Dear parents and students,

I hope that everyone has had the opportunity to relax and recharge during the winter break, and I would like to also wish you all a prosperous 2012.

Term I was rather a busy term full of events and surprises. We hosted an MOE accreditation visit, forged new partnerships, and lost a handful of teachers. The MOE visit went fairly well. We are expecting the written report soon, and we will publish it on the school website for you to read. We believe that a strong partnership between the school and the parent community is important to improve the teaching-learning conditions at SAIS.

In December 2011, our school signed a memo of understanding (MoU) with the American University in Sharjah (AUS). According to the MoU, AUS will offer workshops to SAIS teachers; offer patronage of selected research, cultural, social and sporting activities and events organized by SAIS; award partial scholarships to deserving students selected from lists provided by SAIS; and offer university preparation courses as well as recruitment of outstanding students from varied socio-cultural and economic backgrounds to AUS. The university will also offer SAT and TOEFL preparation courses for SAIS students. To learn more about this MoU, check our school website (www.saissharjah.com) or read the press release on the AUS website at the following link: http://www.aus.edu/news/article/aus_signs_sharakah_mou_with_sharjah_american_international_school

In Term I, a handful of our teachers left the school for different reasons. Some gave proper notice during which we were able to recruit replacements, which limited the negative effects suffered by our students. Other teachers departed without giving us enough time to find replacements. We reassigned different existing teachers from other parts of the school to cover up for the missing teachers to limit the negative impact on
students’ learning. At the same time, we followed up with five recruiting agencies and we place local ads to replace the missing teachers. We would like to thank the teachers who helped cover up for the missing teachers. Also, we would like to apologize to SAIS families for these unexpected shortages. We would like to assure you all that the best interest of our teachers is always in our hearts, and that we will always do our best to overcome any obstacles in the way of smooth learning here.

Sincerely,

Saleh Jadayel
Principal

*Parent-Teacher Meetings - End of Term I*

This week, we will have two parent-teacher meetings to discuss student progress during the first term. We would like to invite all parents to attend. However, due to the large number of parents who usually attend, we would like to ask our dear parents to respect the following guidelines:

1. Limit your discussion with any teacher to less than five minutes. This will give more parents the chance to talk to the teacher.

2. Ask for an appointment next week if there are many issues that you need to discuss with a certain teacher regarding your child’s achievement.

3. Do not bring your children along. Parent-teacher nights are usually crowded events. Bringing students along, serves no good goal. It only adds to the crowds, and takes away time which students could otherwise use to study or relax.

The parent nights will take place as follows:
- **Monday, 23rd January:** KG1 (1:30 – 3:00pm)  
  G1-6 (6:30 – 8:00pm)
- **Tuesday, 24th January:** KG2 (1:30 – 3:00pm)  
  G7-12 (6:30 – 8:00pm)

*Holiday Notice:*
SAIS will remain closed on Thursday, 02\textsuperscript{nd} February 2012 on account of Prophet Muhammad’s Birthday. Classes will resume as usual on Sunday, 05\textsuperscript{th} February 2012.

**Important Notice:**

Kindly communicate the following to your drivers or nannies who pick your children from the school.

**Drivers/nannies dropping off school students must not use the toilets meant for students in the school. Strictly not allowed.**

*From the desk of Wing A Coordinator (Grades 1-4), Ms. Deborah Anne Mustafa*

Asalaam alaikum dear parents!

I hope you all had a wonderful winter holiday and have returned refreshed and rejuvenated. I am happy to say I stayed in the UAE to enjoy the wonderful winter weather here. I can’t think of any place I would rather be during this time of year, especially to get “out and about”. The saffron and lemon yellow color of magnolias lining the boulevards all over Dubai ignite a sense of happiness and joy that can only be found in few other places around the globe this time of year.

Since getting outdoors now is a priority now, we have begun our field trips. The grade 1 classes have recently visited Rashadya Park in Ajman, and the remaining grades will be going very soon to the Discovery Centre in Sharjah in the month of February. More information will follow.

In the mean time, why not explore your town and take the family on a field trip? Having recently visited Old Bastakya and Heritage House in Dubai, I was very impressed with the preservation of culture as seen in the museums there. If you have not taken your children to see the way things were done in the UAE in the past, this is an excellent time to do so. Taking a dhow cruise to follow is also an exciting way to enjoy this time of year. Below are the links to the museums.

As you know we have had some transitions in the elementary school, and the good news is that we have two new teachers for grades 2C and 3B. Ms. Esriette Raman from Pretoria, South Africa (2C), and Ms. Stephanie Morrisey from Toronto, Canada (3B). You will have a chance on January 23 from 6:30-8:00pm to meet your child’s new teacher and to discuss your child’s performance and any concerns with her.

