



EMIRATES  
HILLS

Secondary  
School  
Newsletter



Final Edition 2023

2022-2023

# Head of Secondary Message

Hello all,

As the school year has ended, we wanted one final addition of the Secondary Newsletter. I wanted to say a personal thank you for all the support in my first year of Head of Secondary. From the moment I stepped into this role, I have been continuously inspired by the dedication and commitment of our parents. Your enthusiasm for your children's education and your active involvement in their learning journey have truly made a difference. Your support has been invaluable, and I cannot emphasize enough how grateful I am for your partnership.

It has been a superb year, with so many highlights. My personal favourite was the International Evening, where families came together to hold our biggest and best yet.

I am deeply appreciative of the patience and understanding you have shown as we implemented changes and improvements throughout the year. Your open-mindedness and willingness to embrace new approaches have allowed us to grow together as a school community. Your valuable feedback and suggestions have been invaluable in shaping our strategies and refining our practices.

It has been an honor to serve this community, and I am grateful for the opportunity to work alongside such dedicated parents and a brilliant team of staff. I look forward to many more years of fruitful collaboration, growth, and success.

Michelle



# Key Information

## Dubai International Academy, Emirates Hills

### Calendar Outline 2023-2024

SMT return to School for Orientation and Training	16 August 2023
HODs and Year level leaders return to School for Orientation and Training	17 August 2023
Teachers return to School for Orientation and Training	21 August 2023
Primary School 'Hopes & Dreams' – First School Day	28 August 2023
Secondary School New Student and all Year 7 students Orientation All Year 11 and 13 students orientation – First School Day	28 August 2023
Lessons start for KG2 – Year 13 students	29 August 2023
KG1 settling in programme	29 August – 1 September 2023
Prophet Muhammad's birthday (No school for students and staff)	29 September 2023
Mid-term Break	19 – 20 October 2023
Parent Teacher Consultations KG1 – Year 6 (No school for PS students) Early closing for SS students	30 October 2023
Parent Teacher Online Consultations Year 7 – 13 (No school for SS students)	10 November 2023
Parent Teacher Online Consultations Year 7 – 13 (No school for SS students) Early closing for PS students	13 November 2023
Commemoration Day (No school for students and staff)	1 December 2023
Winter Break	11 December 2023 – 1 January 2024
Lessons start for KG1 – Year 13 students	2 January 2024
Parent Teacher Consultations KG1 – Year 6 (No school for PS students) Early closing for SS students	5 February 2024
Mid-term Break	12 – 16 February 2024
Parent Teacher Online Consultations Year 7 – 13 (No school for SS students)	1 March 2024
Parent Teacher Online Consultations Year 7 – 13 (No school for SS students)	4 March 2024
Spring Break	25 March – 5 April 2024
Eid Al Fitr (No school for students and staff)	9 – 12 April 2024
Parent Teacher Consultations KG1 – Year 6 (No school for PS students) Early closing for SS students	6 May 2024
School holiday (No school for students and staff)	27 May 2024
Eid Al Adha (No school for students and staff)	17 – 18 June 2024
End of year for Students and Teachers	5 July 2024

# A Final Reflection from Ms. Jeshi!

## *Service as Action in the MYP*

In the (IB) Middle Years Programme (MYP), service action is a fundamental component of the program. The MYP aims to develop students' academic, personal, and social skills through a balanced and comprehensive curriculum.

Service as Action is an integral part of the MYP that encourages students to engage in meaningful service activities that contribute to their communities. It is designed to foster a sense of responsibility, empathy, and a commitment to making a positive impact on the world. The SA requirement helps students develop an awareness of global issues, an understanding of their own roles and responsibilities, and the ability to take action for the benefit of others.

Through service action in the MYP, students are encouraged to become compassionate, responsible global citizens who actively contribute to building a more equitable and sustainable world.

Our students in DIA always strive to fulfil this requirement and sometimes they go beyond the call of duty . the initiatives varied between activities within the school community such as mentoring and workshops to a much wider scale such as the Ramadan boxes across Dubai and relief kits for women and children affected by the floods in Pakistan flood. Some students were involved in international activities like the Cambodia trip that provided an opportunity to learn about a new culture while helping residents.



