



Welcoming the Holy Month of Ramadan

Weeks before Ramadan, Minaret College set about planning a welcome deserving of the Holy Month. Across the three campuses, Welcome Ramadan Assemblies were held, each reflecting the spirit of Ramadan through a variety of recitations, quizzes, performances and even a play that depicted the significance of Ramadan. Our very articulate emcees shared hadeeth on Ramadan and tips on how to make the best of Ramadan. The celebratory atmosphere was contagious, as students and teachers were treated to lively performances, which conveyed the values of fasting and unity. As we embark on this sacred journey, may we carry the spirit of Ramadan in our hearts and strive to make a positive difference in the world around us. Ameen.



EP's Message

Assalamu alaikum wa Rahmatullahi wa Barakatuh,

Ramadan Mubarak! Alhamdulillah, the holy month is upon us again. As we spend our days and nights reflecting, repenting and asking for Allah's (SWT) mercy and blessings, we remember the hardship and suffering our brothers and sisters in many places all over the world are facing, and make sincere, heartfelt dua for them.

In a talk given at an appreciation tea event for our parents earlier this term, Mufti Zeeyad Ravat spoke about the importance of staying resilient in these times of global turmoil. Mufti shared some ways we can work with the pain and empathy we feel for our suffering brothers and sisters, which is aptly in line with our theme for this term – perseverance. With the view that this world is a place of tests and trials, we uphold steadfast sabr (patience). At the same time, while pain can be intense, let's not forget the favours of Allah (SWT). And this is how we keep smiling in the face of difficulty – to constantly reflect on all the blessings Allah (SWT) has provided us with.

And we indeed have a lot to be grateful for. Term One has been a tremendous start to the year; students across all year levels have been busy with classroom learning as well as many extra-curricular activities including excursions, incursions and clubs. There have also been a number of special assemblies across all campuses, including the formal appointment of student leaders through Investiture Ceremonies and Welcome Ramadan Assembly. Selected year levels across primary and secondary schools have just recently finished NAPLAN testing which will provide us important insights regarding the academic progress of our students and the ability to tailor future interventions and lessons based on their individual needs. VCE students studying Unit 3 and 4 have also been receiving additional support. Students will participate in masterclass workshops throughout the year and selected students are also taking additional classes each weekend through TSSM and funded by Minaret College. While we do have a few pockets of classes impacted by the national teacher shortage, Alhamdulillah we have been able to find viable solutions for most challenges presented. We thank our dedicated teachers as well as our students and families for working through such matters with good will and patience.

As we enter the second half of this auspicious month, I do hope you will join us at our nightly taraweeh sessions on our Officer and Springvale campuses, and the Eid prayers on the Springvale campus. I wish the entire Minaret College community a joyous Ramadan and Eid filled with forgiveness and blessings. May Allah (SWT) grant us the health, strength and patience for us to fulfil our Ramadan obligations, and may He fill our hearts and homes with taqwa, iman and steadfastness. Ameen



Taraweeh and Eid Prayers

Nightly taraweeh prayers at our Officer and Springvale campuses have been well attended by the community. As we enter the last 10 nights of Ramadan, do note that the Isha athan for 21-26 Ramadan will be at 8.50pm, while from 27 to 29 Ramadan, it will be 7.50pm due to daylight savings.

The College will hold congregational Eid Prayer at Springvale Campus only. As per tradition, we will pray on the date announced by the Board of Imams Victoria. Arrangements will be shared on our social media accounts and website closer to the date InshaAllah.



Our Inspiring High Achievers

Through their hard work, grit and dedication, our 2023 VCE high achievers have done Minaret proud. Congratulations to our College Dux, Ayman Ibrahim who achieved an impressive ATAR of 96.35 and will be pursuing an Engineering (Honours) Degree at Monash University. Alhamdulillah all our graduates have achieved strong results with 98% of graduates receiving at least one offer for their tertiary course of choice.

Our Officer and Springvale campuses held award ceremonies to honour not only the students, but their parents and teachers too, who were pivotal to their success. Our college Dux, Ayman Ibrahim and the Dux of Officer Campus, Dawd Dawd, gave moving speeches on his journey with Minaret, thanking his teachers and parents for their unwavering support. He also gave advice and encouragement to our year 11 and 12 students, reminding them that putting in that extra hour of study, will not go unrewarded. Congratulations to all our students and their families. We pray for your continued success. Ameen.













يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اسْتَعِينُوا بِالصَّبْرِ وَالصَّلَاةِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ مَعَ الصَّابِرِينَ (153: 2)

O you who believe! Seek help with patient perseverance and prayer; for God is with those who patiently persevere (2:153)

Meet the Primary School Leaders

At the start of this school year, you may have noticed some changes to the primary school organisation. Previously, the primary school years were split into Junior Primary and Senior Primary. Now, Primary School is a single entity, offering a more holistic educational experience for our students.

The leaders for the primary schools across Minaret College campuses are:

	Head of School	Deputy Head of School	Assistant Head of School
Springvale	 <p>Dr Ahmad Sujan</p>	 <p>Sr Hasnija Avdic</p>  <p>Sr Sadet Selmanov</p>	 <p>Sr Jancy Faber-Louis</p>
Officer	 <p>Sr Imrana Roomi</p>	 <p>Sr Yumna Thaufeeg</p>  <p>Sr Zahra Amirdeen</p>	 <p>Sr Shaakirah Khan</p>
Doveton	 <p>Sr Fairooza Gaffar</p>		 <p>Sr Semra Kara</p>

While continuing to ensure that our Islamic values and principles underpin all that we do, we are further investing and strengthening our focus on core literacy and numeracy skills. Sr Amna Khan and Br Kevin Roberson have been appointed as the Head of Literacy and the Head of Numeracy respectively. These experienced and specialised leaders will ensure our students across all three campuses are supported with best practice resources and teaching methods.

Sr Masouda Keshtiar has been appointed as the Head of Wellbeing and will work to ensure all our primary students have access to appropriate and relevant programs to support their emotional development and are armed with skills to create positive mental health.

In addition, after many years as a Curriculum Specialist at Minaret College, Andrew Maclean has been appointed to the Primary Head of Teaching and Learning role.



Sr Amna Khan



Br Kevin Roberson



Sr Masouda Keshtiar



Br Andrew Maclean

Noticeboard

Discount for upfront payment of school fees



You would have received the invoice for school fees via email. If you haven't, it should be in your inbox soon, InshaAllah. This is a reminder that a **10% discount** applies if the annual fees are paid in full by the due date listed on the invoice. We do hope that you take advantage of the discount by making payment by the due date, and appreciate your efforts to pay promptly.

Providing reasons for your child's absence

Protecting the safety and wellbeing of children through reporting and monitoring of absenteeism is the responsibility of both parents/carers and schools. If your child is absent when the roll call is taken, you will receive a notification through the Sentral Parent Portal. You should click on the 'Absences' tab to provide a reason for your child's absence. Otherwise, you are expected to send a note to the Form Teacher or call the College to keep us informed.

We understand that there may be valid reasons for your child's absence, such as illness or family emergencies. It is essential, however, that the school is informed of the reason for the absence. As a parent or carer, you are legally required to ensure your child attends school every day or you must provide an explanation for their absence. If there are continued unexplained absences, the College will have to escalate, as it is the legal obligation of the College to follow up when students are absent, in order to ensure the safety and wellbeing of the child.



Important Term 2 Dates

Tue, 16 Apr - Start of Term 2

Thu, 25 Apr - ANZAC Day

Mon, 10 Jun - Kings Birthday

Mon, 17 Jun - Eid ul Adha (TBC)

Fri, 28 Jun - End of Term 2

Not Just a Bunch of Girls Kicking a Ball

What started as a few students coming together to learn a new sport, has now bloomed to become an inspirational, inclusive safe space for our sporty students.

Inspired by the incredible performance of the Matildas during the Women's World Cup 2023, a remarkable initiative has taken root within our school community - the Girls-Only Futsal Sessions. It started with a small group of enthusiastic girls who would gather every Thursday after school to play futsal. These sessions started with some basic drills and casual games, and as the girls' skills and confidence grew, they transitioned into more structured matches. But these sessions are not just about the love for the sport.

These weekly gatherings have become a source of inspiration, bringing together a diverse group of talented girls who share a passion for sports and breaking down stereotypes. Most importantly the sessions are a safe and inclusive space for girls to play sports. The girls believe they serve as a powerful example for other girls, especially hijab-wearing girls, who may have been hesitant to participate in sports before.

