



"He who learns but does not think, is lost! He who thinks but does not learn is in great danger."

Confucius



Dear CHSMC Community,

We do hope that you have had a wonderful Christmas and a great start to 2014.

This update and the attached newsletters, will give you glimpses of the highlights of Autumn Term and the forthcoming events for the Spring Term of our current scholastic year 13/14.

A FOCUS ON LEARNING

LEARNING TO LIVE AS A COMMUNITY

First Things First – Safety First!

At CHS throughout the Autumn Term you would have noticed that we have increased the number of Traffic and Transport attendants to ensure safety for all during drop-off and collection times. We would like to thank all staff and parents for their full co-operation. We are delighted that it has become so much safer for our children, parents, staff and the public. We therefore appeal to everyone to continue abiding by our regulations and procedures to ensure that we are all safe at all times. Please remember to respect neighbours' spaces, speed limits and whenever you are close to the school, drive with great caution. Thank you.

At SMC traffic arrangements ensure that we get very little congestion at drop-off time, however, going-home time still necessitates more attention. Parents are reminded about the importance of parking properly and allowing the free-flow of traffic. Our neighbours have complained very openly about the blocked roads. We trust that you will assist us to keep the school vicinity safe and clear of congestion. Thank you.

FINDING OUT MORE ABOUT LEARNING Assessment

We are sure that you are well aware of the fact that teachers at CHSMC have been observing, correcting school/home work and recording our learners' progress and achievements.

At CHSMC all learners at all levels are continuously being monitored and assessed and parents will receive Assessment For Learning (AfL) reports in February/March. Level 4 and Level 5 learners at CHS will this year receive the AfL report during the third week in January in-time for exam preparation. We are piloting this new procedure in order to bring to light to learners and their parents exactly how well learning is taking place in all aspects of the curriculum. This very detailed feedback is an integral part of Assessment for Learning and crucial for deep and profound learning to set in. It is also one step closer towards Individualised Learning Programmes for every child, this being one of our educational targets of our SDP for 13/14 and 14/15.

Assessments of Learning (Test and Exam results) will follow or accompany AfL reports and parents are encouraged to give us feedback during Parents' Days.

In mid-January I will be calling a Parents' Meeting. I have entitled it: Demystifying Assessment. The aim is to give a comprehensive run-through of our CHSMC Assessment procedures. The detailed explanation will explore the what, how, when and why...assessments take place and how we have retained some rigorous testing and adapted other procedures to come in line with modern learning practices. I look forward to meeting you, answering your questions and discussing suggestions.

Please remember that January also hosts Mr Kevin Gatt's presentation. Over the past ten years, Mr Gatt has benchmarked SMC Results against National Results. SMC Results for 12/13 for Level 6 (Benchmark), Level 11 (SEC) and Level 13 (MATSEC) will all be discussed and analyzed. Parents are most welcome.

LEARNING AT SIXTH FORM

With a record population of over 112 students at Sixth Form, over 46% of our SF students are SMC students and 54% hail from other Independent, Church and International Schools. As we approach our second phase, please look out for some administrative and structural changes. The new laboratory has ushered in many Science students from all levels and our specialised practical sessions have attracted Sixth Form students from many other institutions. Please look out for more specialised courses which are being planned by the Sixth Form Team. Registrations for 14/15 are now open and we take this opportunity to invite our Level 11 students and parents to become acquainted with the special arrangements for SMC students wishing to attend St Martin's College Sixth Form. We shall be organising a special information meeting for Level 11 students. The meeting will be organised and run by Level 12 and Level 13 students who will share real-life experiences at College and they will happily answer any questions. Mr Pace, Lecturers, tutors and I will also be in attendance.



LEARNING SPACES AT BUMBLE BEE LEVEL

Ms Dorothy's Bumble Bees have moved into the newly refurbished class and the new play area which adjoins it. The outdoor area is fully decked-out with the highest standard of playground surfaces and equipment. This learning space also has its own toilet facilities.

We are also delighted to inform you that we have started our fourth Bumble Bee class. Ms Dorianne has taken the new class. 15 new Bumble Bees started on Monday 6th January. They have joined various classes. Welcome!