# A Final Reflection from Ms. McMechan!

## *MYP Core: Nurturing IB Learners for Success*

In light of the adaptations to the school week, we took the opportunity this year to launch discrete lessons focusing on enhancing students' understanding of the underpinning elements of the MYP, such as IB Learner Profile attributes, ATL (Approaches to Learning) skills, and Global Contexts. We are excited to share with you the progress our students in Years 7, 8 and 9 made in their MYP Core lessons. But that isn't all they achieved!

Through their engagement in MYP Core classes, our students have showcased their commitment to holistic education and the development of essential skills for success in an ever-changing world. Their understanding was emphatically demonstrated during the culminating Wonder Day interdisciplinary project at the end of Assessment Week. Students exhibited their creativity, critical thinking, and research skills by creating fascinating original research projects. They skillfully presented their findings, demonstrating their ability to effectively communicate and engage their audience.

Throughout the year, students have enjoyed a range of learning experiences. Collaborative projects and team challenges have been integral to our lessons, allowing students to develop their communication, social and self-management skills, and apply interdisciplinary and real-world knowledge. Some examples of the inspirational work they have produced includes creating videos promoting their views on which Global Context is the most important, video tutorials on how to succeed in a chosen ATL skill, debates on real-world issues, practising thinking skills and conducting their own action research. Students also enjoyed time to relax and read books of their own choice to promote daily reading habits. They have eagerly taken Accelerated Reader quizzes, further nurturing their reading skills and challenging themselves to make continued progress.

We are immensely proud of our students' dedication and growth in these fundamental, cross-curricular areas. Their learning has fostered their understanding of diverse perspectives and their roles as global citizens, helping them to shape themselves into well-rounded individuals ready to excel in the future.



# A Year 11 Reflection from Mr. Van Der Wal!



The Year 11 Graduation ceremony was a culmination of years of hard work in MYP and dedication for the graduating students. Dressed in their elegant gowns and smart suits, the students radiated a mix of excitement and nostalgia. The air was filled with anticipation as they walked across the stage, received their well-deserved certificates, and getting ready for the transition to the Diploma Programme. The event was a heartfelt celebration, marked by emotional speeches, joyful cheers, and tearful goodbyes, leaving indelible memories in the hearts of both students and teachers.

In contrast, the Year 11 overnight trip to the desert was an adventurous escape from the familiar school environment. As the sun began to set, the students embarked on a thrilling journey to the vast expanse of sand and rock. The desert's beauty captivated their senses, as they witnessed the stunning hues of the sunset and the awe-inspiring starry night sky. Engaging in various activities such as rock climbing, archery, and hill climbing, the students forged strong bonds and created memories that would last a lifetime. They revelled in the tranquility of the desert, away from the bustling city life, and embraced the opportunity to explore nature's wonders.

Both the Year 11 Graduation ceremony and the overnight trip to the desert marked significant milestones in the students' lives. While the graduation ceremony symbolized the end of one chapter and the beginning of another, the desert trip provided a chance for personal growth, camaraderie, and a deeper appreciation for the natural world. These events showcased the diverse experiences and opportunities that enriched the lives of the Year 11 students, as they embarked on their journey towards adulthood with cherished memories and newfound perspectives.



# A Final Reflection from Mr. Norton!



## Until The Very End

Here we stand on this final day,  
The halls echo, but memories won't fade away.  
A year gone by, filled with laughter and cheer,  
We've grown together, through moments so dear!

You have come so far, my-oh-my!  
Conquering challenges, reaching for the sky.  
Let's celebrate and party like there's no end,  
Stand tall and embrace the future that's around the bend.



Into the summer, shining bright with zest,  
Carry wisdom and style, and be your very best.  
With pride, we'll watch your dreams come true,  
The story continues, it's over to you!

*\*Photographs of some students who celebrated with us on the final day of school!*



# Sport updates

## Innoventures Education Table Tennis

DIA has become the Innoventures Education overall Table Tennis Champion!



## DASSA Table Tennis

DIA has become DASSA overall Table Tennis Champion!





# A Final Reflection from Mr. Mihail!



## Sports Awards Gala Ceremony

As we wrap up another remarkable year of Sport and active lifestyle, it's time to reflect on the incredible achievements and milestones that our students have accomplished. Throughout the year, we witnessed the unwavering passion and dedication of 988 talented athletes who made our sports programme thrive.

