

# AL NOOR-ABA NEWS

20th September 2018

## Message from the Superintendent

Dear Parents,

For those of you with older students at the school, you will know that ABA is part of a sports conference known as MESAC. At the end of each season, our Junior Varsity and Varsity teams (Boys and Girls) compete against five other international school teams at one of the schools. Annually, the heads of school and the Athletic Directors get together to discuss the coming year and think ahead to the future. With the difficulties facing The American School of Doha and travel restrictions to and from Qatar, ABA and Delhi, as “neutral” countries, hosted more events than usual last year. We were thanked once again by all at the meeting for our willingness to do so and for our efforts. Though it was extra work, it did give us a chance to extend our ABA hospitality more often with our Booster Club really rising to the occasion. This year we will again be hosting a good number of events and so it is a great opportunity for our own community to see our teams perform. I do hope we will see big turnouts for the tournaments. It really is fun.

If you would like to get involved with Booster Club, please contact Vanessa McCarron: [boosterclub@abaoman.org](mailto:boosterclub@abaoman.org). The spirit in the school is indeed boosted by this work. My thanks to all who have already signed up to help.

*Simon Taylor*

## Upcoming Dates

24 Sep	Early Release Whole School Dismissal 12.15 pm
25 Sep	PTA Tuesday Talks PTA Room 7.40 am
27 Sep	Peace Day Free Mufti Student Council Pizza and Baked Items Sale Drama Court 10.25 -11.05 am 12.25 -12.55 pm  Booster Club Ice Frenzy Drama Court 11.30 am - 1 pm

## Message from the Elementary School Principal

### Parent Library Session: Thursday 27th September: 1.30-2.10pm - Elementary Library

Mara Hakim, the Elementary Librarian, would like to invite you to this session, which will be geared towards supporting parents of students from Grades 1-5 and new parents who have joined us this year at ABA. The session will focus on the role of the elementary library, the library homepage and the resources available to students as well as the importance of internet safety. Please save the date to attend this useful workshop.

*“Books Connect – People to People, People to Places, People to Learning.”*

### Week of Inspirational Maths

In the first weeks of school, many classes have again been making use of an excellent maths resource from Youcubed.org. Dr Jo Boaler, from Stanford University has made it her mission to inspire teachers and children to approach maths with a positive mindset, engage in deep exploration and attain high levels of understanding.

Many of us can relate to negative feelings about maths based on our own learning experiences. When maths is seen as a procedural, one-dimensional subject involving memorizing procedures and getting answers correct, anxiety develops and learning is hindered. Teachers have been making use of the latest resources from this year's Week of Inspirational Maths, including this powerful video on the importance of struggle. The YouCubed website contains many useful resources to help teachers, students and parents engage with mathematical learning in a positive way - take a look! [www.youcubed.org](http://www.youcubed.org)

### Parent Communication

As you will have heard during our recent Parent Orientation sessions, we have moved to using SeeSaw as our main form of communication this year. This will, we hope, streamline our communication with you, as well as enable you to access important notices alongside a window into the classroom and your child's learning journey. If you have not yet signed up to SeeSaw, please check with your child's teacher to ensure that you are not missing important messages. Email will remain the best way to communicate about matters specific to your child.

### Drop-off and Pick-up

Safety is our very first priority, and we remain concerned about some incidents during morning drop-off and afternoon pick-up that may be compromising the safety of our students. A few reminders:

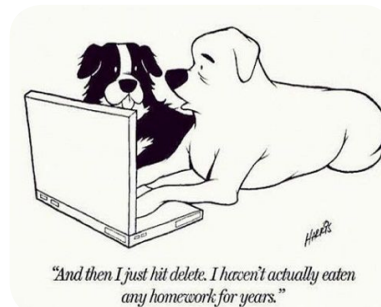
- Please do not drop off or pick up directly outside the Admin Building. This is our main crossing point.
- Please follow the directions of the ABA staff. They only ask drivers to do something for reasons of safety or efficiency of traffic flow.
- Please remind all drivers and other carers about our expectations.

Sam Cook

## Message from the Middle School

This week middle school students engaged in an inquiry into the benefits of homework and when it is helpful. This community inquiry was facilitated by advisors where students watched two videos about homework and participated in a discussion about when homework is helpful. The students' suggestions will be collated and discussed later in the school year.

Numerous studies have been conducted about the impact of homework on student learning with varying conclusions about its actual effectiveness. Manzano & Pickering (2007) succinctly presented a balanced case on this contentious topic. In an article called: The Case for and Against Homework, they considered the available educational research and shared their perspectives. Alfie Kohn, a notable dissenting voice, raises many questions about homework's purpose in the education of children and has advocated that it is removed totally from the school environment. A one-minute video clip available on Youtube shares his scathing criticism of the impact of homework on familial relationships and likens it to students working a "second shift" after school.



