



# DBSEH

HALF-TERMLY JOURNAL

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# MESSAGE FROM THE PRINCIPAL

Welcome to Issue 3 of the *Half-Termly Journal*.

In this issue we'd like to take a moment to introduce a few of our staff members who perfectly exemplify some of our strategic priorities (Community and Wellbeing) and are crucial contributors to the outstanding provision found at DBS Emirates Hills.

Additionally, also along the staff theme, we're lifting the bonnet on the school's engine and giving you some insight into how we work with our staff to ensure the best by the students - go to our Student Agency section to find out more.

With such lovely weather upon us you'll also have a chance to find out more about what we've been getting up to beyond the campus, both from an Inclusion and Opportunities perspective.

As always, we're simply giving a glimpse of life in school - there's so much more going on than what we showcase in this publication, which we share via our social media channels, listed below.

Happy reading!



Sarah Reynolds  
Principal



@dubaibritishsch



Dubai British School



@dubaibritishEH

# WELLBEING

*"Facilitating personal, social and emotional growth is essential to secure academic development of students; if students do not feel emotionally secure they cannot thrive."*



# WELLBEING

This half term we shine the wellbeing spotlight on two of our most valuable specialist resources; our counselling team. As Counsellor and Assistant Counsellor, Gail Gallagher and Aliyah Marshall offer expertise, both preventative and in response to need, from whole school to individual level.



Gail Gallagher



Aliyah Marshall

Benefitting students, staff and parents, the team's professional, trusted and nurturing approach advocates, champions and supports wellbeing and positive mental health for all. The comprehensive support has multiple facets; some support is 'universal' and offered to all via whole school events, workshops, assemblies and planned initiatives. This includes top tips for mindfulness, co-regulation strategies, emotional literacy, developing a growth mindset, ways to develop resilience and ways to manage anxiety. Much of this support is preventative in design, is woven into the curriculum and is therefore responsive and adapted to a cohort's needs.

The team also tailor and target support to meet the needs of small groups of students. This support usually focuses on the development of important social skills that can be used to develop lasting problem-solving strategies, emotional regulation strategies and resolve friendship issues.



# WELLBEING

For students who may be experiencing personal difficulties, the team offer individual counselling sessions and confidential support with general coping strategies around school and home issues relating to change and transition, academic stress, setting and achieving goals, developing self-esteem, peer relationships and social skills; as well as grief and loss, mood disorders and trauma and crisis intervention.

As we all know, being away from our home countries and families can prove challenging at times and so our staff also benefit from the support that Gail and Aliyah offer, to ensure that they are still able to bring their best selves to the classroom.

Parent support comes through the 'Let's Talk' coffee morning series, the most recent of which focused on *Managing Anxiety and Stress*.



Our counselling team are a significant asset to the school's outstanding holistic provision. With the rich range of expertise they utilise to benefit students, parents and staff they are crucial in supporting the schools mission to ensure that every child can *Enjoy, Aspire and Achieve*.

