

THE MINUTES OF DAYSPRING MONTESSORI INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL PARENT-TEACHER ASSOCIATION GENERAL MEETING HELD VIA ZOOM ON THE 21ST OF FEBRUARY 2021.

The Chairperson opened the meeting at exactly 3: 18 pm with an opening prayer.

The minutes of the previous meeting was not available for review as the outgoing secretary had not worked on it. The Chairperson therefore called on the Principal to present her report.

PRINCIPAL'S REPORT

Period of lockdown

The Principal gave a general overview of events that transpired in the school during the period of the lockdown announced by the President of the Republic effective 16th March 2020.

She informed the house that because the lockdown had been announced at the tail end of the second term when the school was getting ready for exams, revision was done via WhatsApp class platforms and end of term exams taken from home. Exam papers were packaged for each child and parents supervised them at home to do them.

Virtual lessons were started in June for the third term to sustain teaching and learning via the Dayspring Virtual Campus. The programme however had to be suspended effective September 2020 due to lack of cooperation from parents and the school's inability to sustain 50% of staff salaries.

Online Learning

The Principal noted that as a result of lessons from COVID 19, virtual learning has come to stay and the school has adopted it as a policy. She announced that the online learning by the school basically is to augment the work of regular school and also for the school to be ready in case there may be another lockdown situation.

She said the IT support team was working hard to start the exercise from Monday 22nd March, 2021. She noted that the mass promotion of pupils since the return of school had given teachers a difficult time filling in the knowledge gap created by the lockdown.

She urged all parents to invest in the necessary gadgets needed for their children to participate to ensure its smooth take off.

COVID 19 Protocols

The Principal outlined various measures that had been undertaken by the school to minimize the spread of the COVID 19 and also curb any infections among staff and pupils of the school.

She acknowledged the gesture of PTA in donating 3 thermometer guns and 6 automated dispensers. A seventh dispenser was given as a personal donation from one of the PTA executives.

She announced that the school had been thoroughly disinfected and fumigated prior to school reopening. That the attendants clean and disinfect all tables and chairs with alcohol based disinfectants.

Wearing of nose masks was also strictly enforced amongst staff and pupils despite the challenges it poses to both teaching and learning especially among the nursery pupils. She informed the house about directives she had received asking pupils in kindergarten to also wear nose masks.

Temperatures are also checked regularly and so far no abnormal temperatures had been recorded.

Washing of hands is also strictly monitored at points of entry and attendants also assist nursery children with the process. Hand washing is carried out in between activities especially when they visit the washrooms.

There are no gatherings for assembly, worship, PE and extracurricular activities. Snack and lunch are also taken in the classroom. The school also insists that the classrooms are no go areas for outsiders including parents; all in the effort to limit the exposure of the classrooms to the virus. No borrowing of items from friends is allowed. All learning equipment is thoroughly disinfected in between use.

She also mentioned a visit by **TV3** network on 4th February, supposedly following up on a report they had received from a parent about COVID 19 breaches in the school. She informed the house that TV3 had given a full endorsement to the efforts of the school in ensuring all protocols are observed.

She advised parents to keep their wards at home in case they may be having some health issues until they are fully recovered. She said staff members were also made to stay away if there were any reported health situations.

Unruly behaviour

The Principal also disclosed to the house some unruly behaviour demonstrated by pupils of the JHS department especially and advised parents to monitor their children carefully.

BECE results

The Principal informed the house that even though the official results had not been released by the Educational Directorate to the school, the school had been able to confirm the results of all the candidates and the aggregate breakdown as follows;

Aggregate	Number of pupils
06	9
07	1
08	5
09	4
10	2
11	3
12	3
13	3
14	2
15	4
17	1
18	2
21	1

She remarked that per the results received, the students who took academic work seriously performed relatively better. The average aggregate for the 40 students was 10.67 compared to 9.4 the previous year. School placement was also ongoing on and so far most of the students who came to have their forms endorsed were getting their first choice schools.

Robotics

The principal explained the suspension of the Robotics Programme in KG and Lower Primary due to a number of reasons. She said it was mainly because of the situation with COVID 19; to ensure there would be no physical contacts among pupils as this

programme had pupils working together in groups. Also to ease the fees burden on parents, even though this was only GHC130 per pupil.

