

BCCIS Preschool/Nursery Department



March 2011 Communication

I am pleased to announce that we have had a gradual increase of students returning to school and that most classrooms are now operating between 90 and 100%!

I'm sure that like us, with the gradual return to daily routines, you are feeling a little less stressed and more at peace; especially having your children back in school!

Some of you however are still feeling apprehensive about the safety of your child, especially, if they take the school bus. Under the current circumstances these fears are quite natural and some of your concerns valid, however it is equally important to keep in mind that we need to confirm the source of information and discern between fact and fiction; information of incidents are often heightened and blown out of context through gossip and rumor. Think about the game of Chinese whispers; the beginning person whispers a sentence to the person next to them and so and so on until the last person whispered to voices what they have heard. If you have never played this game give it try and you'll see how quickly information gets lost in translation; and it's fun to play!

Over the next several months of transition, as the country begins to stabilize and adjust to the impact of change, naturally we will all have concerns for our security and safety. Unfortunately, unlike the two week transition period that you've all heard us refer to as the magic time period it generally takes children to adjust to new situations, this transition phase will I'm sure, take much longer!

Last week we held a team meeting to discuss higher security measures within and around the school premises. We also discussed busing concerns. Although we all agree that the hiring of more security staff is important, the idea of putting a security officer on all our buses is considered impractical and unnecessary at this time. If however during this period it makes you feel more secure, we recommend you drive your child to and from school. Or you could contact other parents who live close to you and arrange car-pooling.

A few parents have also raised some concerns regarding educational delays for the KG1 students. Although we validate your concerns I would like to take a moment in an attempt to relieve some of these concerns.

Firstly please take into consideration that the children have only missed 13 days (two days during this period would have been staff professional development days) due to closure. This is less than the amount of time students lost last year due to H1N1 closures and high absenteeism.

During the preschool and early elementary years this time loss is not considered detrimental to their learning -- children are on a continuum of learning that does not cease just because they miss a few days of school!

We begin assessing Kindergarten readiness at the beginning of the second term and our assessments, using the developmental and learning continuum scale, indicate that the number of students demonstrating early KG2 readiness skills is high. Encouragingly, since our return we have not identified any obvious signs of learning set-back in any of our students as result of the missed school days.

It is also worth mentioning here that your response and support in encouraging your child on the journey through early childhood is as important as the relationship we develop with them in school. Thank you for supporting us to support them!

Nursery parents: Please be informed that we will be contacting you regarding the 2011-2012 program before the end of next week.

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The following steps are being taken to ensure your child's safety and your peace of mind.

Information link:

Phone tree: we will be contacting two parents from each class to give each of them the responsibility of contacting a set group of between 6 to 7 parents in the event we need to contact all of you.

Email addresses: please send us your most frequently used email address so we can update our system.

BCCIS website: we are working on posting all information on the website on a regular basis to keep you informed

Security

Higher security: Increase in security officers in and around the school.

Military support: we have an active telephone link with the military stationed in El Sherouk in case of concerns or emergencies.

Outside contact: the head of security, Mr. Mostafa, has daily contact with nearby district schools to update each other with new information.

If any of you have any questions that you would like to address on the issue of security please contact Mr. Mostafa, head of security at any time.

While we understand your concerns and anxiety at this time, please accept that we also are new to this and like most of you, have never been through a revolution before. We just want to assure you that although we are doing everything we can keep your children safe and happy in school, some of things you are asking for are not always practical, especially as none of us have any absolute certainty how long the country could be in this unstable situation.

We look forward to seeing you all on our Mother's Day parent-participation day on the 17th March. As this is an event for mothers' only so if you don't think you can attend, please try to arrange for a grandma, aunt or close family friend to come in your place.

Preschool: March 17th between 10:00-12:00

Nursery: March 17th between 12:45-2:30

Regards,

Adrienne Calder – Early Childhood director