New Horizons College, Minna

 Principal’s Online Learning & Other matters Newsletter

Sunday 26th April 2020 (3rd Ramadan, 1441AH)

***Do men think that they will be left alone on saying, "We believe", and that they will not be tested? Q:29:2.***

***“Even the darkest night will end and the sun will rise.” ― Victor Hugo,*** [***Les Misérables***](https://www.goodreads.com/work/quotes/3208463)

Assalamu Alaykum Wa Rahmatul-lah Wa Barakatuh.

Dear parents,

I hope this newsletter meets you in the best of iman and spirit. We pray you are all keeping safe and are in the best of health.

Ramadan Kareem to you all and our children. May we all reap the benefits of this holy month of Ramadan because it is a golden opportunity for us to intensify our supplication to Allah, for His forgiveness due to our transgressions as a people and as an ummah.

May He carry us through this trying period and help us bring to an end this pandemic that threatens our existence.

Below are the highlights of this report:

1. Online learning report and matters arising
2. Centralized Test and Promotion Exams to hold Online
3. Change in online learning starting time due to Ramadan
4. Mid-Term break from Online Learning
5. Cambridge IGCSE Exam 2020 update
6. SS3 students situation and WAEC examination

1. **Online Learning Report**

The closure of all schools has forced many schools to explore online teaching and learning since schools will not open anytime soon going by how widespread the coronavirus pandemic is nationally and globally. We anticipated that schools were eventually going to be closed, so we began creating our learning portal in readiness for the closure which eventually happened.

We have had about two weeks of online learning now. During this period, we experienced a lot of technical challenges which included erratic connectivity, poor network as a result of unusually heavy traffic nationwide, especially with schools and businesses all working remotely. However, toward the end of week 2, there was a great improvement with regards to the technical hitches previously experienced.

We also had challenges with one or two teachers not showing up online to teach due to logistics challenges at their end, which they failed to communicate to the school management in advance. Such teachers were reprimanded and cautioned against any repeat of this type of lapse.

Our biggest challenge was and remains students not showing up for their lessons and not doing assigned work. Aside from a few exceptions, for most online classes, 70% of the students do not show up (particularly the male classes)! **This situation is most worrying and we appeal to parents to please assist us in getting their children to show up online for their classes.**

It is pertinent for parents to stress to their children that school has resumed even if it is online! As from week 3, which begins tomorrow Monday 27th April, attendance, assignments participating in class discussions and classwork will be recorded by teachers and will add up towards the final overall grade a student will get when exam scores are added.

2. **Centralized Test and Promotion Examination to hold online**

Looking at the current situation with regards to the coronavirus pandemic, it is becoming clear that schools may not resume this term or before July; hence, planning for assessment and a promotion exam becomes a must-do if students are to move to their next class.

Consequently, we are informing parents that students will be writing a centralized test sometime within the first week of June in sha Allah. Only students with 80% attendance starting from Monday 27th April will be allowed to write the test. Similarly, 80% of online attendance is required for students to be allowed to write the promotion examination. The exam is in sha Allah scheduled for the third week of July.

Teachers will be informed to make accommodation for network challenges when issuing deadlines for when assignments or classwork are to be submitted, by giving 24 hours for submitting classwork or centralized tests.

3. **Change in online learning starting time due to Ramadan**

As we do when we are in school during Ramadan, we are adjusting the start time of the online classes from 7:45 am to 8:30 am. Each period has been reduced by 5 minutes and break time cut down to 15 minutes. All lessons will come to an end by 1:35 pm in sha Allah.

4. **Mid-Term Break from Online Learning**

In sha Allah, we will be going on break on the 15th of May to resume on Monday the 1st of June 2020.

5. **Cambridge IGCSE Exam 2020 update**

We have been informed that the Cambridge IGCSE examination for 2020 will not hold. However, the exam body will be using the predicted scores submitted by the school during the registration process of the exam. We have been guided on how to supply accompanying evidence that would jointly be used with the predicted scores to give results to students.

6. **SS3 students situation and WAEC examination**

WAEC is yet to communicate to schools the actual date of the exam. However, it has provided materials and resources on its website to help students continue to prepare for the exam. This means that students are expected to continue to prepare for the exam and be ready to write the exam without any long notice.

This is in line with our expectations, which was why we began online lessons for SS3 students through WhatsApp over 3 weeks ago, even before we started the general online classes for the rest of the school.

The attendance rate of the SS3 boys is giving us cause for concern. Most times, only about 30% of the students appear online for lessons. on the side of SS3 boys with regards to ensuring they are prepared for the exam. We have called parents individually and sent messages to many of parents of the students concerned without seeing any significant improvement.

Online learning for all students is only effective when parents provide much-needed adult support and supervision at home. The atmosphere and activity in the home need to support online schooling. A good number of students are treating this period as a holiday and the lessons as more summer-school.

In conclusion, on behalf of the school management, I want to thank all the parents who have been working closely with their children to ensure they get the best online learning experience. May Allah continue to be with all our parents and make easy their affairs.

Wassalamu Alaykum

Mustafa Mas’ood

Principal