Executive Principal

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#RAKAcademy

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Dear Parents,

I am delighted to be writing to you after the first half-term break of the academic year at RAK Academy. As a school community (parents, students and staff) we are all acutely aware that due to the current challenges, the nature of school is very different from that which we would expect in a normal year. I would like to sincerely thank you all for your positivity and support as we have been forced to work around not only the strict covid-related school operation guidelines but also a number of maintenance issues that we have encountered in several of our school buildings within the academy.

01 IMPRESSIONS OF RAK ACADEMY

Whilst I have only been in post for a short time, I have been extremely impressed with the professionalism and dedication of our teaching staff and school leadership teams and the care and attention of our administration staff. I would also like to thank you, the parent body, for your positivity and support as we aim to strengthen and grow the quality of education and the level of service offered across the academy. I have found the students of RAK Academy to be an absolute pleasure to work with and they are a credit to you as parents. Our students are polite, hard-working, interested in learning and demonstrate many talents both academic and non-academic, and I am sure that by working together as a supportive learning community, and with a determined focus, the future is very bright for our academy of schools

02 VIRTUAL UPDATES AND COMMUNICATION

In an ideal world, I would have had the opportunity as a new Executive Principal, to meet directly with parents from across our schools to address you directly, and to share key information with you in person, as we move through the academic year at RAK Academy. But as we are all too well aware, we are not operating in an ideal world, but rather in an environment where many of our interactions are virtual. I will therefore, be sharing a regular video diary (Vlog) for parents of RAK Academy.

This will provide you with up-to-date information from the Executive Principal's office, about the academy, in an easily accessible form. Within each Vlog, I will attempt to touch upon aspects of school operation that are important to parents, as well as providing an understanding of the vision, aspirations and strategic direction of the academy. As well as this I will be sending all parents an e-letter each month - the first of which is the publication you are currently reading.

I truly believe that regular and purposeful communication is at the heart of any good organisation and it is my aim that we will further strengthen lines of communication throughout all of our schools. I encourage you to follow RAK Academy on a variety of social media platforms and have also included information on my Executive Principal social media feeds at the end of this e-letter, should you wish to 'follow' my updates.

03 STRATEGIC PLAN AND PARENT SURVEY

The development of a new three-year strategic plan for RAK Academy is a high priority for the Board. This will be a comprehensive plan that will cover all areas of academy operation and function, ranging from a review of the vision and mission of our schools, right through to how we would wish learning to be delivered in our future-ready classrooms, and how we can better serve the needs of our parents and students as key stakeholders.

As Executive Principal, I am very keen to understand your perspectives on the future of the academy, your views about the ways in which we should operate and function and what you believe our aspirations should lead us to, as we design and focus on ensuring the delivery of excellent teaching and learning in our schools. Understanding the views of you, our parents, will support us to shape the next phase of development of RAK Academy.

Later this week you will be provided with a link to an important, wide-ranging and detailed parent survey. I humbly request that every parent completes this survey, to allow us to fully understand our current areas of strength and to identify any aspects in which we need to improve. We are also conducting staff and student surveys and will collate all the information received to help formulate our strategic plans for the academy.

04 INITIATIVES FOR LEARNERS:

STUDENT VOICE AND LEADERSHIP

I strongly believe that our students should be empowered as key stakeholders in our academy. We should aim to support each student to achieve their potential in all areas, to become positive global citizens and to develop skills to become future leaders. I strongly believe that a quality, modern education should be broad and varied and should excite and enhance each of our students' unique skills, interests and abilities. Student leadership is a key focus area, and in support of this, the academy has now appointed a team of teacher representatives under the leadership of our Well-being and Counselling Manager, who will drive forward opportunities for students in all of our schools to be involved in a range of activities and initiatives. Further information regarding student leadership opportunities will be shared by the relevant Heads of Schools.

FINANCIAL LITERACY PROGRAMME

We will shortly be launching a new and exciting educational programme designed to ensure that our students develop financial literacy skills, and knowledge of investing from a young age. Designed to provide an age-appropriate understanding of financial investment, the unique pilot programme will be delivered initially in BSK and ISK and then rolled out across all schools in the academy. Further information will be provided to parents following half-term break.

CHROMEBOOK PROGRAMME

I am delighted to confirm that our student Chromebook programme is about to be rolled out for all academy students from Grade 2 through to Grade 8. This is a major project and is testament to the commitment of the academy and the Board to ensure we provide a future-ready learning experience for our students. We will be providing more than 1,500 Chromebook laptops after half term break and you will shortly receive information regarding the logistics of how this will work for you and your child. The use of mobile technology will make a positive difference to teaching and learning and will support the development of students' personal learning and higher order thinking skills, and will open up new avenues of learning while we ensure secure and safe use through our control of technology. Students will be able to take the chromebooks to and from school every day and this will enhance both home and school-based learning.

05 ISAMS PARENT PORTAL

We recently wrote to all parents who are yet to register for the iSams Parent Portal. I would like to remind all parents that it is very important that this is done, as all school reports are delivered to parents through this method. We ask that if you have not yet done this, that you follow the instruction that were sent out previously, to ensure you are registered in our system.

06 PARENT EXPERIENCE OF RAK ACADEMY

As an academy of schools we clearly understand that the experience of parents when interacting with our schools is of paramount importance. In support of this I have now established a wide-ranging committee from across the academy whose key focus will involve ensuring that parents are communicated with effectively and are able to access information with ease. We are concentrating on building systems that will support parents at every point in their journey with the academy from initial contact through to clarity of their child's learning journey through school. We will be seeking parental views on your current experiences and will be implementing change across all areas to ensure improved service levels. Elements related to this will include; the launch of a new, streamlined school website, implementation of improved end-to-end services for parents (including admissions, fees and the enrolment process), and clear and efficient lines of communication at all levels.

07 MAINTENANCE AND FACILITIES

As many parents will appreciate, we have encountered recent issues related to both air conditioning systems and general building maintenance. This has impacted the operation of some of our school sites and has caused some disruptions, which we have worked very hard to minimise. I am, therefore, pleased to inform you that that we are about to implement a new, comprehensive facilities maintenance contract. The maintenance contractor will provide a full review and refresh of all of our systems (plumbing, AC, electrical, buildings, etc.) with the development of fully-inventoried maintenance schedules, to ensure we do not face further issues and we can approach the future with confidence in our buildings, facilities and academy infrastructure.

I thank you all for your dedication and parental support in these unusual times and I know that as we navigate our way together through a challenging start to the academic year, the future certainly offers exciting opportunities for our whole academy.

Kind regards,

GRAHAM BEALE
EXECUTIVE PRINCIPAL

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