Despite opponents of this traditional practice, educators shifted the conversation from whether it should be assigned at all, to when is it really helpful.

Their advocacy rests on the essential skills students can nurture in the practice of engaged independent study as they prepare for adult life and work. Manzano & Pickering (2007) supports this notion with their opening statement: Teachers should not abandon homework. Instead, they should improve its instructional quality.

From a student's perspective, Sara Kutscher suggests ways in which homework could be helpful in her [TED talk](#) of the same name.

Sara provides a student's insight into what makes homework meaningful, enjoyable and engaging.

It is clear that homework that is meaningful has its place in student learning (Walk & Lasak, 2017) given that the research has shown that students who have homework perform better than students who have done none at all. The questions about homework is therefore about its quality. Even Alfie Kohn agrees. He recommends that it makes good sense to only assign homework that is beneficial to student learning instead of assigning homework as a matter of policy. This thinking aligns with the philosophy of our school. Homework at ABA is expected to be an enhancer of the learning rather than a busy activity. Hence there is no dogmatic expectation that homework must be given and when.

Students' discussion this week will inquire into the value of homework as well as provide suggestions about when homework is helpful to their learning, in so

our students' opinions will guide our thinking as we consider the effectiveness of this practice.

They will also be looking at their timetable and craft a homework schedule that will allow them to review classwork each evening whether or not homework is assigned. Our teachers will be aware of their schedules and will assign homework accordingly.

The schedules, as designed by the students will be finalised, and distributed this week via advisory for students to add to planners or other personal organisers. Studies have shown that parental involvement in this process ensures that good habits for learning are cultivated. By not only asking if they have homework, but also engaging in the activity itself, it can serve as a catalyst for discussions about school and learning. It is in these discussions that the value of preparation, review and reflection are developed. It is also important that home study time is sacrosanct. This means that time in the evening should be protected for your child to reflect on their learning.

Homework is also changing in ABA. A majority of students are using Google classroom where the work is continuous and with online work expected. Being connected allows you to know what is going happening in lessons and what project work your child is engaged in.

On our end, we will commit to only provide homework that is helpful, homework that enhances the learning experience and homework that supports the development of essential life skills.

As an inquiry-based school, committed to the development of ATL skills and the IB learner profile traits, discussions of this nature is promoted at all levels. While the IB does not explicitly endorse homework as a practice, it expects learners to be reflective, persevere and learn independently. This means that homework that enhances these traits and skills are important to our learning philosophy and to our of mission of developing responsible lifelong learners.

We welcome any thoughts you may have on this issue. Feel free to drop me a line with your thinking at [mbarker@abaoman.org](mailto:mbarker@abaoman.org).

*Marzano, R. J., & Pickering, D. J. (2007). Special topic: The case for and against homework. Educational leadership, 64(6), 74-79.*

*Image sourced at: [www.lefunny.net](http://www.lefunny.net)*

*Walk, L. & Lassak, M. (2017). Making Homework Matter to Students. Mathematics Teaching in the Middle School, 22(9), 546-553. doi:10.5951/mathteachmidscho.22.9.0546*

*Megel Barker - MYP Coordinator*

## Grade 7 Tanzania Trip



Interested in sending your G7 child on the Tanzania Trip? Then come along to our introductory presentation to find out more. Teachers, parents and students will be there to tell you about the trip and answer your questions. This will take place immediately after the Middle School "Meet the Teachers' session: Tuesday 25th September, 7 – 7.45 p.m. in the PAC. Don't miss the opportunity to find out more about this unique trip!

*Tanzania Team*

## Message from the High School



ABA Graduate, Umniya Al Khalili scored a remarkable 44 out of 45 points in the May 2018 examinations, the highest score in the Sultanate for an IB Diploma student.

Although the statistics for May 2018 have yet to be released, close to 160 000 students globally will have been entered for the IB's Diploma exams last year and only approximately 500 will have received such a high score. ABA Superintendent, Simon Taylor says: "I am delighted with the accomplishments of this cohort which clearly demonstrate the excellent relationship between teaching and learning at ABA. Umniya, in particular, achieved an outstanding result and will certainly be a wonderful ambassador for Oman."

