



Carmel School
Annual Report
 2019-20 / 5780

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Mission Statement

Carmel School Association is a Jewish International School committed to academic excellence through fostering intellectual curiosity, self-directed learning and the individual development of each child. Carmel is committed to teaching students about, and fostering a love for, Jewish values and traditions, and the Land and State of Israel, its language and culture.

Our personalised approach, with emphasis on growing caring, compassionate, global citizens, produces students who are independent thinkers and communicators and who will become leaders and contribute to the Jewish and wider world.

Excellence, Community, Tradition

Board Chair's Report

Dear Carmel Community,

The world is changing at an accelerated rate. We are living in a period of transformation where, if in the past internet and emails changed the way we communicate and Facebook, Instagram and Snapchat changed the way we socially connect, Covid-19 has shuffled all the cards and changed everything, from the way we dress, to the way we interact and communicate.

The education world and Carmel School were not an exception and education transformed accordingly. This change was not easy and required a steep learning curve. Through this time Carmel School demonstrated creativity, flexibility, fast adaptation and resilience coping with the situation and providing our children the best education possible under these challenging circumstances. Carmel School was one of the few schools to adopt high level online learning at a very early stage, providing online educational content to students of all ages. It has been flexible enough to continually adapt and improve the educational services it provided throughout the year. Peter Drucker once said "the greatest danger in times of turbulence is not the turbulence – it is to act with yesterday's logic". Carmel is using tomorrow's logic.

We are still faced with a rapidly evolving situation but we should not underestimate the advantages our children have in Carmel School. We see all the stakeholders pulling in the same direction and willing our children to perform to the best of their abilities in becoming lifelong learners. Your participation in promoting and supporting the School is valuable and will help us achieve this important goal.

Lastly, I would like to thank the School Board, Faculty, Administration and PTA for their efforts and support throughout this difficult and unprecedented period. I am looking forward seeing you in the coming year and pray to the Almighty that it will be a healthy and successful year for all. Keep safe and see you next year.

Sincerely,



Shay Razon

Board Chairman



Principal's Report

Dear Carmel Families and Stakeholders,

This year has been unique in its challenges and perhaps surprisingly, in its opportunities. Throughout the trials, tribulations and suffering experienced here in Hong Kong and across the globe, the Carmel School family has been able to draw hope and inspiration from our Jewish heritage and our Jewish texts: from the weekly parasha where again and again the relevance to our situation and the lessons have been so clear; from the writings of learned scholars past and present. Rooted in our Jewish philosophy, each situation presents opportunities for positivity and growth.

Carmel School proved to be at the forefront of successful and innovative online learning, with Judaism at its heart: our webinars were requested and viewed by school leaders and teachers from around the world; our heads and teachers' video chats and presentations brought the human element back into our lives; and our assemblies and special celebrations, incorporating student participation, had enormous reach.

Elsa High School adopted and sustained the synchronous learning model trialed during the November class suspensions and at Carmel Elementary parents supported the implementation of the blended eLearning model. The Holly Rofé Centre staff faced and met the biggest challenge of children too young for independent learning and virtual interaction. We all adapted to a completely new teaching paradigm, acquiring new strategies, extending innovative delivery across the campuses, such as virtual one-to-one and group sessions for our youngest learners. Academic rigour was supported by a focus on physical and emotional wellbeing – ranging from the Elsa virtual Purim spiel to the Pre-K Graduation with impactful teacher visits to each child's home, and the G4-12 student and teacher Carmel Virtual Sports Day. We were fortunate to be able to hold the Elsa High School Graduation live, albeit limited to graduates and their parents. It proved to be memorable and inspirational – so well deserved by the Class of 2020 who have had such a difficult year. Our greatest inspiration has been our students who adapted to eLearning from home and are now readapting to live learning in School – with the added challenges of social distancing.

My personal heroes in this extraordinary year are our Community and School leaders. I thank you all: the Ohel Leah Synagogue Trustees, the Carmel School Board under the dedicated strategic leadership of Mr. Shay Razon, our talented COO Ms Anna Wong and her administrative team, our tireless and supportive Head of Elementary Mrs Mira Hasofer, Ms Annabel Baillie and Mrs Hagit Razon who faced all challenges with good humour and professionalism, and our ever-active PTA. The Carmel School faculty have been truly outstanding – dedicated, inspired and inspirational. It is a privilege to lead such a unique school. Never have the words of the Carmel School motto rung so true:

ראשית חכמה קנה חכמה ובכל קנייך קנה בינה.