Our commitment to fostering a strong sports culture was evident in the formation of 88 sports teams across a diverse range of disciplines. From Football to Basketball, Swimming to Golf, and everything in between, our students embraced the opportunity to participate in 18 different sports, each showcasing their unique skills and talents.

The enthusiasm for Sports was palpable as we organized over 400 fixtures, providing countless opportunities for our students to compete, learn, and grow. These fixtures not only showcased their abilities but also promoted teamwork, discipline, and sportsmanship.

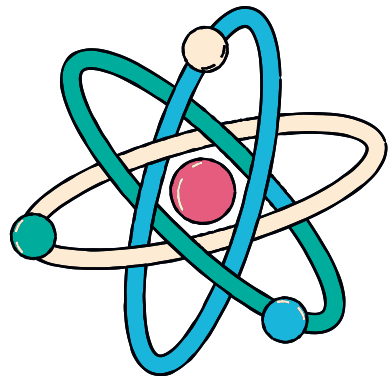
Beyond the numbers, what truly defined this year was the camaraderie and spirit that permeated every aspect of our sports programme. Our students formed lasting friendships, built upon shared goals and experiences, and learned valuable life lessons through their participation in sports.

We are immensely proud of each and every student who contributed to this exceptional year. Your commitment, hard work, and perseverance have elevated our sports programme to new heights. As we bid farewell to this chapter, let us carry the lessons learned and the memories created into the future, continuing to embody the values of sportsmanship, resilience, and excellence.

Here's to another fantastic year of Sport and an active lifestyle!

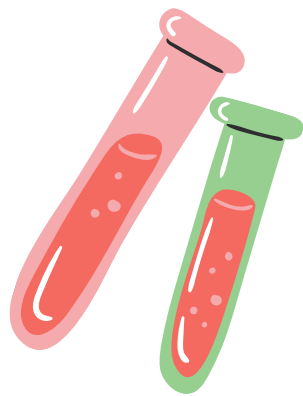
Mr. Mihail



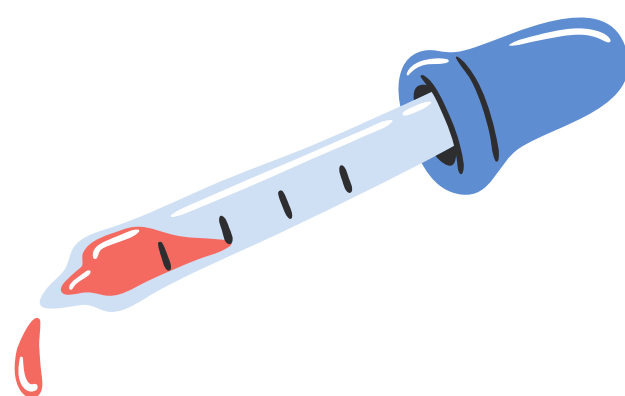


# Year 12 & 13

## IB Retreat & Group 4 Projects



The Years 12 & 13 participated in unique outdoor learning retreats to enhance collegial and independent learning skills, the Year 12 trip was held at Longbeach Campground and Year 13 students went to Double Tree by Hilton, both resorts were in Ras al Khaimah. These retreats also brought students and faculty together as a community with shared goals in promoting well-being through a range of exciting outdoor pursuits such as kayaking, paddle boarding, archery and an array of water sports, as well as movie nights, live performances, quizzes and musical numbers. Also our students conducted a wide range of experiments facilitated by the Science Department for the Group 4 Project which helped students enrich their critical thinking through independent inquiry-based learning. Many of our students and faculty have heralded the retreat as being forever embedded as a highlight of their journey at DIA-EH.





# STEAM Projects

## First Lego League-Brazil

It all began in early December for the school when 10 students, Soumyo Shankar, Atharv Bansal, Rishabh Mittal, Parthav Karthikeyan, Domekveer Chopra, Zain Mumtaz, Selin O., Erkin O. and Ibtisam Waheed came together to form the "DIA Wolves Robotics Team". These students completed their robotics training during an after-school activity, the goal was to build a strong core robotics team that could be a front runner at any and all major robotics competitions.

First Lego League is the largest robotics competition in the world with about 300,000 teams participating every year with 30,000 teams. Every year, a theme is released and the teams' job is to identify a problem within the given theme and solve it using technology. The team also needs to prepare for a "Robot Game" where they build LEGO robots to autonomously solve timed missions on a standardized game field. This year's theme was "Cargo Connect" where students were challenged to improve global logistics and supply chain issues.