*Guy Essex IBDP Coordinator*

# Message from the Extra Curricular Program

## Middle East South Asia Conference (MESAC)

This week travel letters were sent to MESAC season one families outlining the costs. As the tournaments are not far away please ensure payment for the MESAC tournaments are made on or before 26th October at the Business Office. Locations of the tournaments are below:

Tournament	Dates	Location
JV Volleyball	24 – 28 October	ABA
Golf	22 – 24 October	ACS: Abu Dhabi
V Volleyball	25 – 29 October	AES: New Delhi
Swimming	24 – 28 October	DAA: Dubai
Academic Games	25 – 28 October	AS Dubai: Dubai

## Volleyball matches next week

23rd September	U13 Boys vs TAISM @ TAISM	3:45 - 4:45pm
23rd September	U14 Boys vs TAISM @ TAISM	3:45 - 4:45pm
23rd September	U 14 Girls Vs TSS @ TSS	4:00 - 5:00pm
23rd September	U19 Girls Vs TSS @ TSS	4:00 - 5:00pm
26th September	U19 Boys V'ball vs TSS @ ABA	3:30 - 4:30pm
26th September	U14 Boys V'ball vs TSS @ ABA	3:30 - 4:30pm
26th September	U19 Girls V'ball vs TAISM @ TAISM	4:00 - 5:00pm
27th September	U13 boys vs BSM @ ABA	2:45 - 4:00pm

*Paul Brace - Athletics Director*

## Vipers Swim Team

Registration for participation on the Vipers swim team is closed for Term I. The rosters are complete and we're looking forward to a great year ahead!

## TAISM Dual Meet

Secondary swim team members (Grade 6 & above) will participate in the TAISM Dual Meet on Monday, September 24. This event will be a great "warm up" for the upcoming ABA Sprints, which is scheduled for Friday, October 5.

## Water Safety and Survival

Scheduled Grade 9 & 10 PE students are participating in Water Safety and Survival lessons. These lessons will help create a greater safety awareness and help to prevent accidents and injuries in and around the water. The lessons include; use of safety equipment for reaching and throwing assists, survival swimming strokes, use of life jackets and clothing items as flotation devices, basic principles hydrodynamics and buoyancy.

## Aquatic Emergencies Course

Interested in the Aquatic Emergencies Course but couldn't make it to last Friday's first session? The course continues this Friday, 12:30 - 2:30, and there is still time for you to join. Contact ABA Aquatics Director, Mr. Semple, for additional information or questions at: [swimmingteam@abaoman.org](mailto:swimmingteam@abaoman.org).

*Charlie Semple*

# Message from the Mother Language Program

"The Mother Language Program will open for registration on Sunday, September 23rd for the 2018-19 school year! Please go to the new Mother Language Website, click on the grey "Register" button at the top of the page to register your child for the program. Registration will be open for the next two weeks, and from the information gathered, we will begin the process of organizing classrooms and Mother Language teachers based on the number of students registered for each language."

*Alexis Williams*

# Message from the University Counselor

The season of university visits has started with a warm welcome to George Washington University, Rochester University (New York State), Baylor (Texas) and Allegheny College (Pennsylvania). Allegheny College, a small Liberal Arts school, was voted #1 for Research in the US as every single undergraduate student at Allegheny takes part in research opportunities. The other three universities offer a broad range of major and minor subjects but, generally speaking, Rochester is best known for Engineering and Technology, George Washington for International Relations, Media and Communication and Baylor for Business.



Please find a full run down of university visits below. There may well be additions to this calendar later.

Date	Visiting Universities	Location
Thursday 20th September	<b>UK Group:</b> Aberdeen, East Anglia, Exeter, Into Foundation Courses, Kent, Reading, Portsmouth, Queen Mary, Study Group, West of England Bristol,	ABA Lecture Hall 10.15 - 11.00
Wednesday 26th September	<b>Bentley University, Boston, US</b> 9.15 - 10.00 <b>For parents:</b> Applying to US Unis in general and Bentley in particular (PAC) 10.25 - 11.00 <i>Preparing a winning application for the US (PAC)</i> 11.45 - 12.15 <i>Writing an outstanding Application Essay (SLH)</i>	9.00 - 13.00 Lecture Hall & PAC Variety of presentations
Friday 28th & Saturday 29th September	- American University, USA - University of South Florida, USA - Swansea University, UK - University of Huddersfield, UK - University of Nicosia, Cyprus - IESEG, France - Istitutomarangoni (Italy, UK) - American University in Dubai - University of Wollongong Dubai - University of Dubai - American University of Sharjah - Manipal University, UAE - Amity University, UAE - Kaplan Colleges (Pathway to UK, USA, Australian Universities) - University of Birmingham, Dubai - University of Balmand, Dubai	Grand Hormuz Hotel 6pm - 9pm
Tuesday 9th October	RCSI, Bahrain (Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland). For Medicine and Nursing	Counselling Office 10.25 - 11.00
Thursday 11th October	<b>Dukes Education</b> Applying to Highly Selective Universities in the UK and the US	Presentation 1.00 - 2.00 in PAC
Thursday 18th October	<b>Boston University</b> (Mr Scott Dyer)	Mrs Barker's Classroom S17 10.30 - 11.00
Sunday 21st October	<b>US University Visit</b> Visit by Tulane, Boston College Northeastern, & Washington.	Lecture Hall 1.00 - 2.15
Tuesday 23rd October	<b>US Universities in Qatar</b> - Northwestern University in Qatar, - Carnegie Mellon University Qatar - Georgetown University Qatar - Texas A&M University at Qatar - Virginia Commonwealth University Qatar - Weill Cornell Medicine – Qatar	Lecture Hall 10.25 - 11.00
Sunday 28th October	<b>Canadian University Fair</b> Visit by, Carleton, Concordia, Dalhousie, Guelph, Ryerson and University of Toronto Also University College, London	Lecture Hall 1.00 - 2.15
Thursday 1st November	<b>UK University of Brighton</b> Studying in UK and Personal Statement Writing	Lecture Hall 10.00 - 13.00
Tuesday 6th November	<b>Canadian University Visit</b> UBC University of British Columbia Mr Chris Payne	Mr Mackenzie's Classroom 10.30 - 11.00