Our lost and found collection is becoming a mountain of jackets, sweaters, lunchboxes, wallets, water bottles and other valuable belongings. I urge you to stop by and claim your child’s personal belongings between now and parents night. We will donate the items to charity if they are not collected. Once you find them, don’t forget to write your child’s name on these items.

It has come to our attention that some of the children are coming to school with a lot of sweets and chips in their lunch bags. Some students even have mentioned to me that they are allowed to ask their drivers to stop at the local market to fetch these items. It is not healthy for a child to eat nothing but sweets throughout the day without having a balanced meal or some healthy snacks. I just want to remind you that research indicates that children’s learning, behavior, and physical and emotional development are all related to what nutrients they consume. Further, we do not allow soda and will take it from the child if they bring it to school. I hope you will take their diet concerns seriously and make sure they have a balanced array of healthy choices packed in their bags each day. I have enclosed a useful link on this matter and hope you will have a look.

Looking forward to seeing you all at the upcoming Parents Night!

Warmly,

Deborah

From the desk of Wing B Coordinator (Grades 5-8 Girls), Ms. Carole Abboud

Dear Parents and Students,

I would like to wish you all a prosperous 2012 full of health, prosperity, and happiness.
Term 2 is the busiest of the academic year. Fairs, Sports Day, field trips, and many other educational activities are scheduled in this term.

Our students are already working enthusiastically on their math and science projects. This Project-Based Learning (PBL) approach provides them with critical thinking and problem solving skills that are crucial to their personal development as active and successful contributors to their future workplaces. Students are fully engaged and excited, and learn better once collaborating with peers. Thus, SAIS ensures that all students are equipped with the necessary skills to face the 21st century challenges with confidence and anticipation, as stated in its mission statement.

Additionally, fostering a safe and caring community for students to feel respected, valued, and encouraged to achieve their full potential, is the keystone for accomplishing SAIS mission. It is through building positive teacher-student, student- student, and school staff-parents relationships that we can create a sense of united community. Thus, parents' constructive feedback about and involvement in their children's education are highly valued at SAIS.

Finally, I would like to congratulate grade 7AA for winning the National Day Bulletin Board Competition.

I am really proud of you girls and I hope that you will keep up the good work throughout the rest of the academic year.

**From the desk of Wing C Coordinator (Grades 9-12 Boys), Mr. Toufic Khachab**

Let us hope that the New Year brings with it happiness, health and prosperity for you and your family!

Happy New Year!

The past month has been extremely busy with examinations. Now that the exams have ended, it is time for the students to receive their report cards to see how their efforts over the whole term are reflected through their marks. I want to congratulate the students who worked hard and got good results. Also, I want to encourage the students who did not perform very well to put effort and work harder this term to improve their yearly average.
The use of projects for assessment in education has developed extensively over a number of years to support the students in undertaking a more active role in their learning. Projects are important tools for students to develop skills to self-assess and critique their own teaching and learning experiences. Moreover, projects can enhance the assessment process by supporting the instructional goals and reflect the change and growth over a period of time. Our goal of using projects is to produce richer and more valid assessments of students’ competencies than only using the traditional testing approach. To achieve this, our school organizes Science and Math Fairs during the second term every year.

Student evaluation in mathematics and science for term two is predominantly derived from the grade for their Math Fair project. Parents should be aware of the guidelines set by the mathematics and science departments for all secondary students and should plan with their child to meet all deadlines set. Parents will be able to view all exhibits at an arranged time yet to be determined. Please be mindful that your son or daughter has been given ample direction and time to complete their projects on time. Be sure to ask them in advance what they plan to do and who they are working with.

The Math Fair will host projects reflecting the application of the concepts taken in class and giving the students the chance to come up with creative ideas by using geometric models and/or posters to show the use of math in everyday life. The Math project will account for 40% of the total Math average of Term Two.

From the desk of Wing D Coordinator (Grades 5-8 Boys), Mr. Kassem Zayour

Dear Parents,

As we enter 2012, I would like to extend my hope for everyone to have a happy and successful new year. A new year presents all of us with the feeling of a fresh beginning and the opportunity to establish and achieve goals for the upcoming year. I wish that everyone has had a wonderful vacation and that we are all ready to start Term 2 with energy.

I would like to remind you of the due dates for the science and math fair phases, please make sure that your child is finishing his work on time so that he can do a great job without falling into the stress of work.
Again I wish everyone a great start to 2012. Thank you for your continued dedication to your child’s success.