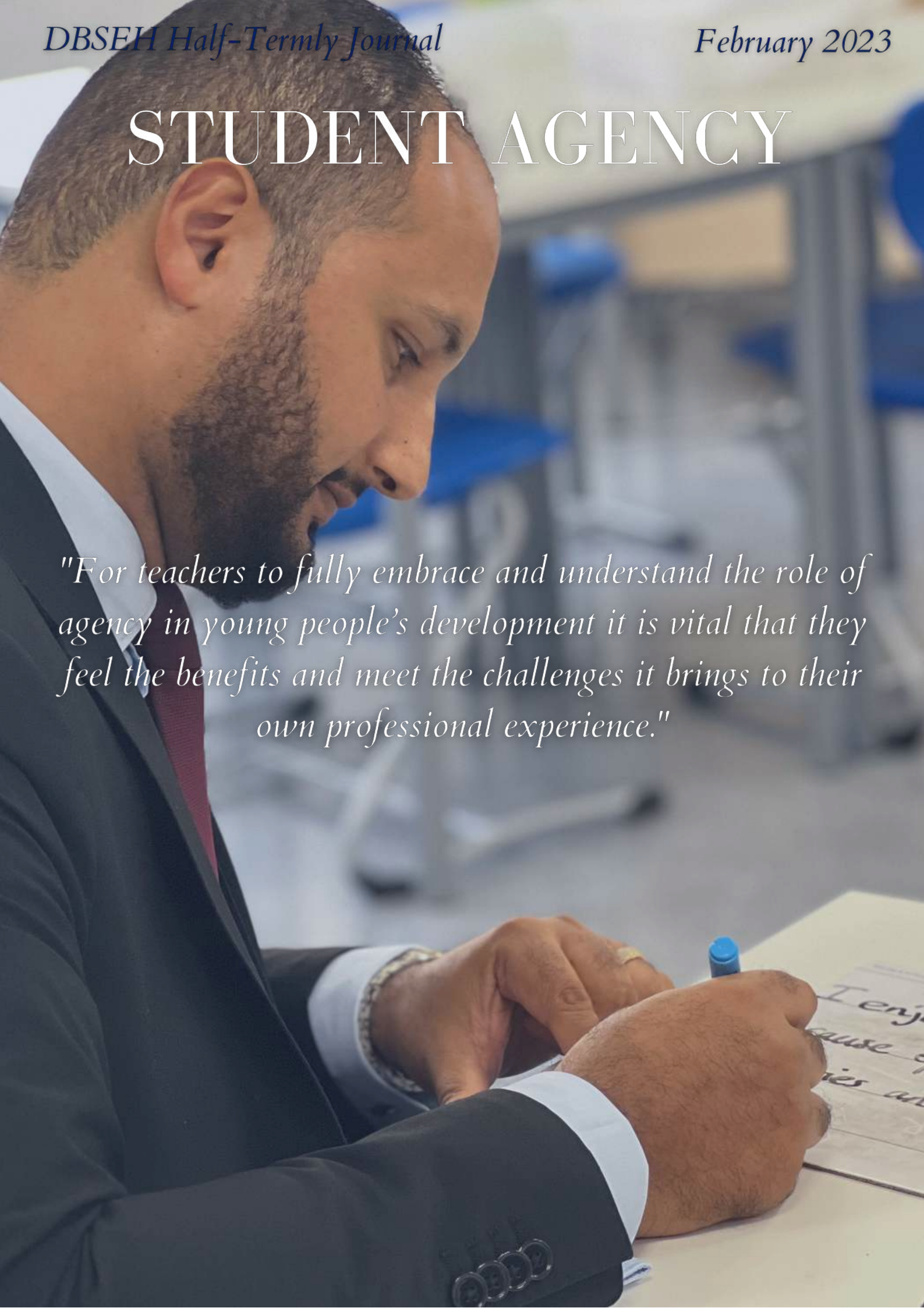


Georgia Lavery  
Head of Primary

*Our team are receptive to planning talks that meet the needs of our community therefore if you have specific requests for topics you would like to see covered, please let them know. They are also available to meet with parents (by appointment) to discuss any social/emotional concerns.*

# STUDENT AGENCY

*"For teachers to fully embrace and understand the role of agency in young people's development it is vital that they feel the benefits and meet the challenges it brings to their own professional experience."*



# STUDENT AGENCY

For decades conventional professional development models in British education settings have focussed largely on a top-down, one-size-fits-all approach which subjects teachers en masse to instructional 'training' imparted by their leaders irrespective of their individual contexts.

Whilst paradigm shifts are slow in most professions, they are particularly ponderous in education where there is a tendency for schools to cling to the status quo for fear of disruption amid the annual cycle of examination results and inspection. However, an evolution that has gained momentum in recent years is the recognition that the continued progress of high-performing schools is dependent upon teachers driving their own professional learning in a manner bespoke to their and their students' particular strengths, needs and priorities.



In this vein, our teachers have recently been considering their own specific areas of focus as part of their professional learning and growth. Our primary teachers, for instance, have been engaging in peer observation and providing formative feedback which allows further refinement of their practice towards objectives related to student achievement, engagement and experience.

