 ظهرًا حتى 2:00 بعد الظهر. وتعد هذه الفعالية محطة مهمة لطلابنا وهم يفكرون في خيارات ما بعد سن السادسة عشرة، بما في ذلك مسارات المستوى المتقدم (A Levels) و BTEC وتطلعاتهم المستقبلية بعد المدرسة. ونحث بشدة جميع طلاب الصف الحادي عشر وأولياء أمورهم على الحضور، حيث ستوفر هذه الفعالية الوضوح والطمأنينة والإلهام لمساعدة الطلاب في التخطيط لخطواتهم القادمة نحو المرحلة السادسة وما بعدها.

كما سعدنا باستقبال طلاب الصف السادس في صباح تعريفنا لمرحلة الانتقال من الصف السادس إلى الصف السابع الذي حقق نجاحًا كبيرًا. وقد تفاعل الطلاب بحماس مع التعلم المتخصص في المرحلة الثانوية، وستستمر هذه التجربة خلال الأسابيع القادمة من خلال مشاركتهم في دروس متخصصة في التصميم والتكنولوجيا، وعلوم الحاسوب، والفنون، والعلوم، بإشراف معلمين متخصصين وفي مرافق المرحلة الثانوية. وتهدف هذه الفرص إلى تعزيز الثقة والفضول والحماس للانتقال إلى المرحلة الثانوية.

Beyond academic transitions, we are also looking forward to celebrating key moments in our school community calendar. This Friday, 30th January, we will mark Haq Al Laila, celebrating tradition, generosity, and cultural heritage. Please see the [family letter for Hag al Laila at the link here](#).

This will be followed by our International Day on 13th February, a vibrant celebration of the diversity, cultures, and global connections that - thanks to the contributions and collaborations of all - make our school community so special.

As always, thank you for your continued partnership and support as we guide our students confidently through each stage of their educational journey.

وبالإضافة إلى الانتقالات الأكاديمية، نتطلع أيضًا إلى الاحتفال بمحطات مهمة ضمن تقويم مجتمعنا المدرسي. ففي يوم الجمعة 30 يناير سنحتفل بيوم حق الليلة، احتفاءً بالتقاليد والكرم والتراث الثقافي.

يلي ذلك اليوم العالمي في 13 فبراير، وهو احتفال نابض بالحياة بالتنوع الثقافي والروابط العالمية والتي بفضل مساهمات وتعاون الجميع تجعل مجتمع مدرستنا مميّزًا. يرجى الاطلاع على [رسالة العائلة الخاصة بالحاج الليلة على الرابط هنا](#).

وكما هو الحال دائمًا، نشكركم على مشاركتكم ودعمكم المستمرين ونحن نوجه طلابنا بثقة في كل مرحلة من مراحل رحلتهم التعليمية.

Wishing you all a lovely weekend ahead.

نتمنى لكم جميعًا عطلة نهاية أسبوع سعيدة.

Warm Regards

مع أطيب التحيات،

Andrew Durcan

Head Teacher Secondary





A Guide to Supporting Exam Revision at Home

**By James Alloub -
Deputy Head Teacher Secondary**

As we move closer to GCSE and IBDP examinations, we would like to share some clear guidance to help Year 11 and Year 13 students revise effectively at home (this also applies to all our students who are preparing for tests and end of year exams). We understand that supporting exam revision can feel challenging, especially when English is not a first language. Please be reassured that small, consistent habits at home make a very big difference.

Revision works best in short, focused sessions. We recommend students revise for 25 to 40 minutes and then take a short break. Long periods of revision without breaks often lead to tiredness and reduced concentration. Short sessions, repeated regularly, are much more effective.

It is important that revision is active. This means students should not only read notes or highlight books. More effective revision includes answering exam-style questions, writing answers from memory, explaining ideas out loud, or checking work against mark schemes. If revision feels difficult at times, this is normal and shows that learning is taking place.

Testing memory is very important for GCSE and IBDP exams. Students should practise remembering information without looking at notes. Past exam questions, flashcards, and writing down everything they remember about a topic are all useful methods. Exams test what students can remember and explain, not what they recognise on a page.

We also encourage students to revise more than one subject in a day. Studying different subjects helps the brain stay focused and improves long-term memory. This also prepares students for the exam period, where they will move between different subjects across the week.

Sleep and routine are extremely important. Students who sleep well and revise a little each day perform better than students who stay up late and try to learn everything at once. A calm, supportive routine at home will help students manage stress and perform at their best.

Parents do not need to be experts in the subjects to support revision. Simple actions such as encouraging a routine, providing a quiet place to study, checking that revision time is happening, and offering positive encouragement all help greatly. Listening to students explain what they are revising can also be very effective.

For Year 11 and Year 13 students, revision does not need to be perfect. It should be regular, focused and honest. Spending more time on difficult topics and practising exam questions consistently will have the biggest impact. These habits will support success in the upcoming exams and prepare students well for the next stage of their education. If you have any questions or would like advice on how to support your child at home, please feel free to contact the school.



