**PRINCIPAL’S MESSAGE TO SS3 PARENTS ON RESUMPTION FOR WAEC**

Assalamu alaykum,

Dear parents,

In the name of Allah the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful, the One exalted in power and honor, the One who has no rival or equal, the One who is most worthy of the best of adoration and worship, We give thanks to him for sparing our lives up to today, and to in sha Allah witness our children resume and write their WAEC exams.

Below are the some important issues concerning the school and our students.

1. **Preparations made for resumption**

As parents may be aware, the Federal Government gave safety guidelines that must be met before schools open. Many private schools have been made to fill forms both physical and online about facilities they have and how they have prepared to meet these guidelines. New Horizons College has been doing all it can to ensure the school does not have any shortcoming in this regard.

 Below are some of the steps we have taken:

1. Spraying and disinfecting the school block and hostels
2. Orientation of the school nurses regarding handling of students with regard to illnesses during the period of WAEC.
3. Purchase of drugs and sanitary materials.
4. Provision of 4 customized masks with the name of each student embroidered on it to avoid mix-up of masks.
5. Production and distribution of huge volumes of liquid and aerosol-based hand sanitizers which have been placed in strategic locations in the school and hostels blocks, as well as the gates and entry points of the school. Students will be given hand sanitizers in addition to the ones they bring from home.
6. Purchase of temperature guns to screen visitors at entry points into the school and for daily temperature checks on the students.
7. Two students are to be placed in each room.
8. During lessons, no more than 20 students will be put in a class.
9. Social distance will be maintained student-student and student-teacher.
10. Provision of face shield and face masks for teachers to use during lessons. Students will also be made to use their masks during lessons.
11. Provision of face mask for hostel, kitchen and security staff and cleaners.
12. Orientation for students on the safety guidelines they will be required to follow.

1. **Preparedness of SS3 students for WAEC**

We are pleased to say the 10 weeks of online lessons have assisted the school in covering the WAEC syllabus. Our worry remains those students who missed these lessons or have failed to solve past questions as they were directed to. The school sent a general message to parents on this matter; called individual parents and even hosted a zoom meeting with parents of SS3 boys to address the issue. Subsequently, the boys' attendance improved for a few days, but plummeted soon afterwards to pre-zoom meeting situation.

What we have discovered is that some students who have made their GCE papers are unduly influencing their mates. We ask parents to advise their children against following such persons blindly; they should also let their wards know that the school will not condone any misbehaviour when school resumes on the 8th of August. After the first warning to any erring student, the school will send such student home since he or she has shown they are not interested in writing the examination.

1. **Fees to be paid and matters arising**

The calculation of the fees to be paid starts at least six months before the start of the new session. These calculations are made separately for boarders, day students and SS3 students because of services or costs peculiar to each group.

For general costs such as school uniforms, sportswear, exercise books and textbooks, salaries of teachers and welfare, gardeners, security, rent of the school block, electricity of the school block, teaching resources and equipment, sports equipment and facilities maintenance, government and local government taxes, staff training, etc., these costs are totaled, divided by the total population of students, then further divided into three terms with a greater portion allotted to first term because of bulk purchase of books, uniforms, teaching resources, etc. In essence, the three terms are not independent but are connected because the costs have been spread out among them. This then largely forms the cost for day students and to some extent boarding students.

For boarding students, costs such as procurement of house wears, cleaning supplies and other hostel related materials, water in the hostel, generator maintenance, diesel, electricity bills, the salaries of hostel staff, nurses and catering staff; rent for the hostels, etc. are added to general costs as stated above, to get a new total which is then divided by the total number of boarders and further divided into three terms and which becomes the fees boarders pay.

These were the reasons why the fees for day students and boarders were not the same; which goes beyond just the cost of the E-learning!

Despite this, we went ahead and gave a discount of 30% in late April after a lengthy budget defense by the school management to the Islamic Education Trust’s Senior Management Board (SMAB). Many parents appealed to the school for a review. The PTA chairperson called to also appeal to the school for a review on behalf of parents.

The school forwarded the appeal to the IET SMAB. After a deliberation lasting several hours of further budget review and defense, a further discount of 5% was given bringing the total discount to 35%. This brought the discounted fees to be paid in monetary terms to be N285,350 as against N439,900 for boarders minus the ICT fee (with the exception of SS3 and SS2 students), while the discounted fees for day students came to N118,615 (minus the N7,000 for ICT) as against the usual fee of N169,450.

Other costs that came up which were not part of the budgeted cost have included the creation of the E-learning platform, hosting of the platform by a UK based server and subscribing to their stand-alone bandwidth and not the shared one which is cheaper (6 months subscription), the Airtel subscription of internet bandwidth which is not a shared plan but a stand-alone one (6 months), monthly Zoom subscription plan, purchase of software to drive the school’s provision of E-experience, addition of Exam portal to the E-learning platform to minimize cheating through the use of device cameras, etc.

The additional amount of N110,000 we are now asking SS3 parents to pay have been forced upon us by practical realities staring us in the face.

When the discount was given in April, feeding and other costs related to boarding school were taken out. So no parent is paying double for anything.

N100,00 out of the N110,000 is just the cost of feeding the students and supporting staff for 6 weeks. The remaining N10,000 multiplied by 76 students (if they all resume) comes to N760,000. It is doubtful if this amount will cover expenses which includes electricity bills (we spent approximately N240,000 for diesel when students were not around every two weeks, and N250,000 to N350,000 per month for NEPA bills. Now that the students will be here, the generator will be used daily and at night when there is a power-cut), spraying and disinfecting the school, chemicals for making liquid and aerosol sanitizers, etc. This N10,000 also excludes cost of salaries of teachers for August and September, which is usually paid for by students school fees for the new session, which we are not even sure of getting!

It is important to note that even when this N110,00 is added to the N285,00 already paid by most parents, it is still less than the N439,900 which is the actual school fees, which government has now granted permission to private schools to charge!

In conclusion, we want to reiterate that the college was not set up as a profit making institution where the profit goes to its owner, but was set up with the purpose of providing qualitative education to Muslim children and also with the aim of helping to sustain the daw'ah activities of IET, through the properties it rents out to the college (school block and hostels).

This is our reality, and despite this, we have tried to offer a quality of service that is above the industry average, maintain our staff by paying them fairly; we try to do this and more without jeopardizing our financial situation. We demand a quality of service from our teachers, we try to support them with regular coaching and personal development training, hence those who still fail to meet up usually have their contracts not renewed.

To further match our new reality, we have had to cut salaries of teachers who do not teach SS3’S and staff not involved in matters related to SSS3's, in percentages ranging from 20% to 50%, to 80 and 100%!

It is my hope that this lengthy explanation will put to rest the issue of why we are charging this or that fees, and also help to disabuse the minds of parents who are saying that we are too money-driven.

Lastly, we want to remind parents to help us in cautioning their children to focus on the task at hand, which is to spare no effort towards succeeding in the WAEC examinnation which starts in sha Allah on the 17th of August.

Wassalamu alaykum

Mustafa Mas’ood

Principal