In addition, they have been collaborating on key areas of strategic planning linked to curriculum design, the use of educational technology to redefine learning opportunities and relational behaviour approaches to ensure our next steps at a whole-school level are the product of full consultation and due consideration of best practice research.

# STUDENT AGENCY



In the secondary school a team of teachers with specific pedagogical interests have led their colleagues' learning in five key areas:

- Metacognition – encouraging students to understand their own thinking processes
- Effective questioning to stimulate deeper thinking
- Giving effective feedback for improvement
- Leading student agency to develop independence, engagement and critical thinking
- Using writing as a structure for thinking across the curriculum

These learning experiences have served as an initial stimulus for teachers to embark upon action research projects in which they will now explore new teaching techniques and carefully monitor their impact before sharing with colleagues for further consideration.

This is the beginning of an approach to professional learning at DBSEH designed to ensure that not only does our collective professional practice continue to improve, but it does so in a way that promotes effective distributed leadership practices and leads to innovation that allows DBSEH to operate at a truly world-class standard.



David Potts  
Head of Secondary



# OPPORTUNITY



# OPPORTUNITY

Taking learning beyond the confines of the school campus, and the school day, is vital to provide students with real-world opportunities to put their tenacity to the test. Residential excursions are introduced to students at DBS Emirates Hills in Year 4, and from there until Year 13 students have the chance to apply a range of real-world life skills in a series of increasingly challenging settings.



Our Year 5 students recently spent a fantastic few days in Hatta, taking part in a variety of fun and challenging activities that included climbing, archery, survival skills and buggy building. For many, this was the first time away from home on their own, and they had a great time courageously developing their collaboration, communication and creative skills.

Being away with classmates and teachers in a new and exciting setting provides students with the chance to form stronger bonds that benefit them on their return to the classroom. The trip provided an excellent balance of education and recreation, and the Year 5 children came away with new memories and experiences that will last a lifetime.



# OPPORTUNITY



Further up the school, the Duke of Edinburgh Award practice expeditions to Fossil Rock were a success for both the Bronze and Silver award participants. The group, consisting of students ranging from Year 9 to 12, set out to support the process of achieving this prestigious award. Taking place over the course of three days and two nights, the students had the opportunity to develop their organisational, leadership, teamwork, and survival skills.



The students started the journey by hiking around Fossil Rock before setting up camp for the first night. The end of the trek was not the end of their challenge however, with students having to pitch their tents and cook dinner before being able to wind down around the campfire. The second day was the most challenging in terms of terrain, with a painfully long, straight route following a fire road up and over the sand dunes. We said goodbye to the bronze award students at the end of day two, and the silver students enjoyed a picture-perfect camp in the dunes and a hike along a wadi on day three.

With distances travelled on foot of up to 45km over the course of the weekend, our students proved that they have what it takes to succeed in the Duke of Edinburgh Award program. They demonstrated resilience, determination, and a strong work ethic, which will serve them well in their future endeavors.



Ben Crowder  
Assistant Headteacher

# OPPORTUNITY



# INCLUSION

It has been an action-packed half term in Inclusion with lots of fabulous learning experiences taking place outside of the classroom and school.

Student Agency continues to be at the forefront of our approach, with our ASDAN students leading their next enterprise initiative, focusing on sustainability and marketing. The beautifully recycled heart shaped crayons and cards were a roaring success, selling out quickly meaning many lucky recipients will feel that extra bit special this upcoming Valentine's Day.



Taking our learning experiences outside the classroom, we experienced an educational day learning all about Emirati culture. Linking up with other schools within Dubai, we headed off to the Heritage Express to uncover all about the amazing country in which we live. From food tasting to learning about the traditional cultural dress, it was an action-packed morning of hands-on discovery.



# INCLUSION

The Unified Games was next on our agenda. Hosted by DBS Jumeirah Park, we limbered up to participate in a range of organised sporting events competing against other students from schools across the emirate.

It was a great morning of healthy competition, laughter, collaboration and making new memories, as well as the opportunity to discover new talents that we possess in the sporting field.



