New Horizons College, Minna

End of E-Learning Term Newsletter

Friday 14th August, 2020 (24th Dhul Hajj, 1441AH)

*Accomplishing anything great in life requires us to make significant changes that push us beyond our comfort zones. - Anonymous*

*“I alone cannot change the world, but l can cast a stone across the waters to create many ripples.” – Mother Theresa*

Assalamu Alaykum Wa Rahmatul-lah Wa Barakatuh.

Dear parents,

It is said that the art of life lies in a constant readjustment to our surroundings and situations which come upon us whether we are ready or caught unawares. This is where we all have found ourselves and we all have adjusted as best as we could. May Allah see us through the rest of this trying times that the whole world is going through. Below are the highlights of this report:

1. E-learning activities.
2. Students results from E-learning
3. Resumption of SS3 students for WAEC examination.
4. Revisiting the matter of discounted school fees
5. Preparation for resumption (whether physically or online)
6. Resumption Slip for next Session

1. E-Learning activities

Unlike many institutions which merely reacted to the closure of schools and quickly put together their own online learning platform as best as they could, New Horizons College actually foresaw the closure of schools and planned for it; hence, we were able to start the process soon after the Easter holidays.

Despite our best plans and efforts, we were besieged with technical hitches, network problems, and even the ineptitude of a few teachers. We also faced challenges from the students’ end, which prompted us to reach out to parents on more than one or two occasions, either by sending general messages or by reaching out to individual parents. Alhamdulillah, we can confidently say that we quickly learnt as we plodded along, and we are better for the experience and insight we gained.

We will not be mincing words if we say our biggest challenge came from the students’ own end, where we were beset by many challenges. Some of these included:

* Irregular attendance by students
* Students not carrying out assigned work.
* Students log in and enter the E-learning forum, abandon their laptops or devices and go back to sleep or wander off to do other things.
* Students missing centralized test because they forgot or were asleep, causing the school to give make-up tests on an unprecedented scale!
* Students cheating during classwork, quizzes, and the centralized tests.

Measures we took included:

* At first resorting to fixing 75% attendance as criteria for students to have before they would be allowed to write their test or exam as is the norm in universities; a decision we later changed, and instead used attendance as half of the total score of the first test.
* Class work, quizzes and assignments done by students were used to make up the marks for the second test, as is the norm during regular school.
* Introduction of the use of camera on every student’s device to ensure cheating in any form is largely reduced to the barest minimum.

2. Students results from E-Learning

Considering it was a first-time experience for most students, it was not an entirely smooth experience for most of them, but as time went by, most of them adapted and got the best out of the experience. The overall general performance was satisfactory with a few isolated cases and poor individual performances due to online truancy. We believe the students’ online performance will In sha Allah improve if we are to continue with online teaching and learning. One thing for sure is that our students have become more proficient at using technology for educational purposes as our teachers have.

The top three classes with the highest averages are, JSS1Girls, SS2 Girls and SS2 Boys. The overall performances of those classes were commendable. The three classes with the lowest averages were, JSS1 Boys, JSS 3 Boys and JSS2 boys.

The students with the highest cumulative averages at the end of the session are, Ahmed Abdulazeez Tugga SS1 Boys, Hafsat Kolomi Lawan SS2 Girls and Zayd Haneef Lemu JSS2 Boys.

3. Resumption of SS3 students for WAEC Examination

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 took and have implemented include:

1. Sprayed and disinfected the school block and hostels
2. Orientation of the school nurses regarding handling of students regarding illnesses during the period of WAEC.
3. Purchase of drugs and sanitary materials.
4. Provision of 4 customized masks for each student with their names 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 were given hand sanitizers in addition to the ones they brought from home.
6. Temperature guns purchased and used to screen visitors at entry points into the school and for daily temperature checks on the students and staff.
7. Two SS3 students were placed in each room.
8. During lessons, no more than 20 students are taught in each class
9. Social distance-maintained student-student and student-teacher.
10. Provision of face shield and face masks for teachers to use during lessons. Students have been made to use their masks during lessons as well as in the hostels
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.

We are pleased to say the 10 weeks of online lessons have assisted the school in covering the WAEC syllabus. An extra week was used to brush up the knowledge of the SS3 students after they resumed. Their exams will in sha Allah be starting on Monday and we want to call upon parents to join us in praying for their success.

4. Revisiting the matter of discounted school fees for better understanding

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 is what becomes the main cost of fees for day students and to a smaller extent that of 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 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.

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).

Based on our realities, we have had to cut down on many expenses, reduce staff salary, part with staff who could not meet up with expected standard after months of coaching and training for E-learning, etc.

5. Preparation for Resumption of School (Whether Physical or Online)

We have continued to discuss preparation for the two possible resumption options being bandied around: whether physically or online.

Plans have been put in place to overhaul the E-learning portal towards making it more user friendly, efficient, and effective for teaching and learning, to minimize disruptions because of network or technical issues. We have also included check systems to ensure students do not get away with truancy or logging in and absconding. A weekly attendance record which parents can access is also in the works.

We also discussed resuming physically and being able to meet the conditions of having two-three students in the hostel rooms and 15 students in a class as currently practiced with SS3 students. To meet up with this government guideline for the entire school population, we will have to build new hostel and classroom blocks within the next one, two or three months. If government maintains this directive, we have discussed arrangements to have an online school and a physical school; where JSS students will have online school for 6 weeks, while SS students will be physically present in school for lessons. After the 6 weeks mentioned, the two groups will swap places with the SS students going back home to have online classes, while the JSS students resume to take physical classes.

We in sha Allah intend to have a zoom meeting with parents prior to any resumption as we did recently with parents of SS3 students.

Our prayer is that this pandemic comes to an end soon so that our children can fully resume soon.

6. Resumption Slip for Next Session and deposit as confirmation

For proper prior planning for next session, our norm has always been to ask parents in June of every session, to indicate if their child or children will be returning for the new session by filling a slip at the end of the End of Session Newsletter. This is usually to help us with numbers when we are budgeting for books, uniforms, catering, etc. It is also to help us give an answer to parents whose children are on the admission’s waiting list.

As a result of this and the matter raised in item 5 above, parents should please indicate in the slip provided below, whether their child/children will/will not be resuming whenever schools open physically for resumption.

Lastly, as confirmation your child will in sha Allah be resuming with us whenever schools resume, you are to pay an advance of N100,000 of the school fees as final confirmation of your child’s resumption, on or before Monday 7th September, 2020.

May Allah spare all our lives and bring us back together again when school finally resumes.

Wassalamu alaykum wa rahmatul-lah wa barakatuh



Mustafa Mas’ood

Principal

**CONFIRMATION SLIP FOR STUDENT’S RESUMPTION 2020/2021 SESSION**

NAME OF PARENT:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ PHONE:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

NAME OF STUDENT:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ CLASS:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**PLEASE TICK THE APPROPIRATE BOX BELOW**:

* MY CHILD WILL IN SHA ALLAH RESUME WITH THE SCHOOL NEXT SESSION

* MY CHILD WILL NOT BE RESUMING WITH THE SCHOOL NEXT SESSION
* MY CHILD MAY NOT BE RESUMING, AND IF YOU DO NOT HEAR FROM ME BY MONDAY 7TH SEPTEMBER, PLEASE TAKE IT THAT MY CHILD WILL NOT BE RESUMING AS A STUDENT OF NEW HORIZONS COLLEGE

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**SIGNATURE OF PARENT DATE**