Extension hour charges

The Principal explained this was suspended because school was supposed to close earlier than normal and therefore pupils were to be picked up early for staff to also leave for their homes early. Unfortunately this did not happen so the Principal assured the house the fees would be reintroduced so staff could receive their “extension hour” allowances.

Early reporting

She announced that the school rule on early reporting, and school gates shutting at 8:00am was still in force. She asked all those who were going to be late to kindly call the school as latecomers would be turned away.

Montessori Demonstration and other matters

The principal informed the new pre-school parents that the programme which was normally held for new parents had to be suspended due to the COVID situation.

Children from starters to KG1 must always have a change of clothing in their bags in case of any eventualities.

Parents must inform teachers of peculiar health needs of children and also keep plastic files for children’s homework. Parents were also asked to try and feed their children breakfast in the house as the morning feeding tends to waste a lot of time of the attendants who have to help with the washing of hands. Parents were also asked to please keep polythene bags in the school bags of their children for washed but still wet clothes to be conveyed home.

School uniforms

The Principal apologized for the delay in the supply of school uniforms. She also described the prescribed school uniforms for the various sections of the school. She advised parents to ensure that they buy the school uniform from the school and also ensure they sew the prescribed uniforms if they would rather do it themselves. She also reminded parents that school uniforms made by them must have the school’s crest sewn on them.

Homework Supervision

The Principal reminded parents, especially the new ones of the need to continue to supervise the homework of their children.

Payment of feeding fee

The Principal advised parents to try as much as possible to reimburse teachers who have had to use their own funds to pay feeding fees for some of the pupils.

School Fees

The Principal reminded parents of the need to settle all outstanding school fees of their children.

Upcoming events

- 15th – 17th March: Mid-semester break for JHS
- 29th March to 1st April: revision week.
- 2nd to 5th April: Easter break
- 6th – 12th April: examination week for Preschool and Primary School
- 16th April: vacation for Preschool and Primary School
- 4th May: reopening for Preschool and Primary School
- 11th June to 5th July: first semester vacation for JHS.
- 6th July: Second semester for JHS begins

REACTIONS TO PRINCIPAL'S REPORT

Online learning

Mrs Toboh wanted clarification about combining schoolwork and online and that will the students write some of the notes in the class and put the rest online and suggested that everything should be done in the school. She further enquired whether the day's homework will be available that same day online. Because personally she gets home late.

Mrs Seaneke asked for a combination of both the online and school work. Stating that because of internet challenges in some areas it will be difficult to have the work done immediately.

Dr. Toboh also asked if the online would be permanent since the roll out of the vaccination and easing of the restrictions signalled better days ahead in respect of the COVID and active cases might drop.

Madam Owusua asked if the online work could be shifted to weekends and that the homework for the rest of the week be done manually as some parents go to work with their gadgets but are interested in the children's work.

Madam responded by saying that the online is meant to preempt any future lockdown and to make the school ready to roll. She added the school wanted some kind of preparation for pupils to get used to navigating the system. With the exception of the Grade 1 whose teachers had pleaded that since the students are slow they be exempted from the online, the rest of the school would be ready to roll on Monday as stated. She also noted that even when some sense of normalcy returned the programme would continue and holiday homework for instance could all be put on the virtual Campus.

The Principal also said that it is important for our children to be abreast of modern technology and also get used to online learning as it is the future of education. She said that it is also a training that the school would want to give to its pupils as part of its policy. She therefore urged parents to make gadgets available for their children.

The Principal also said she had taken note of all concerns and that they would be looked at.

BECE results

Mrs. Obedia Seaneke asked whether all the results had been received by the school. Madam responded in the negative saying that the broadsheet giving details of each candidate's performance had not been received from the District Education Directorate yet. Based on the results checker however, the results reported were the ones received.

Madam Nana Aba asked if the placements had been successful. The Principal responded that 13 out of the 15 placement forms so far received obtained their first choice schools. Also some had gone on to private senior high schools.

AOB

Nii One asked why there is too much rice on the school menu and that parents should be given more variety.

Mrs. Seaneke asked if it was possible to have the menu published.