Finishing off our hectic half term, our Year 7 students headed off to Khorfakkan for their residential trip. Three fun-filled days of activities and team building was a great way to round off this half term with us all ready to recharge our batteries during our week off.



Jacqueline Baxter  
Head of Inclusion



# COMMUNITY

If you were to ask members of the DBSEH community to describe Mr Zulfiqar Ali, they may look at you with a confused look upon their face. But ask them about our one and the same 'Mr Z' and their faces would light up and words like steadfast, industrious, diligent and kind-hearted would be showered upon him.

It is likely that you have seen Mr Z's kind and friendly face around school as he earnestly goes about his work in providing the safest, most welcoming learning environment for our children. Whether it be hanging flags for National Day or decking the school with lights for Diwali he is the man responsible for many aspects of school life that seemingly go on 'behind the scenes' but Mr Z very much deserves to be centre-stage for the work he does for our children.

We recently celebrated 10 years of Mr Z being a member of the Taaleem family and as we spoke to people who were eager to wish him well on this achievement, we discovered more and more of his underlying talents. A very skilled carpenter, Mr Z is also a talented tailor and as well as utilising these skills to build princess carriages and games for school events, he can also be found supporting the children at sewing ECA.



# COMMUNITY

Mrs Ragei who relishes in having opportunities to work alongside Mr Z had this to say about him: "Mr. Zee continuously exceeds every expectation. His dedication to whatever he does is phenomenal. He is a great support to all staff members and students. Mr. Z inspires me. DBSEH is so lucky to have you."

Year 5 students James and Jackson wanted to Mr Z to know: "Mr Z has been helping us with sewing and we would not be as good without him. He is a huge help and is kind to everyone. He is very patient and honest which has helped us to progress and understand our mistakes. Thank you for everything you do!"

It comes as little surprise then that the PTA presented Mr Z with the 'Above and Beyond Award' earlier this term. A pillar of our community, he is an asset to our school, so if you do see him around please share a smile or some words of thanks with him.



Lisa Smith  
Deputy Head of Primary



# EXCELLENCE

The notion of excellence is so often associated with exceptional outcomes. We are proud to share our incredible academic outcomes with you under this strategic objective, but when you consider the international context in which we find ourselves we'd like to expand this lens and think about what excellence looks like in broader terms.



Over the past 3 years, DBS Emirates Hills as partnered with PICO Kids, an Israeli initiative that seeks to provide quality educational experiences to its students by placing them in an outstanding international setting and providing a rich programme that benefits both the visiting and resident students concurrently.

Interested students are selected from Year 8 and 9 from DBSEH to embark upon a 3-day challenge with their Israeli peers. The students, under the watchful eye of Mrs Fisher, are teamed up to collaborate on a project that tackles the issues of water scarcity. They are given two days to design a prototype solution and then head to Dubai Future Foundations to present their projects in a beautiful environment to members of the Israeli Consulate, Israeli Diplomats and Elie Wurtman, the founder of PICO Kids.



# EXCELLENCE

The start of the collaboration sees students break the ice with traditional Israeli games, as well as presenting to each other about themselves. This, along with the high-profile presentation at the end of the project serves as an incredible opportunity for our students to develop high quality and effective communication skills; students' creativity and collaborative skills are honed and refined as they work together to generate solutions to real-life, globally relevant challenges, and problem-solve their way through the design phase.

Providing these opportunities for students to forge new and productive relationships beyond the school walls, and respond to authentic challenges in high-stakes settings is one thing, but witnessing our students meeting such incredibly high expectations is another. The PICO Kids initiative is just one way that Excellence is illustrated as we equip students with the skills they need to thrive in their adult lives.



PICO kids 2021/22



Sarah Reynolds  
Principal





GCSE Blood Brothers Masterclass



ASDAN Heritage Express Tour



Year 4 Plastic Pollution Artwork



House Sing-Off Competition



Mr Z during sewing ECA



Chinese New Year Parade



Primary Arabic Spelling Bee



Emerson and Treadm Visit to DBSEH



Unified Games



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