After consulting with experts from DNATA and logistics consultants, they found a problem endemic to the Middle East- Faded Barcodes. They built an AI Algorithm which can detect faded barcodes on packages, remove them and paste a replacement barcode on the package. This was a novel solution to an unusual and often overlooked problem.

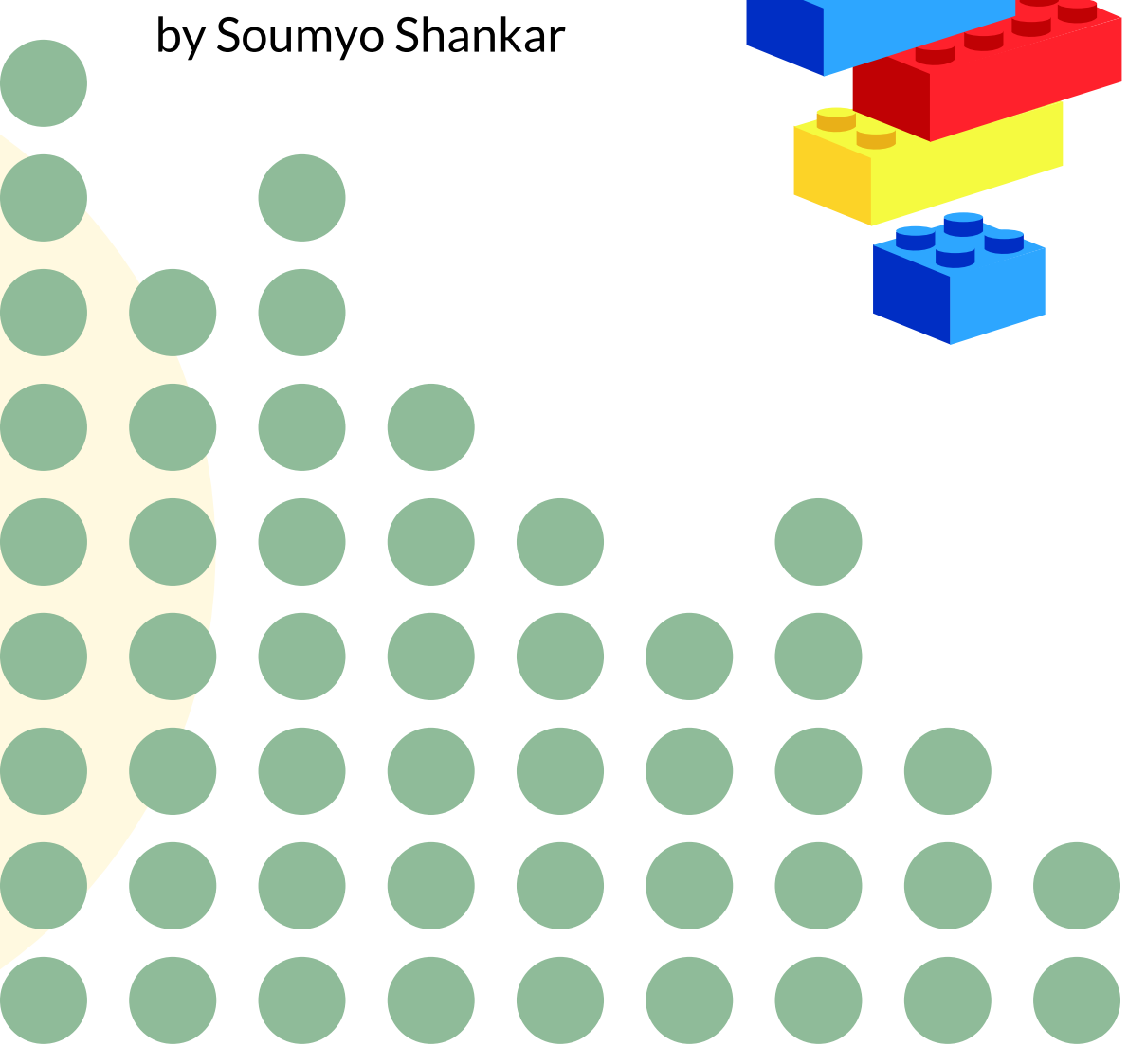
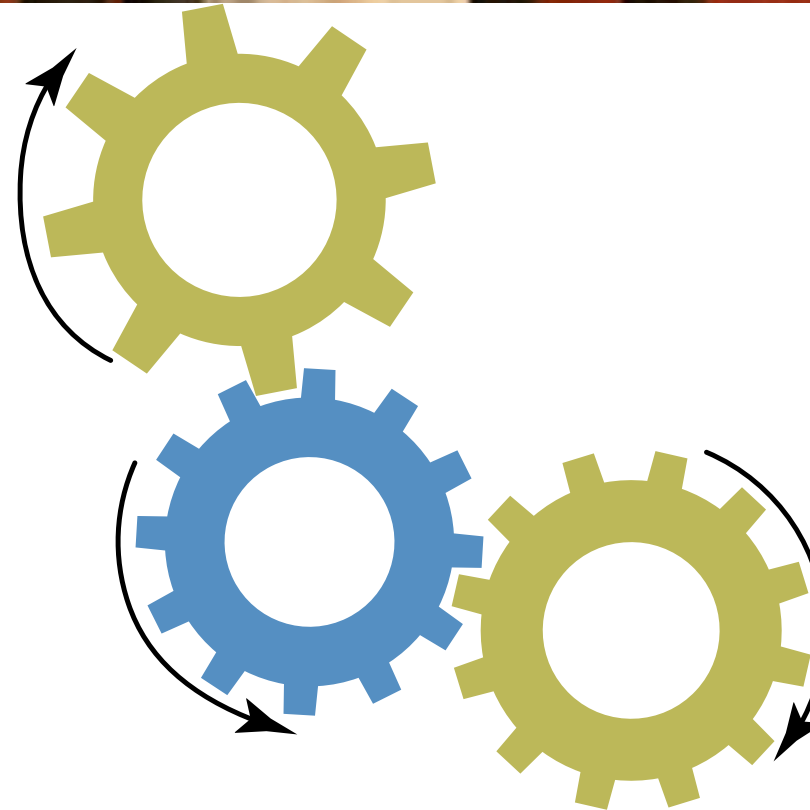
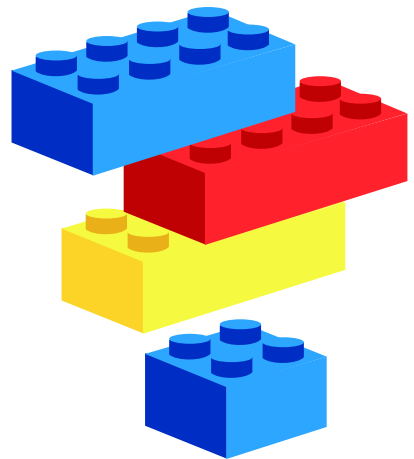
At the Dubai Regional Round, they were heralded the Champions whilst also picking up a Runner Up award for the Robot Game. At the National Round, they were the Runner Up Champions, being granted an award for their Robot Game. Finally, they also secured the prestigious honor of representing the UAE at the International Finals in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil from 5-7 August 2023.