"The seeds of knowledge are in learning; and in all your learning, strive for understanding."

Proverbs 4:7

Wishing all our families, stakeholders and supporters a healthy, happy and prosperous 2020-21/5781 school year ahead.

Yours,



Rachel Friedmann

Carmel School Association Principal

Elsa High School Student Reflections

"Elsa is extremely diverse and international, and yet, it maintains a strong Jewish identity. The Jewish experience at Elsa is nothing short of inspirational." Ori Razon (Grade 11)

"Online school was a great learning experience. It not only taught me how to separate work and relaxation but how to make the most of every minute." Ativa Goldberg (Grade 10)

"Going to Poland was an unforgettable experience that was able to bring everyone together and be grateful for what we have" Elianna Diestel (Grade 11)

"Elsa is a diverse community where secular and Jewish life intersect. From the mezuzah on every door frame to the Jewish holidays we celebrate, Elsa observes the traditions of our Jewish heritage but at the same time also accepts the different qualities of our international students and the values of Hong Kong." Tahlia Goldberg (Grade 9)

"E-learning permitted me to be more flexible in future situations like this and I much enjoy that. I also really enjoyed seeing my friends again after E-learning" Ezra Cohen (Grade 6)

"My first year at Elsa has been full of many challenges such as E-learning, but also many victories such as finishing exams this term, despite having a more difficult term of learning." Harry Golovsky (Grade 6)

"The Intern Program at Elsa gave us the opportunity to solve a real life scenario as a group. This experience has been very valuable to me as I can apply the skills that I have learnt at school, while also learning to solve problems and challenges along the way." Joshua Jay (Grade 10)

"The Personal Project has shown me that it is possible to learn a new skill in an environment that isn't a classroom" Dan Hasofer (Grade 10)

"Sports in Elsa are competitive but friendly. I love it because we get to know each other better through the different sports we play." Reut Shahr Charnuha (Grade 8)

"Since online school has ended, we've been having wellness programs every Monday at 2:30. I've particularly enjoyed these programs because it gives me time to relax and reflect after a long day at school." Natalie Kleinberg (Grade 9)

"Robotics at Elsa is great! I have learnt not only engineering and coding skills but also leadership skills." Nicolas Kai Chun Fung (Grade 10)

Head of Elementary Report

Dear Carmel Families,

This year has affirmed the importance and significance of family. Family is a powerful defence against adversity. Family empowers us to work together, to stay together, to focus on a common goal and to appreciate that there is strength in numbers.

As communities around the world battled with COVID-19 and global unrest, our Carmel School Family took these challenges in stride, remaining focused on moving forward. Our faculty took seriously its duty to educate and enrich the lives of every Carmel student. Our teachers did not falter for even a moment, finding in the depths of uncertainty, the strength to support every child. Our students were our heroes, advancing their learning while showing maturity and courage well beyond their years. We continued to achieve the highest standards in all academic areas. We pursued new benchmarks for excellence in language acquisition and in the Arts. We continued to celebrate Jewish milestones and holy days.

At a recent event, I shared that I look back on this year with no regrets. It allowed me to view our achievements and our successes through a new lens - at Carmel we develop resilient, balanced children who are able to think for themselves, to critically analyse information and to speak with confidence from a base of knowledge. Knowledge in today's new world is currency. The ability to apply knowledge is power. When framed in the teaching of age-old Jewish values and traditions, the result is a foundation for a strong future.

On Friday nights, families sing songs of praise, saying that 'Strength and dignity are her clothing; and she smiles at the time to come'. Our blessing is that all our families shall smile in future when looking back at these extraordinary times. May we all, with Hashem's help, go from strength to strength.

Mira Hasofer

Head of Elementary



Grade 4 students presented a collection of poems that they had written. Their poems were called "Where I'm From".