CHSMC PROFESSIONAL LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

We have continued with various Professional Learning opportunities for our staff. Our initial programme in September for teachers was a resounding success. Encouraged by Prof Louise Stoll and Mr Richard Townsend, the Learning Market Place saw over 13 teachers sharing their best practices with their CHSMC colleagues. This was again organised in November where another 12 teachers from CHS and 12 teachers from SMC gave of their best and these wonderful professional experiences and conversations spurred on peer-reviewed and peer-observed sessions.

Research shows that these fantastic opportunities are very impactful and in fact, SMC teachers have taken the plunge and have organised peer-observation sessions throughout the Autumn Term. Students could view, at first-hand, how open their teachers are to learning and how a learning climate inspires team-work and team-learning. Lifelong education par excellence! Our Administrative and Finance Teams have also been busy learning. During various sessions new skills were learnt and others further developed. LSAs were also given the opportunity to meet up as a CHSMC Team to work on common interests and improve transitions for learners with difficulties.



LEARNING WITH PARENTS Parent Capital

In-keeping with our SDP Targets, the Parent Capital project will commence this term just after Mid-Yearly Examinations. Ms Maria Buttigieg will initiate the project by inviting Parents to contribute 2 hours in the year to developing/assisting CHSMC in one way or another. Please look out for Ms Maria's e-mail via MYSCHOOL. We thank you in advance for your enthusiasm and support.

TECHNOLOGY-ASSISTED LEARNING

Now that all classrooms and most activity rooms at CHS have had interactive whiteboards installed, teachers and other staff members have also taken part in further training and support exercises. Most of the training was carried out by external experts however the very valuable on-going support at CHS has come from Ms Margaret and Mr Mark whilst at SMC Mr David and Mr Tonio have supported the whole initiative. Over 29 laptops have been given to teachers and staff at CHSMC. At SMC another 10 interactive whiteboards, as well as another 5 at CHS, have been installed and decisions are being taken to distribute tablets in the higher Senior levels and Sixth Form. Most of the new technology has been bought by the Government *Per Capita* Grant.

LEARNING MORE ABOUT LITERACY

Ms Becky Debattista, Middle Leader responsible for promoting Literacy, has devised a support programme for readers in Levels 1 and 2 who need special attention. Ms Becky joins all classes in Level 1 and 2, assigns special tasks to the small groups needing attention and supports and takes these groups to spur on their interest in print. Ms Rebecca also leads special reading/poetry sessions in classes in order to support teachers during literacy activities. This boost in the Early Years classes ensures that all of our learners are well on the way to becoming excellent readers with a love for language and expression. Ms Anita and Ms Audrey, also in consultation with Ms Cynthia and Ms Becky, have been working steadily on a robust Literacy Programme throughout CHS. It is our very firm belief that if we manage to get all our learners literate and fluent in English and Maltese (for those who take Maltese) by the age of 7, and with that inculcate the love of languages, then the children's learning trajectories will be magical!



GIFTED LEARNERS - RE-STARTING BUZZ GROUPS

In early March, Buzz Groups will re-start at Levels 2, 3, 4 and 5. Last year's pilot scheme outlined the necessity to devise a framework for improving the level of challenge and pupil interaction with very gifted children. However, we want this to happen within all classrooms and with all pupils, therefore this year's programme will run differently, although it will still ensure that our most gifted pupils will be directly involved in designing the sessions to offer choice, agency, collaboration and reflection. More details to follow once we have mapped it out for the different levels. Ms Fay will continue to lead these sessions.

MORE LEARNING AREAS AND OPPORTUNITIES

We are pleased to note that the new VEE (Virtue and Ethics Education) Programme at CHSMC has been implemented and we shall be asking learners, teachers and parents for their initial feedback on the programme in the coming months. The International Programme has also got off to a good start and we shall also be asking you for your feedback to ensure that we keep standards and effectiveness at their best. The same goes with the School of Excellence and the Enrichment Programmes. All our extracurricular programmes (please see the extensive list on our website) are offering wonderful opportunities and we thank parents and learners for subscribing to them and thank our teams for putting them together with such enthusiasm and dedication.

We take this opportunity to thank you for your constant support and commit with energy and enthusiasm to making Spring Term a gratifying one!

Best Regards,
Ms Bernie
On behalf of the CHSMC community