While preparing for their presentation in Rio de Janeiro, the team met with various other experts and possible stakeholders in the project, the local community and the government. They presented their solution to the local community at DI@Tech, the annual technology and innovation event hosted by DIA. They also visited CodersHQ, Dubai Future Labs and the Museum of the Future as well as having the privilege of meeting the Minister of AI himself Omar Al Olama.

Finally, the flagbearers for the UAE left for FLL Brazil a 24-hour journey later, the team made it to Rio. The competition was strong; 84 teams from 32 different countries. They competed against the ferocious might of the Japanese, German and Korean teams, considered to be the FLL front-runners for over a decade. DIA Wolves spent 3 days at the competition presenting to the judges and participating in various social events, as well as meeting other teams to understand their design philosophies culminating in the team being given the "Best Innovation Project". They were the only school present to represent the UAE, and then marvelously now being bestowed with the Best Innovation Project in the world. The DIA Community has always tried to create an environment that fosters innovation and promotes individual creativity. The team were extremely thrilled when news broke of the win.

The students say this would not have been possible without the support of their coaches, Mr. Felipe san Juan and Mr. Ateeb Mohommed as well as the principal, Mr. Hitesh Bhagat.

by Soumyo Shankar



# STEAM Project Lunar

## Rover



Year 13 students participated as members of Innoventures Education Incubator Programme which encourages students to think laterally and find solutions to real-world and futuristic concerns.

Mehul Vemareddy, Prateeti Saran, Umar Ingalls, Soumyo Satyanarayanan, and Kshiteez Panigrahi constructed a lightweight lunar rover prototype which can move at a top speed of 30km per hour. The rover's rear is controlled by an electric DC motor which works through a throttle at the front and is constructed with a regular steering setup which could be found on any kart or car. Students sourced materials largely from local companies in the UAE, but also the borrowed equipment and sourced some parts from suppliers in China.

The distinctive feature of this lunar prototype is it is controlled with a stepper motor, which allows it to be controlled remotely. Furthermore the students also built the rover's accessories, including a solar panel and a robotic arm designed to collect samples from the lunar surface. In the future, they have considered incorporating artificial intelligence into the 80kg machine so it can complete missions autonomously.

During the vehicle's construction students were afforded the opportunity to be guided by the Dubai Future Labs and the Ministry of State for Artificial Intelligence, the students were able to assemble their rover prototype in three months. They even held an event to showcase the working model. The students relished the opportunity to combine their collective skills in applying mechanical theory, programming and design to conceptualise and then construct their pro-type a rich celebration of inquiry and independent learning.



مختبرات دبي للمستقبل  
DUBAI FUTURE LABS

UAE  
2031

استراتيجية الإمارات  
للذكاء الاصطناعي  
UAE ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE STRATEGY

# Year 12 CORE DAY &

## Introduction to the Maths IA

The Year 12 Students participated in a day dedicated to the core aspects of the DP Programme such as the Extended Essay and TOK, as well as the Reflective Project for CP Students. Students engaged in a seminar focussed on research methods and how to effectively cite sources using MLA9. They were also shown how to responsibly use ChatGPT and how to effectively reference this as a source. Later in the day, students were introduced to the Maths IA by members of the department, to offer suggestions, lines of possible inquiry, organisation structure and they reiterated some of the potential obstacles the students may encounter and how to overcome these. Students will complete their IA in the new Academic Year.

$$x = \frac{-b \pm \sqrt{b^2 - 4ac}}{2a}$$

e



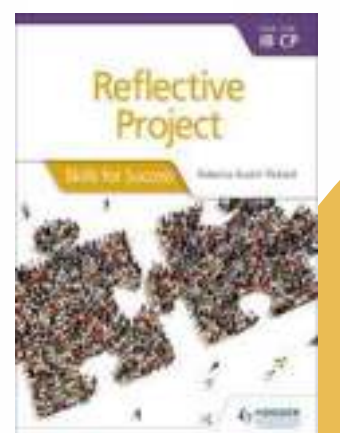
π



MLA  
HANDBOOK  
NINTH EDITION



Extended Essay



# End of Year Student Recognition Awards Ceremony



On Thursday 22nd June we hosted our inaugural End of Year Student Recognition Awards Ceremony for our Secondary School students. Within our school community, we are always so proud of the achievements of our students, both in and outside of the classroom environment. The aim of this ceremony was for us to acknowledge the wide array of talent and accomplishments on show within the DIA student body and to encourage our students to take their skills, passions and interests to an even higher level. You will find a full breakdown of the award winners on the following page. We would like to extend our congratulations to all our award winners and we look forward to the great heights you will reach in the year ahead!



# End of Year Student Recognition Awards Winners



## Student of the Year

Year 7	Sara Johnson
Year 8	Lamar Abbas
Year 9	Caitlyn Rodrigues
Year 10	Nour Merad
Year 12	Anna Georgopoulou

## Amicus Generis

Year 7	Joshua Tak
Year 8	Hoor Kamkar
Year 9	Nirmay Teckchandani
Year 10	Sofia Shehab
Year 12	Elzbieta Rucinska

## Student Council Contribution

Year 7	Pola Konieczna
Year 8	Ananya Makin
Year 9	Varsha Bharadwaj
Year 10	Tanishi Banerjee
Year 12	Sakshi Kisani

## Learner Profile Awards

Year 7	Yuna Lekhal Open Minded
Year 8	Vihaan Shukla Knowledgeable
Year 9	Kyna Puri Caring
Year 10	Katty Khirandish Balanced
Year 12	Maia Weeman Communicator
Year 12	Badria Kazim Balanced