*I am from 'you can do it'
and I am bulletproof (Eva Cohen)*

*I am from a person who loves words
I am from my family house (Lea Rebibo)*

*I am from it will get better
and equality for all (Mia Gefen)*

*I am from friends and happiness
I am from games and playing and I'm proud
(Nathan Weiss)*

*I'm from calmness and fun
I am from goodnight and Shema (Aviram Shemesh)*

*I am from Hebrew, Jewish Studies and Covid 19
I am from all these things (Eden Hazut)*

*I am from masks
and there is no stopping me now (Shahar Ohayon)*

*I'm from It's too hard
And this too shall pass (Atara Hasofer)*

*Even as this year slows to a close,
We are from all these memories we've shared,
From leaving things better than they were found,
Growing tall and moving on! (Grade 4 jointly)*



Financial Report

Instability from the effects of the international trade war, civil unrest and then the global pandemic, have given us an unprecedented challenge over the past school year. These factors have contributed to an uncertain economic landscape for many families. Carmel School has done its best to provide support measures for its students and teachers in lockdown, striving to meet the needs of its community while remaining steadfast in its mission to provide a quality education.

Carmel School's enrollment figures were directly impacted this year, severely limiting its financial flexibility. Our current enrollment sits 12% below last year, resulting in a sizable projected deficit. While we remain optimistic in the long term, we are making preparations for a period of possible continued contraction in the short to medium term.

Cost cutting measures have been made across the school wherever possible and going forward we have scaled back budgets based on enrollment trend models. The School administration, led by our COO Ms. Anna Wong, have made tough choices in staffing and capital expenditure and

there remains hard work to be done in order to balance our financial liabilities. As the world adapts to the new normal, we are secure in the knowledge that we can scale up to meet demand and future challenges.

We have been fortunate in having the support of the Ohel Leah Synagogue Trust and they have been generous in providing emergency funding of up to half of our current annual deficit. We have also applied to the Government to take advantage of the support measures they are offering.

Finally, we commend Mrs. Tara Diestel for admirably steering the Development Committee. Annual fundraising has also felt the impact from the year's slowdown, receiving lower participation (2.1m vs 2.5m) but we are optimistic that Carmel School, along with Hong Kong and the rest of the World, will return to full health soon.

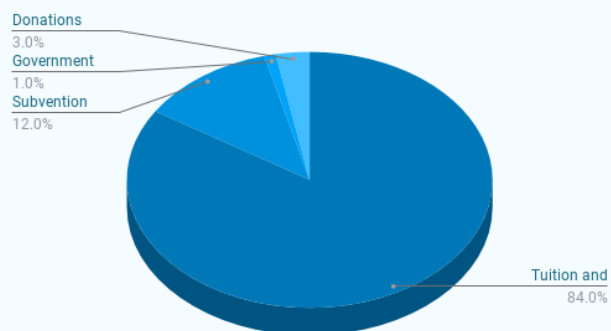
Wishing you all a safe and healthy summer.

Russell Davidson

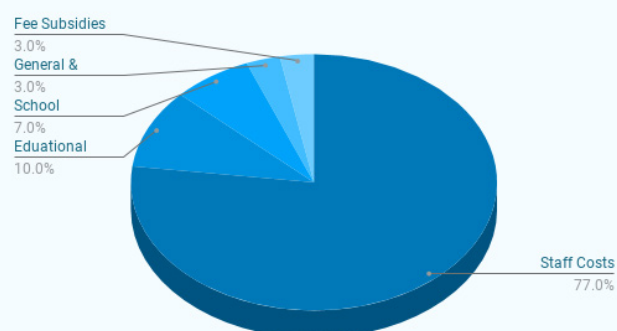
Board Honorary Treasurer



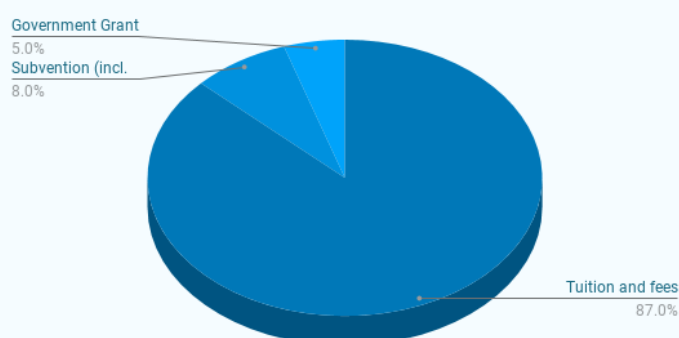
Income (Forecast 2019-20)