دليل لدعم مراجعة الامتحانات في المنزل



- بقلم جيمس ألوب نائب مدير المدرسة الثانوية

مع اقتراب موعد امتحانات GCSE و IBDP ، نودّ أن نشارككم بعض الإرشادات الواضحة لمساعدة طلاب الصفين الحادي عشر والثالث عشر على المذاكرة بفعالية في المنزل (ينطبق ذلك أيضًا على جميع طلابنا الذين يستعدون للاختبارات وامتحانات نهاية العام). ندرك أن دعم المذاكرة قد يكون تحديًا، خاصة عندما لا تكون اللغة الإنجليزية هي اللغة الأم. نود أن نطمئنكم بأن العادات الصغيرة والمنتظمة في المنزل تُحدث فرقًا كبيرًا جدًا.

تكون المذاكرة أكثر فاعلية عندما تتم في جلسات قصيرة ومركزة. نوصي بأن يذاكر الطلاب لمدة تتراوح بين 25 و40 دقيقة، ثم يأخذوا استراحة قصيرة. فترات المذاكرة الطويلة دون استراحات غالبًا ما تؤدي إلى التعب وضعف التركيز، بينما الجلسات القصيرة والمتكررة بانتظام تكون أكثر فاعلية.

من المهم أن تكون المذاكرة نشطة. وهذا يعني ألا يقتصر الطلاب على قراءة الملاحظات أو تظليل الكتب فقط. تشمل المذاكرة الأكثر فاعلية الإجابة عن أسئلة على نمط الامتحان، وكتابة الإجابات من الذاكرة، وشرح الأفكار بصوت عالٍ، أو مراجعة الإجابات باستخدام نماذج التصحيح. إذا شعر الطالب بأن المذاكرة صعبة أحيانًا، فهذا أمر طبيعي ويدل على أن عملية التعلم جارية.

يُعد اختبار الذاكرة أمرًا بالغ الأهمية في امتحانات GCSE و IBDP. ينبغي على الطلاب التدرب على تذكّر المعلومات دون الرجوع إلى الملاحظات. تُعد أسئلة الامتحانات السابقة، والبطاقات التعليمية، وكتابة كل ما يتذكره الطالب عن موضوع ما من الأساليب المفيدة. فالامتحانات تقيس ما يستطيع الطالب تذكّره وشرحه، وليس ما يمكنه التعرّف عليه فقط عند النظر إلى الصفحة.

كما نشجّع الطلاب على مذاكرة أكثر من مادة في اليوم الواحد. يساعد التنقل بين مواد مختلفة على بقاء الدماغ في حالة تركيز ويعزز الذاكرة طويلة المدى. كما يهيئ ذلك الطلاب لفترة الامتحانات، حيث ينتقلون بين مواد متعددة خلال الأسبوع.

يُعد النوم والروتين اليومي أمرين في غاية الأهمية. فالطلاب الذين ينامون جيدًا ويذاكرون قليلًا كل يوم يحققون نتائج أفضل من أولئك الذين يسهرون ويحاولون تعلم كل شيء دفعة واحدة. إن توفير روتين هادئ وداعم في المنزل يساعد الطلاب على إدارة التوتر وتقديم أفضل ما لديهم.

لا يُطلب من أولياء الأمور أن يكونوا خبراء في المواد الدراسية لدعم المذاكرة. فالإجراءات البسيطة مثل تشجيع الالتزام بروتين منتظم، وتوفير مكان هادئ للدراسة، والتأكد من تخصيص وقت للمذاكرة، وتقديم التشجيع الإيجابي، كلها أمور ذات أثر كبير. كما أن الاستماع إلى الطلاب وهم يشرحون ما يُذاكرونه يمكن أن يكون فعالًا جدًا.

بالنسبة لطلاب الصفين الحادي عشر والثالث عشر، لا يشترط أن تكون المذاكرة مثالية، بل يجب أن تكون منتظمة، ومركزة، وصادقة. إن تخصيص وقت أطول للموضوعات الصعبة، والتدرّب المستمر على أسئلة الامتحانات، سيكون لهما الأثر الأكبر. وستُسهم هذه العادات في دعم النجاح في الامتحانات القادمة والاستعداد الجيد للمرحلة التعليمية التالية.

إذا كانت لديكم أي أسئلة أو رغبتم في الحصول على نصائح حول كيفية دعم أبنائكم في المنزل، فلا تترددوا في التواصل مع المدرسة.



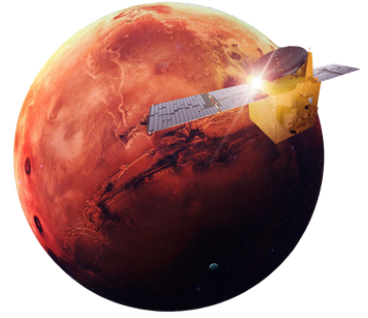
UAE Wonders

Amazing things you might not know about the UAE



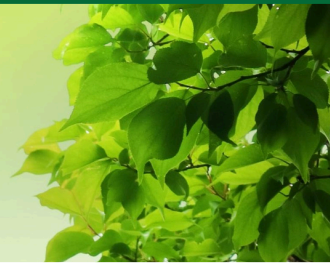
Did you know?