## Best Year 9 Community Project

Zena David
Taara Shetty
Varsha Bharadwaj
Ishika Soni

## Most Distinguished ALPHA Student

Can Khan
Eva Chacra

## Service As Action & CAS Awards

Year 7	Perla Sidhom
Year 8	Clara Doumit
Year 9	Eva Chacra
Year 10	Rishabh Mittal
Year 12 (CAS)	Taara Kuriyan

## Best Club Event of the Year Water for Life Carnival

Yana Pinto	Maia Weeman
Usman Kashif	Anna Georgopoulou

## Best CCA of the Year News@DIA

Riva Shah
Ananya Iyer
Ananya Bhat

**End of Year  
Student  
Recognition  
Awards  
Winners**



**Best Student RAP Coach**

Badria Kazim

**Citizenship Award**

Yuvraj Bharadia

**Charity Award**

Selin Ozsaracoglu  
Erkin Ozsaracoglu

**Sustainability Award**

Rishabh Mittal

**Innovation & Technology Award**

Veda Fernandes

**Wellbeing Award**

Aekam Pal

**International & Cultural  
Awareness Award**

Timidu Weerawardhana

**The Arts Award - Music**

Lea Zein

**The Arts Award - Drama**

Yuna Lekhal

**The Arts Award - Media**

Neel Gopal

**The Arts Award - Dance**

Anoushka Menon

**The Arts Award - Visual Art**

Hayun Jang

**Kindness Ambassador Award**

Zed Billimoria

**Resilience Award**

Mia Grunfield

**Growth Mindset Award**

Abigail Tak

**Special Recognition Awards**

Saachi Singla

Megha Golkunath

Enrique Dmella

Dan Blake

Shaurya Chakravarty

Neev Gadkar

Aditya Banerjee



# *The International*

## *History*

### *Bee & Bowl*



*The International History Bee and Bowl are two history quiz competitions in English which are held around the world. 2023 IAC Asian Championships took place in Thailand between 15th and 18th of June. In order to qualify for this competition students had to qualify for it in the regional competitions (for example, one that was held in Dubai in the spring). There were 13 teams presented in the Varsity division from all over Asia and Middle East (China, Philippines, Japan, India, UAE, Thailand). Three rounds of competition were followed by Play-off. Every round teams were given no time to think about the questions as they had to aim for the buzzer. However, speed did not always win, as the wrong answer would be picked up by the opponent team. DIA team successfully reached to the Quarterfinals and one of the members Samik Shetty was able to come second in the Asian History exam, that was held within the championship.*



*Thank you to our fantastic teaching and support staff*



*Always putting in the little extra to make the magic happen*





International



Houses



# Competitions 2023



Travel



Arts



School Principal  
Hitesh Bhagat  
hiteshb@diadubai.com

# Secondary Communications

## Secondary School Senior Leadership

Head of Secondary  
Michelle Puxty  
[michellep@diadubai.com](mailto:michellep@diadubai.com)

Deputy Head Years 7 - 11  
Michael Norton  
[michaeln@diadubai.com](mailto:michaeln@diadubai.com)

Deputy Head Year 12 - 13  
Claire Inglis  
[clairei@diadubai.com](mailto:clairei@diadubai.com)

Director of Sport, PHE and CCAs  
Mihail Kouzev  
[mihailk@diadubai.com](mailto:mihailk@diadubai.com)

Head of Inclusion  
Asha Karam  
[ashak@diadubai.com](mailto:ashak@diadubai.com)

Assistant Head Pastoral  
Colin Leacy  
[colinl@diadubai.com](mailto:colinl@diadubai.com)

Assistant Head Years 7 - 9  
Susan McMechan  
[susanm@diadubai.com](mailto:susanm@diadubai.com)

Assistant Head Years 10 - 13  
Gerhard Van Der Wal  
[gerhardv@diadubai.com](mailto:gerhardv@diadubai.com)

## IB Coordinators

MYP Coordinator  
Ruba Jeshi  
[rubaj@diadubai.com](mailto:rubaj@diadubai.com)

DP Coordinator  
Kanchi Das  
[kanchid@diadubai.com](mailto:kanchid@diadubai.com)