Madam Rejoice asked why soupy food was not being made and that her ward complained about the food. The last time her daughter brought home beans with plantain, the plantain was very hard and the gari was too much. She also brought fried rice with “shito” full of spices which is too much for her 3 years old child. She also suggested that pupils could bring their own bowls for the soupy food.

Madam explained that because of the COVID situation the food was being served in disposable packs so it limited the variety of food to be served to mainly different rice dishes and chicken. Serving of sausage was not also allowed in the school. She also noted that most pupils refused to eat fish.

The Principal therefore advised parents who wanted variety to bring food from the house as it was allowed. She also promised to try and have the menu published.

Mr. Justice raised three issues:

- the code of conduct and discipline policy of the school and whether the school had a detailed code of conduct policy,
- the recruitment policy of the school and capacity building for teachers already in service,
- he noted the online learning is a worthwhile programme and that the school must seek to address all concerns in relation to the online learning so that it will be inculcated in school activities.

The Principal noted that every child admitted is given a handbook which contains details on code of conduct. She addressed the issue of staff recruitment by emphasizing that before recruitment, staff go through a rigorous exercise where;

- positions are advertised in the Daily Graphic,
- the applications are short-listed based on qualification and experience,
- a rigorous interview process is followed to test good command of English Language, knowledge of subject area, teaching competence through demonstration, etc.

Qualifications: Montessori Education qualification is a must for all preschool teachers. For Primary, trained teachers with Diploma in Basic Education or higher are employed. Subject teachers and Junior High School teachers are mostly degree holders in their fields.

Capacity building for staff already engaged has not been attended to, too well in recent times but there had been a few over the years and suggestions are welcome.

Mrs. Obedia Seaneke asked if it was possible to have school fees receipts given to their wards at their various classes or may be left at the secretary's office.

Madam Maud asked if the extension hour already paid would be credited to pupils. The Principal responded that the extension hour charges should not have been taken off in the first place as most pupils were picked up late but those who had already paid would have their account credited with the amount.

Uncle Eric Addo appealed to parents to pick up their children early. He cited the example of a Nursery School child who was still in the school after 4:30 pm, when school had closed at 12 noon.

Mr. Andrew Oppong asked for a facelift of the furniture at the primary section. The Principal wanted clarification about which particular class. She noted that the Directors had recently taken delivery of a new set of furniture. She however noted that the furniture received was too big for some classes and as soon as the appropriate sizes arrived, they would be changed.

Madam Ewuradwoa, a new parent, asked if there were other means of communication. She also commended the PTA executives. The Principal responded by saying apart from the PTA WhatsApp groups, parents also receive information through the school's SMS portal and Newsletters.

Madam Amanda Amoo-Otoo asked about how as new parents they could join the PTA WhatsApp platform. The Humble Lion also expressed similar sentiments.

Their numbers were taken by the Principal and subsequently added to the platform.

FINANCIAL REPORT

The financial report, as presented by the treasurer, is attached.

Reactions to financial report

The chairperson acknowledged the sacrifices made by the treasurer and thanked her immensely for her hard work.

Mr. Nimako thanked the treasurer for her tremendous effort but asked for explanation regarding the reward scheme for teachers stated in the report.

Mrs. Toboh and the Principal explained that there are awards for best teachers initiated by the school and supported financially by the PTA. There is also a special cash award

package for teachers of the JHS 3 BECE candidates who score grades 1 and 2 in their respective subjects.

Mr. Justice was grateful for the level of transparency showed by the executives and said, “More grease to their elbows”. He enquired why the GCB balance had not been shown on the face of the account.

Mrs. Toboh explained that the account had not been accessible for two years and that the figure stated was for the balance as at two years ago. She informed the house she would be working hard to secure the current balance.

Auntie Rosemund Senaya wanted to know if it is 2021 or 2020/2021 academic year.

Her point was noted and clarification made: 2021 academic year.

Mrs. Enyo Agbenu congratulated the treasurer and went on to emphasize the need for the Virtual Campus to be encouraged.

The meeting ended at exactly 5:22pm with a closing prayer by Mr. David Aryee.

Recorded and signed by

Endorsed by

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Baldwin Lamptey (Secretary)

Dr. Mrs. Owusu Ansah (Chairperson)