

Discussions from Y12 Coffee Morning 1st November 2017

TOPIC: What is demanded from Y12 students including their subjects / How to manage the strain of increased workload

- 1) Parents should have noticed the increased workload and if not, there is more to come. The most challenging time, especially for IB students, is after CNY. Parents need to know what the students are doing now and what to expect. Students place enormous pressure upon them – there is high expectation to achieve, and the students experience frustration when for example they don't score Level 7. But with the help of parents, students need to understand that reaching Level 7 is a process – they don't need to achieve it in beginning of the year, but when it matters at the end of the year.
- 2) Some of the projects students complete during this term will count. They cannot be reworked. Students need to understand & realize to always put in their best effort.
- 3) Parents should be aware of the pass / merit / distinction marking system. All students' work should be available to parents. Parents need to ask their child. And the child's response should tell you where your child is. If he/she cannot, then more discussions is needed, perhaps with form tutor.
- 4) Students need to follow IB guidelines for submitting work. They have to submit one draft and one final version. Parents cannot re-write the work for the student. Outside tutors cannot view the internal assessments. Subject specialists are always available to assist in this process.
- 5) Encourage children to talk about Theory of Knowledge for example at dinner table. Challenge their thinking. It helps in the presentations at the end of the year.
- 6) In CAS, Island School emphasizes deep involvement in a few projects rather than many. Parents should ask questions from their child about their CAS. It helps in understanding how involved, committed and passionate they are to the cause.
- 7) Predicted Grades is stressful for students. Past statistics have proved accurate. If there is discrepancy between statistics and predicted grades it is a good thing as it creates constructive dialogue.

TOPIC: Aspects of Pastoral System

Y12 should be the student's best year.

Most students are settled in subject choices. Any changes now involve change in level, for example from Standard Level to Higher Level Mathematics.

- 1) Parents should hear their child's pressure.
- 2) Students have multiple leadership opportunities: student prefects' roles, mentoring younger children, managing house sporting events etc.
- 3) School helps to manage students' enthusiasm. Students are willing to take on the projects and activities and approach pastoral program for advice. Students are guided throughout the process. This often ties in with their CAS.
- 3) As part of their Tutoring for Learning (TfL) program, students will be assigned a tutor or house leader for the university selection and application process after the Quest Week. Though students view them as reference writer, they stay with the student throughout the process. They will know students well, especially inside school, not necessarily outside. The onus is on the student to regularly meet their assigned tutor or house leader and keep them informed about events inside and outside of school.

In the end of June, parents are expected to attend a 30 minute TfL meeting to review and assess their child's performance. Tutors will also discuss future plans

with student, understand how parents think, their aspirations for their child, including hard truths. Targets and aims will also be set for example for improvement areas to work on in the summer holidays.

After summer, there will be a second TfL meeting without parents. Summer activities will be reviewed with the student and university preferences etc. will be discussed and students will be prepared to apply and write their personal assessments by themselves. Tutors will guide the student sometimes requiring the student to rewrite the personal assessment multiple times.

The final stage is the writing the reference letter. As tutors will know their student well, writing the reference letter will be easier.

4) It's an exciting year. It is essential that the child start to find balance between academics and everything else that is important. This is the year of most growth for the student. They will encounter students of equal or superior academic abilities. However, the intangible qualities like confidence and belief in themselves set Island School students apart. Parents are encouraged to ask questions, understand and appreciate their child's work and their other activities. It is a delicate balance but this is confidence building.

5) Students need sleep. Too much focus on academics or engaging in too many activities resulting in less sleep is not healthy. Parents need to explain the importance of rest, otherwise their child will not perform well and also will not enjoy the process during these 2 years.

TOPIC: Higher Education

During the 1st term students are left alone. However, they are encouraged to visit and window shop to help them decide which universities they are interested in. Students will attend a workshop called "Looking in the Mirror" which is a reflective exercise about their activities, the experiences they had etc. This should help them look forward to what they want from higher education.

In Term 2 & 3 Higher education's activities increase.

January 9th there is a University Workshops for Y12 Students only on researching destinations along with parallel workshops and separate sessions for different destinations, for example Canada, U.K., USA, Australia including very select universities and Oxford/Cambridge applications. We need students to think about this well in advance and have them factor this into their research.

January 29th there is ESF Education Fair at KGV at 3pm. 160 universities from different countries participate. It is good for comparison research and parents are invited to attend. It is useful if questions are prepared in advance, so parents and their child can then divide and conquer to visit as many universities as possible. The questions can reflect both parents & their child's thoughts and be answered efficiently to the satisfaction of both.

After the ESF Education Fair, higher education interviews with students start. Workshops about the application process will also be conducted. Students are encouraged to think of the application as a whole. This means concurrently arranging for reference letters as well as preparing university applications etc. Also every Friday after school there will be workshops about specific topics such as reference letters requirements for different countries, visits to the local universities etc.

Parents are also invited to Parents Higher Education Coffee Mornings on March 2nd & May 3rd at new campus. It is an informal event with no agenda or no topic focus. They are question and answer sessions.

The final event for the year is Y12 Parents Evening for Higher Education. Topics include higher education policy, application process etc. This prepares students for the many things to happen in relation to their higher education in Y13. They will occur very fast, one after the other, so this should help students handle it better.

Young people do not use Higher Education and Pastoral Services enough. Parents are also encouraged to approach both services for the benefit of all.

TOPIC: Stress Management and Mental Health

- 1) Help student learn to distress–freshen the mind. It is important that parents are involved. For example go for a 20 minute run.
- 2) Encourage good sleeping habits
- 3) Need to connect with an adult, not a friend, to safeguard mental health. Be aware who your child's friends are if problems arise.

TOPIC: How to Let Children Take Control of Life Beyond School.

Students were consulted and discussions with them held. Students identified the following:

- 1) They need to have good health habits to function, for example good sleeping habits, healthy eating etc.
- 2) Balance i.e. learning to prioritize. Parents can help to talk them through this process.
- 3) Good organization including needing to learn how to take ownership
- 4) Constant communication. Encourage child to inform about problems ASAP rather than very late which results to a communications breakdown. Keep communication lines open with your child so that problems can be solved.

WRAP UP:

Send in questions to Island School at any time – communicate, don't hesitate.