Dear Parents,

While the feast of St Valentine seems to be almost overwhelmed by the marketing of confectioners, florists and jewelers, there remains the essential message of love, friendship and care and I extend to you all my best wishes on this special day. I also wish you much fun and family time as the Carnaval festivities reach their zenith on Shrove Tuesday before the Lenten “abstinence” begins.

Our Carnaval fun in the Primary school was a very enjoyable celebration. I was truly impressed by the costumes, the talent show performances and the spirit generated. I thank Mr. Evans and his Primary team for the preparations and planning. Mr. Evans animated the Primary events with great success and panache and he is a very talented Master of Ceremonies.

In my weekly communication with parents I may seem to be obsessed with dates and anniversaries. This week I want to reflect on a more personal one for me. This break represents effectively the half way point of the academic year and thus, I am also half a year in the School.

Every new leader gets a honeymoon period and now it’s time to see the tangibles and the sense of how the school is moving and improving.

My first 6 months have been to understand the school, its pupils, parents, staff, history, strengths, and areas that need improving. It has also been the time to build trust, to build teams, and to communicate what my vision and focus will be. I have also been laying foundations and putting structures in place.

Before one can build something new one has to dig foundations. By digging we often unearth something we didn’t expect and we may need to slowly chisel around it like an archaeologist so that it is revealed in its entirety. The poet Seamus Heaney often uses the metaphor of digging to reveal the truth. With this metaphor in mind I have been conscious of not excavating in a rushed and brutal way so that those artifacts that may have been hidden by the accumulated deposits of the past were lost and destroyed.

I am very conscious in my role as custodian of this institution with its long and distinguished history that the inheritance that has been passed to me is valued, restored and redefined going forward.

As I mentioned last week, working with the Board of Governors and the leadership team I want to define our strategic goals over the next 5 years. This will take the school to its 125th anniversary and we’re itching to get exciting projects developed so that the school can celebrate such a milestone with confidence and with pride.

My first request is to ask you to respond in writing to the following:

“Describe what OBS will look like in 2020”

I am looking for your vision of the school. This is an open question and can include school size, quality, facilities, pupils, programmes, and many other areas.

Your responses will be considered in our strategy meeting on 28th February, so I look forward to receiving your homework. I am very happy to receive responses in Portuguese. Please email: 
tom.mcgrath@obs.edu.pt
I am also delighted to announce the “reformation” of the Parent Teacher Association (PTA) this week and details are included within the bulletin.

We are now moving forward with our overhaul of the IT infrastructure of the school and by Easter we plan to have substantial improvements in the IT hardware. This will enable greater capacity, speed, reliability, and more importantly it will provide the foundation for strategic technology improvements.

Tom McGrath, Headmaster

WHOLE SCHOOL NOTICES

CALENDAR FOR NEXT ACADEMIC YEAR, 2015/2016
Calendar dates for next academic year are now available on our website, http://www.obs.edu.pt/uploaded/news/CALENDAR_DATES_2015-2016.pdf

TRAFFIC
Please note we have received some information that there will be some changes to traffic in the vicinity of the school. We are still waiting for full and final details, and will inform all parents as soon as possible.

VALENTINE’S DISCO
We raised over €300 and thanks to DJ’s Louis Blackburn and João Afonso Radeski who rocked the Disco!!

Form 11 CAS team and Mr Simson (CAS Coordinator)

PTA
The PTA Committee met this week and elected the officers for this academic year.

- Mrs Martorell (Form 7 parent) was elected Chair.
- Mrs Ana Cristina Gomes (Forms 5 & 7 parent) was elected Vice-Chair. This new position of Vice-Chair was created to support Mrs Martorell when she is not available.
- Dr Pedro Barata Coelho (Form 1 parent) was elected Secretary.
- Mrs Inês Wollmann (Form 4 parent) was elected Treasurer.

After half-term the PTA will start planning the events for the rest of the academic year. All suggestions are welcome, pta@obs.edu.pt

SKIING TRIP TO LA MOLINA 2015
For the last 20 years Fernando Soares has organised successful skiing trips to La Molina. This year, due to his foot injury it had to be postponed to the Easter Holidays, from Saturday the 28th of March till Saturday the 04th of April 2015. Mr Soares intends to organise ski activities for all ages and assist with accommodation in the area as well as other matters.