The UAE's Hope Probe made history in 2021 as the first Arab mission to reach Mars. The spacecraft travelled over 493 million kilometres on a journey that took approximately seven months, inspiring a generation to look towards science, innovation and the future.



Nature Notes

At Aspen we nurture curiosity, responsibility, and a love for the world around us.



Did you know Buffaloes vote on travel plans?

African buffalo herds don't just follow the loudest alpha. They practice a form of democracy. When deciding which direction to travel, adult females will stand up, stare in a specific direction, and sit back down. The herd almost always moves in the direction that received the most "looks."



Dad Jokes

We adore our dads but their jokes are **so bad** they're actually **good**



Dad: Why did the teacher wear sunglasses to school?

Son: Why?

Dad: Because his students were so bright!





Be Kind To Your Mind

Wellbeing at Aspen

Dear Aspen Family,

When we think about kindness, we often think about how we treat others. But one of the most important forms of kindness is how we treat ourselves. At school, students are learning not only academic skills, but also how to manage emotions, handle challenges, and build confidence. Self-kindness plays a powerful role in all of this.

Self-compassion: talking to yourself with care

Self-compassion means treating yourself the way you would treat a good friend. When something goes wrong, instead of saying "I'm not good enough," self-compassion sounds more like, "This is hard, but I'm trying my best." Everyone makes mistakes. What matters is how we respond to ourselves when we do.

Your inner critic vs your inner coach

Many students have a loud inner critic: a voice that says things like, "You should have done better," or "You always get things wrong." Over time, this voice can increase stress and lower confidence.

Your inner coach, however, sounds different:

"I didn't get it this time, but I can learn."

"I made a mistake, and that's okay."

"I'm proud of myself for trying."

Learning to listen to the inner coach helps students feel more confident and more willing to keep going when things are difficult.

What self-kindness looks like in daily school life

Self-kindness does not mean avoiding challenges. It means:

- Taking a break when feeling overwhelmed
- Asking for help when something feels too hard
- Not comparing yourself to others
- Celebrating effort, not just results
- Speaking to yourself with respect

These small acts of kindness help students stay emotionally balanced and motivated.

How kindness builds resilience

When students are kind to themselves, they recover more quickly from setbacks. They are more willing to try again after a mistake and less afraid of failure. This is called resilience, the ability to bounce back, adapt, and keep going even when things are tough.

By practising kindness toward themselves and others, students build stronger emotional wellbeing, healthier relationships, and a more positive school experience.

If you ever feel stuck, stressed, or unsure, remember that support is always available. You don't have to handle things on your own and being kind to yourself is a great place to start.

Warm regards,

Saaniya Kazi

School Counsellor



Sports Update



U19 Boys Football

We are pleased to share that our U19 Boys' Football Team has progressed to the play-off round of the ADEK Sports Cup following a strong performance during Saturday's matches.

The team showed great commitment, teamwork and determination throughout the day, earning a well-deserved place in the knock-out stage. The play-off round will follow a knockout format, meaning that a win will see the team progress to play another school on the same day, with the opportunity to reach the ADEK Sports Cup Football Finals.



We would love to see a strong staff presence this Saturday to support our students.

Play-off details:

Venue: Zayed Cricket Stadium

Pitch: 12

Kick-off: 1:30pm

Opposition: SABIS International School

We wish the team the very best of luck and look forward to cheering them on.

U13 Girls Football Success

Congratulations to our U13 girls football team on an excellent performance against Noya British School on Wednesday 21st January. Aspen secured their first win of the season with an impressive 6-2 victory.

The team showed great determination, teamwork, and resilience throughout the match, resulting in a well-deserved win. A fantastic effort from all players, with special congratulations to our goal scorers Luce, Alia, Malek and Noor.

Well done to the entire squad on a brilliant performance and a great step forward this season!





TERM 2 AND 3 2025/2026 ACADEMIC YEAR

Admissions Open

FS1 (Nursery) – FS2

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by

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Opportunity for Inclusive Sports Programmes Out of School

Dear families,

P.O.D Sports offers engaging, inclusive, and high-quality sporting opportunities that encourage every child to reach their potential outside of school. Carefully structured sessions in sports such as swimming, sailing, padel, football, and private 1-to-1 sessions focus on building confidence, social skills, teamwork, and enjoyment within a supportive environment that meets each participant's individual needs. As an Abu Dhabi government-approved Social Contribution Enterprise, P.O.D Sports is proud to promote inclusion, wellbeing, and community through sport.



Join the P.O.D Sports community, empowering individuals through inclusive sport programmes.



P.O.D Sports

Our Sessions:

● Padel Tennis

Sunday 11:30AM

Join our Padel sessions to build hand-eye coordination while playing fun games and making friends.

● Swimming

Monday 5PM

Join our swimming sessions to build water confidence, develop skills, and make friends.

● Football

Tuesday 5PM

Join our football sessions to score goals, learn new skills, and make friends.

● 1-1 Sessions

Flexible times and dates

You decide the session, tell us what you enjoy, and we'll make it happen!

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