# Message from PTA

The PTA team is complete! We have two amazing teachers who have volunteered to be the 'Teacher Representatives'.

Elementary: Kendra Glider

Secondary: Peter Lawton

Thank you for coming on board. We look forward to working with you!



Building our community together!

## Tuesday Talks & Travels

Date & Time: September 25th, 2018 7.30am to 9am

Location: PTA Room

Talk or Travel: An interactive workshop

Topic: Your child's mental wellbeing

Summary: Have you ever run an obstacle course? Do you feel that life is like an obstacle course? Our children often do!

This workshop will focus on how to deal with children when they are negative and focus on the hurdles rather than on how to overcome them. It will help parents get an insight on how to effectively communicate with children in such situations, enabling them to focus on the bright side and to encourage problem solving. Parents will be introduced to cognitive behavioral techniques used to treat negative thinking and to empower children to work toward change.

Speaker/Guide: Basma AlSaid: M.S Psych, 18 years experience in the field.

Nora Alakzami M.S. Psych.

Cost: Free and open to all ABA parents & staff

Confirm attendance: email [Ptasact@abaoman.org](mailto:Ptasact@abaoman.org)

## Next Topic/Travel

CPR & First Aid Certification. Course in English. Receive a 2 year certification from the American Heart Association. Only 10 people per course.

Dates: Oct 22-23, Jan 8-9, Feb 19-20

Location & Time: PTA Room 7.30am-12.30

Cost: 55 omr. Payments accepted in finance department. First pay, first serve.

Deadline for Payment: Oct 7th, 2018

## PTA Website

Check out all the new information available on the PTA website. Visit <http://abaoman.org/wp-site/pta/>

## New Parents

We have 'New Parent Coordinators' on the PTA ready and waiting to help you. They are amazing resources and if they don't know the answer, they know where to find it!

Elementary: Dina Wahib [PTAeNew@abaoman.org](mailto:PTAeNew@abaoman.org)

Secondary: Alaa Mohamed [PTAsNew@abaoman.org](mailto:PTAsNew@abaoman.org)

table registration  
now open

Book and pay  
for your table at  
the  
Accounts Office

For further details,  
contact  
Evelyn @  
95231828

ABA FLEA MARKET and Bake Sale

FRIDAY 2 NOVEMBER  
3-5PM

## Home Room Parents (HRP) Needed

Parents in grade 11.

If you are interested in becoming an HRP please contact, Evelyn, the Secondary Parent Representative, PTAsRep@abaoman.org

HRP Workshop for confirmed HRPs and Assistants:

OCT 2, 2018 @ 7.40am in the PTA Room

Your PTA

'Building Our Community Together'

## Message from the Booster Club



**ABA VIPERS BOOSTER CLUB**  
Show your stripes

# ICE FRENZY

Thursday 27 September

10.25am - 1.00pm  
*(or until stocks sell out)*

ABA DRAMA COURT

All funds raised go to the VIPERS Booster Club - supporting our kids!

The poster features a large ice cube graphic with the word 'FRENZY' written in large, outlined letters across it. Several '500cz' candy bars are scattered around the ice cube. The ABA VIPERS logo is in the top left corner.



# WANTED

*sports gear*

DO YOU HAVE SPORTS GEAR YOU HAVE OUTGROWN, NO LONGER USE, OR NO LONGER NEED??

Booster Club will be collecting 'gently used' sports gear for our inaugural 'Sports Gear Sale' on 29 November.

\* Collection boxes will be available in Admin end October \*

WANTED in all sizes ... football boots, shin pads, knee pads, running spikes, tennis racquets, badminton racquets, swim fins, swim paddles, basketball shoes!

All funds raised go to the VIPERS Booster Club - supporting our kids!

The poster has a parchment-like background. At the bottom, there is a collection of sports equipment including a tennis racket, a badminton racket, a pair of shoes, and swim fins.

*Yours in community spirit – VIPERS Booster Club*