



SPJ SADHANA SCHOOL

JUNE 2022 NEWSLETTER

The month of June 2022 saw the start of the new in-person academic year after the summer vacation, during which a thorough cleaning and reorganisation of the whole school was undertaken.



The Staff Meeting, conducted on 9th & 10th June, began with a video of Gaur Gopal Das regarding “Growth: If it is to be... It is up to me”. It is up to each teacher/educator/therapist/staff member to bring a change in her students and herself. This would be a slogan that each member of SPJ Sadhana will inculcate through their work and service for learners with special needs. To begin on a lighter note the staff members each introduced themselves to the newly appointed staff with a Teaching Aid representing their class/department, using either the verbal or the non-verbal modality. The Principal made announcements regarding changes/shift of teachers across various levels/departments, details of new students enrolled in the new academic year, changes in school timings, biometric attendance of staff, introduction of Art-based Therapy and continuation of Dance Movement Therapy. The Principal mentioned that the theme for this year is "Reading", stressed the importance of reading for every student across the school and encouraged the staff to make use of the reading room and library as well as the computer room that has also been set up. Staff members were requested to complete the inventories and work on the syllabus for the first term. Other procedural matters such as distribution of students' diaries, list of care workers assigned to each department, etc., were also described. Each class/department also shared breakthroughs about their students' skills/performance during the virtual/online academic year 2021-22.

A Training Programme for new appointed teachers was conducted on 1st July 2022. Various sessions were conducted as part of this training programme.

A session on "How to write a Teaching Format" was conducted by the Principal Fionika Sanghvi and Simida Correia. This session began with an activity that identified the importance of one's own friends and transferred these feelings of friendship to one's co-teachers. The teaching format is a core element at the school and it is important for every teacher to understand the teaching format, write it effectively and execute it efficiently. The teaching format helps the teacher plan the way in which a student would learn and helps to form a connection between teacher and student. Orientation to the teaching format was done using the VAKT – (Virtual, Auditory, Kinaesthetic and Tactile) modality. Each component was explained using real life experiences and providing examples. Connections were made with the lesson plans that had formed part of earlier teacher training. Special emphasis was laid on task analysis, learning styles and methodology, using videos and PowerPoint presentations. The session concluded by presenting the notion of TF = W (T: teaching, F: format, W: questions), the 'W' questions being Where, Who, What, When, Why. The session on "Importance of Report Writing and the Process of Writing Reports" was conducted by Priya D'souza. This session stressed a very crucial skill that teachers need to develop effectively. A session on "Documentation" was conducted by Tejal Kothari. The new teachers were informed about the various formats for documentation used in school, as well as ways to effectively manage time, meet deadlines and balance work schedules more efficiently in order to have sufficient time for one's personal life as well. The teachers were also informed about the Disha Project which is an initiative by Jai Vakeel Foundation to address the relevant curriculum for students with Intellectual and Development Disabilities.

Parent Orientation Meetings were held for each class/department on 15th/16th June. The parents were shown a short Iranian award-winning video entitled "Mother", which captures the tenderness, beauty and universality of the longing we all have for a mother's embrace. A mother is the greatest blessing and no one and nothing can replace a mother. The parents were thanked for their support and effective shadowing on the virtual platform and a token of appreciation was given to every parent.



After welcoming the parents, the Principal highlighted the rules and regulations for the academic year and instructed the parents regarding the now mandatory UDID Card (Unique Disability ID) and Disability Certificate required by the Ministry of Social Welfare. The parents of Aditya Akhadkar-Grade IV, Tirth Shah- Skills Enhancement, Kianoosh Dalal – Hospitality & Catering and Sanjana Pore-Visual Arts & Craft shared breakthroughs about these individual students' development in school. This was followed by a series of presentations.

For the Formative Years, Priya D'souza (Coordinator of Formative Years) conducted a session on Teaching-Learning Styles, describing the four learning styles, visual, auditory, kinaesthetic and tactile, to help parents to understand the best modality to work with their child. The Occupational Therapists (Snehal Shinde, Deepa Udiaver, Rashmin Maknoja) conducted a session on key issues in Occupational Therapy and gave suggestions for follow up by parents. The Coordinator of vocational Section Ms. Simida Correia shared ideas about the importance of vocational training. A friendship activity was conducted and it was stressed that friendship was essential to enhance social skills for the students in school and later in the outside work world. The Sports Teacher, Rajashri Ghosalkar, shared important information regarding competition/selection of athletes for the Special Olympics. She informed them about the four stages of selection: district, state, national and international, and clarified that selection was at the discretion of the All India Sports Authority. She also mentioned that the students must be independent in ADL (Activities of Daily Living), travelling, and taking care of their belongings, and should perform to the best of their ability.



The Enhanced Intervention Centre Coordinator, Kashmira Vazifdar, informed the parents about various issues including the introduction of Art-based Therapy and continuation of Dance Movement Therapy. She discussed issues such as timetables, appointments, responding to emails, signing school diaries, etc.

Students were welcomed back to school during Orientation Week by each department. The Formative Years helped students learn each other's names. The Grade 3 teacher Ms. Akshata made name-chains with all the children to welcome them to class. The Grade 4 teacher Ms. Minal made welcome caps with each child's favourite cartoon character as a fun-filled opening activity to welcome them to school.

The students of the Skills Enhancement Class were engaged in fun-filled activities during the Orientation Week. They were involved in games such as rolling the bottle, dice games, paper balancing, memory action games, mediation with nature sounds, and preparing a birthday chart of superheroes. As part of the kitchen activities they engaged in plucking mint leaves and making tarts. They were introduced to Covid appropriate protocols and celebrated the birthdays of Arjun and Dheer while maintaining Covid protocols. The Hospitality and Catering Department began the Orientation Week with warm greetings, prayers, and brain gym and midbrain exercises to energize the students. This was followed by interesting warm-up games that required movement, dance and formation of pairs. Folded notes with secret messages of appreciation were exchanged and the students joyfully read these out aloud. The orientation week was spent in fun-filled activities such as telly games, ring toss, zip zap zoom, darts games, as well as activities like basic table-setting, napkin-folding etc., which developed motivation and competitive spirit as well as team work, and also helped the teachers to gauge their skills/abilities.

On 28th June 2022, the Office Procedures Class along with their teacher Jasmine Pandya & Cynthia Colaco went to the Union Bank of India. This was their first visit to a bank and it was extremely beneficial, helping the students gain practical experience in banking. The students were extremely well-behaved and almost all the students were able to independently deposit money into their savings bank accounts, applying what they had learned in the classroom to the actual world of banking.



On 29th June 2022, the school commemorated the birth anniversary of our beloved former Principal, late Sister Eileen Gaitonde, as a day of Service and Gratitude. The commemoration began with Sister Pratibha talking about Sister Gaitonde. This was followed by Fionika Sanghvi, who narrated a story called "Fallen Flowers". After a prayer service, singing of hymns and lighting of candles as a tribute, a short movie was screened on Sister Gaitonde's life of service to the special students of SPJ Sadhana School. As part of the commemoration, using the theme of Gratitude, students were asked to make and decorate a gratitude jar where each child is rewarded with a token for every good deed performed during the day. A chart was prepared to help the students identify various good deeds. The therapist Ruchi also helped them prepare a recipe for happiness as a part of gratefulness. The gratitude jar will be a reward given to each student earned for good learning and good conduct. The tokens collected will be summed to an amount that will be donated by the students to the needy.



Thus the month of June provided a fun-filled start to the academic year, and set the tone for interesting and meaningful learning opportunities in the year ahead.

