



## WAH YAN COLLEGE HONG KONG

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Our Reference : 2004/05-12

28<sup>th</sup> September, 2004.

Dear Parent,

### **Changes in school policy – Examinations, homework and other miscellaneous issues**

Over the past few years there has been much debate regarding falling standards, particularly falling language standards. It is not my intention here to discuss this debate but it is clear that a number of parents feel some areas of school policy should be tightened up in an attempt to counter these alleged falling standards.

I and the teaching staff also feel that it may be wise to formalise some areas of policy or at very least make some changes where we feel that students are taking unfair advantage of the relaxed school regime.

I do not want in any way to restrict the freedom we very deliberately extend to our Wahyanites but as the President of the PTA recently said "*With Freedom comes responsibility*".

The following changes to school policy are therefore designed not to restrict freedom but hopefully enhance our students' sense of responsibility.

**View of Pass and Fail results.** In previous years we were very tolerant of "fail" grades from students. However from this year on we will be looking much more critically at fail marks than we did in the past. In all Forms students who fail in English or Chinese language will be marked as having failed the term or year even if they passed or came first in all their other examinations. Students who fail more than half their other subjects will also be deemed as having failed the term or year. Therefore in class ranking for Form 1,2 and 3 boys, failed students will be ranked below any student who passes even if their average total marks are higher.

**Mid term assessment.** Although I do not want Wah Yan to become any more examination orientated than it already is we are going to introduce a test week to all forms, except F5 and F7, in the middle of each term in October and April. This will be a much more formal affair than before and will be run on scheduled days for each subject. It will account for 15% of the term's grade.

**Continuous assessment.** Continuous assessment will also be incorporated into the programme for all subjects and, depending on the subject, will be worth between 20% and 40% of the overall term grade.

**Homework accountability.** We are also going to tighten up on the homework because it seems students are becoming rather lax in handing it in on time thus putting an unnecessary burden on teachers to chase them for late work. Homework will now have strict hand in deadlines and failure to hand homework in will be reported to parents using the SMS system. Here we do need the support of parents. Parents do need to press their young Wahyanites to complete homework to the best of their ability and not just in a perfunctory manner. Additionally parents must ensure that the home environment in the evening is suitable for their offspring to study. This includes insisting on sensible bed times to allow them to be fully rested for the following day's school work.



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**Streaming.** In previous years we have not streamed any of our classes prior to Form 4. Rather we have selected individuals for classes to ensure mixed ability. This will remain the case for Form 1 and Form 2 but Form 3 classes will in future be streamed so that the best students will be placed in the K class and the remaining classes will be mixed ability. I don't want to open up the debate about streaming at the moment. I would rather run this system for a year or two and assess its efficacy then.

**Other measures adopted by the school.** There are a number of other measures we have adopted which we hope will improve standards, prepare our students for their future and enhance the learning environment at Wah Yan. These include changes to Wah Yan's debating, the introduction of additional, and thus smaller, English classes for Forms 1 and 2. We will also be running Chinese language enrichment courses after school for Form 4 and Form 6 students. The other measures adopted in previous years will continue including English Corner, the study tour to China and Stonyhurst, the Trinity Examination and the Speech Festival to mention just a few.

I frankly think that we are offering many more opportunities to today's students than were offered in the past. I do hope that our young men take up these opportunities so that they can maximise on their potential.

Let me conclude by saying that I am acutely aware of the ever present debate centred on alleged falling standards, particularly falling language standards. I am concerned that standards may be falling but I am far more concerned that we provide the best training and education for our young men for their future. Our energies I feel would be best directed at looking into the future and making some educated guesses about that environment and then preparing today's school syllabus for tomorrow's workers.

Without your help we will not be able to fully implement these policy changes for the good of the students and the overall good of the school. I do beseech you to support the school and help us ensure that your sons adhere to and make the best of these changes.

Yours sincerely,

Tam Siu Ping, George  
Principal

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### Reply slip

Please hand in the reply slip to the class monitor who should hand in the slips to Mr. Tong of the Office on or before Monday, 6<sup>th</sup> October, 2004.

The Principal,

Wah Yan College, H.K.

I acknowledge the letter regarding the **Changes in school policy** on 28<sup>th</sup> Sept., 2004.

Name of Student: \_\_\_\_\_ Class : \_\_\_\_\_ Class No. : \_\_\_\_\_

Parent's/Guardian's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_