From the desk of Wing E Coordinator (Grades 9-12 Girls) and the Career Guidance Counselor, Ms. Noha Naamani

It is that time of the year again for students to finalize their college applications and as usual Sharjah American International School likes to help out by organizing its annual Career Day. The fair will be held on Tuesday 24th of January in the school gym from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. We would really like to encourage parents to come to get first hand chance to sit down with college representatives and discuss enrollment opportunities in different colleges.

A number of educational consultants will be present as well in the career fair. These consultants can help our students enrolling in colleges outside the UAE as well as help them with their visa applications and residence choices. Parents’ involvement in such activities creates a sense of security for the student as well as provides clarity for parents and better understanding of current procedures in universities and colleges enrollment.

UAE Citizen enrolled in school should have finished registering for their NAPO and are scheduled to have their CEPA English and Math exam very soon. Please make sure that your son/daughter has done so properly. Sitting for the CEPA exams will ensure that your child is accepted and enrolled in the University of his/her choice. Students in grade 11 should start registering for their SAT and TOEFL exams by going to www.collegeboard.com and selecting the date that suits them best. Sitting for the exams towards the end of this academic year is advised since this will give the student the opportunity to improve the score if needed in the following year.

International Day Carnival

SAIS is planning to have a bigger International Day celebration this year by adding fun activities and games to the previous showcase and activities. Parents are encouraged to volunteer their time and or effort to make this event a successful one. Interested parents
can contact the school coordinators to inform them about their suggestions and enquire about ways to help out in organizing the event.

**Science and Math Fairs in Term II**

Please follow up with your child with the deadlines set for school projects. Students do not necessarily need to meet many times at home to finish the work. With proper organization and planning students can accomplish a lot even by simply meeting during lunch hours to work together.

*From the desk of Wing F Coordinator (KG1 & KG2), Ms. Dionne Zantua*

Happy New Year & welcome back to another wonderful time of learning as we begin term 2. Activities scheduled for this term are as follows:

- January: Parent-Teacher Conference & Field trip Day
- February: KG Fun Day & International Day
- March: KG Mother’s Day

A couple of reminders also:

- We will be having our first Parent-Teacher conferences on January 23rd for KG1 & January 24th for KG2 students from 1:30 pm to 3:00 pm. This would be a great time to reconnect & meet with your respective teachers & also to get feedback on your child’s progress. Remember, success in class is always a partnership between home & school.
- Remember to label all your child’s belongings, specially sweaters & jackets.
- Kindly notify your homeroom teacher if your child is going to be absent for more than 3 consecutive days. A doctor’s note will be necessary to mark your child excused in our records.
- Pack only nutritious snacks & drinks for your child. Healthy snacks include sandwiches, pastas, noodles, beans, nuts & cut up fruits & vegetables among others. Water, low fat milk & low or no sugar juices are preferable. Avoid any kind of sweets & chips.
- Please pick up your child on time.

Here are the recipients of our Character Counts program’s character focus “Respect”: 
For the month of December & January, the character focus is “Responsibility” & is characterized by Ansvar the elephant. Being responsible means:

- Do what you are supposed to do.
- Persevere: keep on trying!
- Always do your best.
- Use self-control.
- Be self-disciplined.
- Think before you act — consider the consequences.
- Be accountable for your choices.

Teachers will be discussing this character in class & will constantly be looking for students who best demonstrate this character. These students will be awarded on our next assembly in February.

We would like to congratulate our KG2C teacher Ms. Lilian on the birth of her son Joe. Ms. Amany Louis, who has previously worked here at SAIS KG as a long term substitute, has taken over her class. Ms. Lilian will be back from her maternity leave on January 29, 2012.

Thank you for your support in term 1 & we look forward to your cooperation again this term2. Please do not hesitate to contact me for any suggestions or comments at 06-538-1780.
Sincerely,

Dionne Pauline U. Zantua

From the desk of Head of IT Department, Ms. Carole Abboud

Dear Parents,

Grade 10, 11, and 12 students' accounts have been activated and teachers are now interacting with them through their emails on the school portal. The IT teachers have asked the students to send them emails during the previous weekend, to ensure that all students' accounts are working properly. I would like to thank parents for their assistance in checking that such emails have been sent to teachers. It is actually through a strong partnership with parents that can schools achieve their goals in promoting responsible and reliable citizens.

Moreover, technology today offers many new opportunities for innovation in educational assessment through rich new assessment tasks and potentially powerful scoring, reporting and real-time feedback mechanisms. Thus, online assessments will be assigned soon to students in the computer laboratories at school as an SAIS initiative to stay abreast of all novelties in the technology field and use them effectively to enhance students' academic performance.