



Friday, 14 November 2008

Dear Parents,

Review of the Tropical Hours Timetable

Over the past weeks, the school leadership team has carefully observed the current educational provision and practical arrangements under the tropical hours at Panaga. Equally, feedback from the children, staff and parents has been taken under consideration.

The general consensus is that the tropical hours system is a positive move forward for the school. The children's learning time has been maximized whilst allowing greater time in the afternoon for after school activities and family life.

However, a key finding on the current timetable is that the break times are too short. Specifically, the second break of 30 minutes is not enough time for the children to eat their food and fully enjoy a beneficial break time. Further, the school informed parents in the summer term that the children would eat inside the classrooms. The reality is that there is not enough time for the class teachers to set up their classrooms for the afternoon sessions after the children have finished eating and so currently the children are often eating outside. They are protected from the sun, but eating from their laps and/or sitting on the floor is not conducive to good health and hygiene.

There is, then, a real need to extend the break times and thus the length of the school day.

Tropical Hours – an amended school day

Following approval from Shell Education Services in The Hague, the tropical hours timetable at Panaga will change. The day will be lengthened by 15 minutes: 5 minutes added to the first break; 10 minutes to the second. The extended second break would allow for the children to eat inside, at a table, and provide teachers time to clear up and prepare for the rest of the day. As P1 to P3 are currently above the Shell, UK and Dutch recommended direct teaching hours, the second break will be extended by 10+ 5 minutes on the Rampayoh site (reducing teaching time by 5 minutes a day yet still within annual recommendations).

It is also planned to bring the first break forward in the morning in order to further enhance the children's learning following an early start to the day. This will mean a slight change in the timetable.

In order to initiate these beneficial changes as soon as possible, the new school day will be implemented as of **Monday 24th November 2008**

The new times will be as described in the table below:

New times	Rampayoh	Teraja
Lesson time	7:45 to 8:50	7:30 to 8:50
First break	8:50 to 9:10	8:50 to 9:10
Lesson time	9:10 to 11:00	9:10 to 11:00
Second break	11:00 to 11:45	11:00 to 11:40
Lesson time	11:45 to 1:35	11:40 to 1:45

Times for Creche and Nursery classes remain unaffected.

After School Activities will, of course, begin and finish 15 minutes later than present.



Break Times/Healthy Eating

It is important that the children eat two healthy snacks during the day. A separate information sheet will follow shortly with more information and suggested foods.

Please bear in mind the fact that in the new timetable arrangements, the children need to be provided with a light snack to be eaten at first break in the playground (eg. apple, healthy chew-bar, carrot sticks, etc). A more substantial snack will be needed for the second break, which will be eaten in the classroom, under the class teacher's supervision (eg. sandwiches, pasta, rice). In order for class teachers to prepare rooms for the afternoon activities, the children will eat first, then play.

Punctuality

As a general reminder, please ensure that your child arrives in good time for the start of the school day, at least 5 minutes before the bell. Late arrivals disrupt learning for the rest of the class.

I trust the above is clear. Should you need to seek further clarification, please make contact with the Head Teachers of the International and Dutch Streams or myself.

With kind regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, which appears to read 'R White'. The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above a horizontal line.

Richard White
Principal of Panaga School