News from the Director

Learning Continues

While we are in the midst of a global and national emergency – a pandemic – the likes of which none of us has seen before, I would like to thank our whole community for their understanding, encouragement and support. We are coming together while staying apart.

ISU administrators, teachers, and support staff are working hard to support student learning remotely while encouraging a positive and healthy attitude.

We know that we will learn much from the students and their families over the next several weeks and our distance-learning plans will evolve and improve. We also know that this type of learning will be easier for some children than for others. Please do not hesitate to call or email. Should you need assistance with materials, technology support, or other resources, we are here ready to help.

Community is one of the words I use a lot. So much so that it is a good-humoured, long-running joke with some students. Much has been written, talked and thought about community. However, at its fundamentals it is quite simple:

- communities cooperate and try not to confront;
- communities discourage rampant individualism;
- communities encourage teamwork and team building;
- communities stigmatise instant gratification.

Never was it truer than now that it takes a community . . . we are in this together for the well-being of the children. Thank you to all for making our community stronger at this challenging time. I wish you good health and happiness in the weeks ahead.

Dr Liam Browne
Director

Digital Learning Coach (DLC), Carolyn Henry (Grade 2 Teacher) tests out various ways teachers will be communicating with students in the coming weeks with our Tech Team and other DLCs.
For the last five days, students and teachers have been making use of Managebac and Google Meet as well as a variety of other online tools. It has been incredibly satisfying to see how enthusiastic and flexible the whole school community has been as we navigate this challenging situation.

I have been lucky to be able to drop into a variety of lessons over the last few days, seeing the engagement of the students and the hard work of the teachers preparing for their lessons. It reminds me of how lucky I feel to be a part of the ISU community. Obviously there have been challenges, occasionally the internet hasn't been cooperative and students have had to adapt to where work is and how to submit it. Teachers are also working on how they build an authentic picture of student learning through an online assessment. What is clear is the determination of everyone to continue to achieve and to learn.

As author Ray A. Davis states, “A challenge only becomes an obstacle when you bow to it.” All I have seen this week is a community meeting the challenges we face head-on and moving on to the next one with determination! Let's keep it up and I look forward to seeing you all soon.

Mr Rawlinson
Middle and Upper School Principal

Teaching is learning

Teaching has always also been a learning profession. Learning from our students daily, learning from other educators, learning from parents and community members, and from the wider world. Many of us became teachers because we knew we would be professionally satisfied by this need to be open to new content, new methods, new ideas, and new humans interacting with us and our classrooms.

This particular moment in time involves a huge amount of learning for our entire ISU community. Students, teachers, and parents are navigating a new e-learning world and while I know it has not been easy, I’ve been immensely impressed with what we’ve accomplished and how teachers, students and parents are learning together.

Every day I see on-line evidence of the hard work teachers are putting in to provide appropriate content to our students and how wonderfully our students are responding. I am also grateful for our parents who have had to quickly shift their lives to work from home while also helping their children thrive in these very different times. Our lives have all been turned upside down and it is wonderful to see the community pull together.

I also fully recognise how difficult this all is. These circumstances have placed families and teachers under tremendous strain as we try to navigate keeping children's lives somewhat normal.

It's ok to make “misnakes”

When I began my teaching career in Oakland, California, my mentor teacher had a sign with these words fully illustrated with entwining colourful snakes hanging in her Grade 1 classroom. I have never forgotten the important message it sends: Learning involves trial and error with mistakes pushing our thinking and understanding forward. In this time of uncertainty and change, I am so reminded of these words and the need to have patience, empathy, and understanding that we will make mistakes and learn and grown from them. This is particularly relevant to our e-learning life. We will learn and grow with you in this endeavour and strive to make things better when we can. Your feedback and input are extremely helpful. Feel free to let us know how things are going. We will adapt as we can and wrangle with new technologies along the way.
Our ISU Distance Learning Guidelines state:

- Student well-being is a priority;
- Learning must include time off-line and away from screens;
- Online Learning activities may be completed independently or collaboratively.

While our priority is to provide students with a forward-moving curriculum and appropriate opportunities for learning, we know that every family needs to make decisions about how to spend their time and figure what works for them. Please do not feel students need to accomplish everything. Each child and family situation is different. Do what works for your family.

We miss your children and hope that these platforms provide choices, connection and continuity but we also recognise that there are no easy ways forward. Balance and flexibility are key.

Take care and be well.

Ms Bachman  
Lower School Principal
The Middle and Upper School Parent-Teacher Conference on March 30 will go ahead using our regular Parents Evening System for making appointments and Google Meet for conducting the conference itself.

Please find below the link to access the system. Please log in and make appointments using the information requested. The information held by the system is that same as Managbac.

Teachers will not be setting work for students on March 30 and we would encourage students to be involved in the meetings during that day.

More details for logging on to Google Meets for each teacher will be shared closer to the conference date. In the meantime, please feel free to make appointments as normal [https://isulmneuulm.parentseveningsystem.co.uk/](https://isulmneuulm.parentseveningsystem.co.uk/)

Please feel free to get in touch if you have any issues logging in to the system (l.rawlinson@is-ulm.de)

Mr Rawlinson
Middle and Upper School Principal
PYP PROFILES FOR HOME LEARNING
for Students, Teachers and Parents

CARING, PRINCIPLED, AND COMMUNICATORS
Remember that this is new for all of us. Be patient with yourself and others. Be encouraging, supportive and forgiving of mistakes. Know that we are in this situation together, and that we will need to work together as a team to be successful.

INQUIRERS, THINKERS, AND KNOWLEDGABLE
This will be a time for us to try out different things and learn in new and exciting ways. It’s a great chance to ask lots of questions and let your curiosity guide you. We can all become more independent learners and explore areas that we are interested in. Be curious, wonder, try, test, and most of all have fun and enjoy your learning!

BALANCED AND OPEN-MINDED
Know that we all need to take care of our hearts, bodies and minds during this time. Rest, play, exercise, talk about your feelings and respect the feelings of others. Be understanding that we will deal with this new experience differently and try to understand the point of view of others.

RISK TAKERS AND REFLECTIVE
Let’s face this situation with enthusiasm and confidence. We can use this chance to think about how we learn and know what we have done well. We can also learn from our mistakes and use them to do things better.

"AND SUDDENLY YOU KNOW. IT’S TIME TO START SOMETHING NEW AND TRUST THE MAGIC OF NEW BEGINNINGS."
MEISTER ECKHART

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In a Morning Connections session with parents and in Lower School classrooms, Mr Browne has been introducing coding and pre-coding experiences to both parents and Lower School students. In the Morning Connections session parents explored how to get the Sphero robot to roll, change colors, make sounds, and move in different directions. The code is developed on the Ipad and there are many different aspects that connect with math, logical thinking, problem solving, and language. Students in Grades 3-5 will have classroom experiences with Mr Browne where they will also explore how to develop their coding skills and get the Sphero Robots to take their commands.

What does it take to make a banana sandwich? How specific and step by step do your directions have to be? How does this activity relate to coding?

Mr Browne helped students understand that coding is a language, a way of clearly, logically giving directions so that your program will work and do what you want it to do.

And who does not love banana sandwiches?