CP Coordinator  
Neetu Rathore  
[neetur@diadubai.com](mailto:neetur@diadubai.com)

## Heads of Year

HoY 7  
Donna Campbell  
[donnac@diadubai.com](mailto:donnac@diadubai.com)

HoY 8  
Amy Dowling  
[amyd@diadubai.com](mailto:amyd@diadubai.com)

HoY Year 9  
Stephen Cleary  
[stephenc@diadubai.com](mailto:stephenc@diadubai.com)

HoY 10  
Naveen Tyagi  
[naveent@diadubai.com](mailto:naveent@diadubai.com)

Assistant HoY 10  
Shannon Meehan  
[shannonm@diadubai.com](mailto:shannonm@diadubai.com)

HoY 11  
John Aboaja  
[johna@diadubai.com](mailto:johna@diadubai.com)

Assistant HoY 11  
Jennifer Agacy  
[jennifera@diadubai.com](mailto:jennifera@diadubai.com)

HoY 12  
Dollour Toma  
[dollourt@diadubai.com](mailto:dollourt@diadubai.com)

Assistant HoY 12  
Diarmid Murphy  
[diarmidm@diadubai.com](mailto:diarmidm@diadubai.com)

HoY 13  
Daniel Murphy  
[danielm@diadubai.com](mailto:danielm@diadubai.com)

## Heads of Department

Arabic A  
Reda Al Ashmawey  
[redaa@diadubai.com](mailto:redaa@diadubai.com)

Arabic B  
Mohamed Nasr Ali  
[mohamedn@diadubai.com](mailto:mohamedn@diadubai.com)

Islamic  
Waleed Ahmed  
[waleeda@diadubai.com](mailto:waleeda@diadubai.com)

English MYP  
Maha Zaouil  
[mahaz@diadubai.com](mailto:mahaz@diadubai.com)

English DP  
Nagina Chaudry  
[naginac@diadubai.com](mailto:naginac@diadubai.com)

Maths MYP  
Asha Kumar  
[ashas@diadubai.com](mailto:ashas@diadubai.com)

Maths DP  
Vidya Shriram  
[vidyas@diadubai.com](mailto:vidyas@diadubai.com)

Science MYP  
Mona Khreis  
[monak@diadubai.com](mailto:monak@diadubai.com)

Science DP  
Declan Alvaro  
[declana@diadubai.com](mailto:declana@diadubai.com)

Humanities MYP  
Mahua Paul  
[mahuap@diadubai.com](mailto:mahuap@diadubai.com)

Humanities DP  
Reena Tikku  
[reenat@diadubai.com](mailto:reenat@diadubai.com)

Language B MYP  
Blanca Gonzales  
[blancag@diadubai.com](mailto:blancag@diadubai.com)

Language B DP  
Yolaine Siko  
[yolaines@diadubai.com](mailto:yolaines@diadubai.com)

Design MYP  
Somya Jajor  
[somyaj@diadubai.com](mailto:somyaj@diadubai.com)

Design DP  
Faryal Arsalan  
[faryala@diadubai.com](mailto:faryala@diadubai.com)

Performing Arts  
Blaine Mackessy  
[blainem@diadubai.com](mailto:blainem@diadubai.com)

Visual Arts  
Veronica Richards  
[veronicar@diadubai.com](mailto:veronicar@diadubai.com)

Media  
Seon Lewis  
[seonl@diadubai.com](mailto:seonl@diadubai.com)

PHE  
Fiona Turnbull  
[fionat@diadubai.com](mailto:fionat@diadubai.com)

## Important Contacts

College Counsellor 12-13  
Rachana Sippy  
[rachanas@diadubai.com](mailto:rachanas@diadubai.com)

College Counsellor 7-11  
Stewart Pinkerton  
[stewartp@diadubai.com](mailto:stewartp@diadubai.com)

Attendance Officer  
Evelyn Pakatan  
[evelynp@diadubai.com](mailto:evelynp@diadubai.com)

Secondary Secretary  
Marian Steyn  
[marians@diadubai.com](mailto:marians@diadubai.com)

IT Support  
[helpdesk@diadubai.com](mailto:helpdesk@diadubai.com)

Accounts Department  
[accounts@diadubai.com](mailto:accounts@diadubai.com)



EMIRATES  
HILLS



**Dream - Inspire - Achieve**