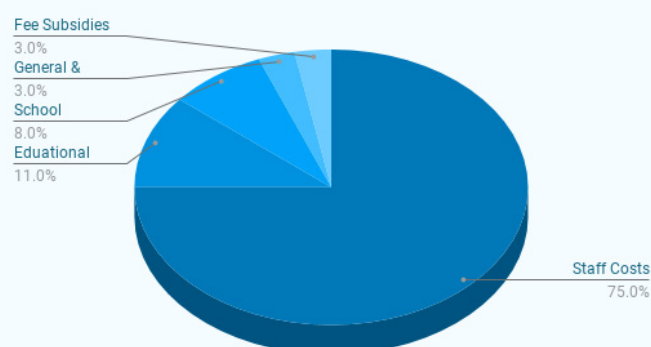
Expenditure (Forecast 2019-20)



Income (Actual 2018-19)



Expenditure (Actual 2018-19)



Financial Highlights

	Actual 2018-19	Forecast 2019-20	Variance (%)
Total Enrollment	422 students	368 students	-12.6
Teacher:Student Ratio	1:5	1:5	
	HK\$m	HK\$m	
Total Revenue (Excluding Subvention and Fundraising)	72.5	67.6	-6.8
Total Expenses (Including Capex)	81.3	84.1	3.4
Regular OLS Trust Subvention	6.6	6.6	-
Emergency OLS Trust Subvention		3.4	
Government Grant		0.9	
Breakdown for Fund Raising (Actual Received)			
Annual Fund - Received (Including balance raised via US & UK Friends)	2.2	2.0	
Purim Basket Program	0.3	0.1	
Other Donations	-	-	
Total Fundraising	2.5	2.1	-16.0
Net Surplus / Deficit	0.3	-3.5	

(1) 2017-18 Extracts from the Audited Accounts for the year ended 31 July 2019

(2) 2018-19 Extracts from Full Year Forecast as of 31 May 2020

Development Report

2019-2020 annual school year has proved to be the toughest since Carmel School's inception 28 years ago. Very mindful of the difficulties all of us faced, the Development Committee worked under the radar to secure much-needed funds. The Quiz Night this year was a huge success thanks to Alan and Karen Landau along with all those who participated. Purim baskets took its cue from the Corona situation and went "virtual". This was a huge success, whilst being environmentally friendly.

Unfortunately this year we saw the loss of one of our original Board members, Peter Kaminsky ob"m. To honor his memory, his family started the Peter Kaminsky Fund which will enhance the lives of children at Carmel School. Throughout the struggles of this year, we would like to thank the parent body, stakeholders and all community members who have supported Carmel School in whatever way they could.

Tara Diestel
Development Committee

PTA Report

The PTA supported many events and initiatives throughout the year. Whether for fundraising or community 'friend-raising', the PTA plays significant role in the School's activities.

PTA Events

Whole School Events

Welcome Breakfast
New Parents Buddy System and gifts
Quiz Night Fund-raiser
Purim Basket Committee
Teacher's Appreciation Dinner and gifts
PTA AGM

BRC/JCC Campuses

Picnics, BBQ, Shabbat Dinners By Class Parents
Tuck Shops throughout the year
Book Café

Elsa High School Campus

Elsa Parent Social
Careers Fair
PTA Lunch Meetings
Chinese New Year Lunch

Carmel School Board

Chairman
Shay Razon

Executive Committee
Shay Razon
Russell Davidson (Honorary Treasurer)
Jason Webber

Board Members
Jason Budovitch
Russell Davidson
Tara Diestel
Agnes Effron
Seth Fischer
David Naphtali
Shay Razon
Atara Sivan
Nahum Shemesh
David Weiss
David Zeiden
Jonathan Zeman
Deborah Khorsandy (PTA Representative)
Belinda Caviglia (PTA Representative)

Board Sub Committees

Finance Committee

Russell Davidson
Shay Razon
Seth Fischer
Jason Budovitch
David Naphtali
Anna Wong
Rachel Friedmann
Mira Hasofer

Premises & Facilities

Jonathan Zeman
Shay Razon
William Betzalel Yau
Rachel Friedmann
Mira Hasofer
Kyle Ford

International Connections

Jason Webber
Nahum Shemesh
Shay Razon
Rachel Friedmann

IT and Marketing Committee

Shay Razon
Ido Meroz
Nahum Shemesh
Anna Wong
Kyle Ford
Alasdair Ong
Rachel Friedmann
Mira Hasofer

Fundraising Committee

Tara Diestel
Neil Hyman

Education Committee

Atara Sivan
Rachel Friedmann
Mira Hasofer

Oversight & Risk Committee

Russell Davidson
Atara Sivan
Jason Webber

Welcome Committee

PTA Representatives





Excellence, Community, Tradition

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