This year the total cost of this trip is 475 Euros. (565€ with transport included). Mr Soares will take a minimum of 20 students. If pupils are interested in organising their own transport, they can fly to Barcelona and then catch a train to La Molina or drive from Porto to La Molina. For more information please contact Mr Soares directly: fernando.soares58@gmail.com

Please note, this is not a school run trip.

Fernando Soares
PRIMARY NOTICES

On Thursday our spring half term came to an end with an amazing show of school spirit from all of the pupils, staff and parents of OBS. This has been my third Carnaval experience and they seem to be getting bigger and better each year. If you were not able to make it to school then you missed some amazing costumes from all of the pupils and staff. Parents also were entertained by Windsor, Braganza and Lancaster houses performing flash mob dances. Though, not to be outdone, EYFS also performed their very special Superman dance.

In the afternoon we had our annual Talent Show performance. Again, this was an excellent opportunity for us to see the many areas that pupils excel beyond the classroom. We watched wonderful performances from musicians, singers, dancers and gymnasts.

School spirit is a vital ingredient in allowing a school to function at its best. If the pupils are happy and enjoy their school then they are more likely to reach for, and attain, their full potential. Yesterday, I was very proud of all of the pupils and staff that give so much energy to make this a wonderful environment to work and learn in.

On behalf of the Primary staff, we hope you all have a great Carnaval holiday.

Mark Evans, Head of Primary

HEAD OF PRIMARY COMMENDATION AWARD

Commendation awarded to Duarte for continued excellent effort in all subject areas at home and in school.

1T

DUARTE SANTOS

AFTER CARE

As we strive to improve and streamline the After Care procedure we will be implementing a new procedure beginning after the half term:

Parents or carers will need to sign their child out of After Care. This procedure will ensure that parents and staff are aware of how long a child is utilizing this service. The After Care staff will have a log book that will be used for checking children into After Care and for signing them out.

Mark Evans, Head of Primary
PRIMARY PORTUGUESE LANGUAGE COMMENDATIONS

1T
CARLOTA FERREIRA excelente aproveitamento na disciplina de Português
RYAN KANABAR empenho, dedicação e progresso na disciplina de Português
NICOLAU GOODER empenho, dedicação e progresso na disciplina de Português

4F
JOÃO PEDRO BASTOS excelente aproveitamento na disciplina de Português e contributo para as aulas
FILIPA PIPIRAS excelente aproveitamento na disciplina de Português
GABRIEL KLEIN excelente esforço e progresso na disciplina de Português
ADRIANA PELLIZZARI excelente esforço e progresso na disciplina de Português

SECONDARY NOTICES

The February Secondary OBSERVER is available in the Secondary Section of the school website and also attached. This is a MUST read! It has much news, information and notices related to curriculum, exams and extra-curricular events. It also contains up to date calendars on the last page. Please ensure that you read this with care.

The focus of the February OBSERVER and the focus of next half term is ‘rights, responsibility and respect’. These interlinked concepts are essential for learning and citizenship.

At OBS we aim to ensure that these concepts are central to our philosophy and practice. Through assemblies, tutor time, the curriculum, CAS activities, the MUN, Amnesty International, the Eco Club, DofE and many other vehicles we seek to ensure that every child has the right to learn and the right to feel safe and enjoy themselves.

Likewise, with your support, we seek to ensure that children are responsible in their actions and show respect for other people’s rights and freedoms. The newsletter contains many examples from the curriculum to the MUN. It shows how OBS is helping develop your child as a responsible young adult. It is these we must build upon. Through the partnership of the school, child and parent we can further develop the potential of our children and their role in society.

Peter Jones, Head of Secondary

All key secondary notices are found at http://www.obs.edu.pt/page.cfm?p=428 Please do check this on a regular basis. In addition, all key dates, letters, guidance can be found in the relevant areas of http://www.obs.edu.pt/page.cfm?p=7

DATES FOR THE DIARY

16th-20th February Half-Term
23rd February School re-opens
26th February F5 Trip to Theatre
26th - 28th February OPOMUN Clip
28th Feb-01st March Duke of Edinburgh Expedition
02nd March Prep Trip to Casa da Música