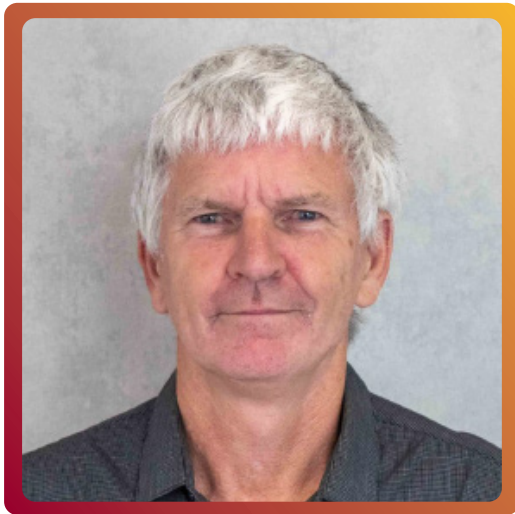
Looking ahead, the organisers and participants of these futsal sessions have ambitious goals. They hope to continue expanding these sessions and encourage even more girls to join. Their ultimate aspiration is to establish a strong presence in school sports, proving that hijab-wearing girls can excel in sports and inspire others to follow their passions.

The Girls-Only Futsal Sessions are a testament to the positive impact that determined individuals can have in creating inclusive and empowering spaces. They remind us all that sports have the power to bring people together, break down barriers, and inspire change. We look forward to seeing these sessions grow and flourish, and we are excited about the positive influence they will continue to have on our school and community.



Top Row (L-R): Roba Mohammed Abdelrahman, Iman Botan, Sgoud Nimir, Lejla Halilovic.
Bottom Row (L-R): Aaliyah Deria, Lyna Harun, Arifa Popal, Iiman Jama.
Other players (not pictured): Leila Bashir, Areen Alshehri and Kheria Hersy.

Meet Kevin



As the Head of Numeracy for Primary School, Kevin Roberson's passion for math + his love for teaching = putting retirement on the backburner

What are your responsibilities as the new Head of Numeracy for primary school?

The responsibilities of becoming Head of Numeracy Primary are far-reaching and varied. I want to ensure that every student at Minaret College achieves their full potential. To enable this, it is my responsibility to oversee the development, review, and implementation of the numeracy curriculum that is aligned with the new Victorian Curriculum 2, through a viable curriculum that enables best practice. This involves ensuring that the curriculum is comprehensive, age-appropriate, and teaches key mathematical concepts and skills effectively.

This necessitates staying informed about current research, building best practices, and incorporating emerging trends in numeracy education, identifying opportunities for innovation and continuous improvement, as well as working collaboratively with colleagues and the school community to implement changes that enhance student learning outcomes.

Implementing best practice through current research requires providing support and guidance to teachers in the planning, delivery, and assessment of numeracy at all levels across Minaret College to improve their pedagogical practices and subject knowledge through training sessions, workshops, and providing resources.

It starts with knowing where our students are on their numeracy journey through effective assessment tools

to measure students' numeracy skills and progress. We would also track their development, celebrate their achievements and analyse assessment data to identify areas of strength and areas needing improvement and using this information for instructional decisions and interventions. It is also important to communicate with parents about their child's progress, and ways parents can support their children's numeracy learning at home.

Overall, the head of numeracy plays a critical role in fostering a positive learning environment and ensuring that all students have the opportunity to develop strong numeracy skills that will serve them well in their academic and personal lives.

As a boy, did you love math?

Yes, I always had a fascination with Numeracy (arithmetic as it was called back in my day). I was always good with numbers and as I've grown, I have fostered that love of numeracy to many students who have frequented my classrooms, as well as developed the love of numeracy on my five children and 12 grandchildren.

If you weren't at Minaret College, where would you be?

Before joining Minaret College I was contemplating retirement, or should I say had retired and was looking forward to enjoying more social events with family. I thought by doing some casual relief teaching it would supplement my retirement and give me something to do. It was like being a grandparent and still teaching. I could teach the children and spoil them a little then give them back.

As I found out. I wasn't ready to retire. There was always something else to do. The explicit teaching of students and the love of learning you see on a day-to-day basis is what I strive for when I walk into a classroom. My passion for teaching and seeing students come to life with their learning. Those connections and seeing those contented smiles of achievement never leaves you.

If you could only bring one item into a classroom of young minds to teach them math, what would it be?

There is one thing I'd bring to the classroom to further student development in learning math is knowledge in a fun way. Humour transcends many cultures and enjoying what you are doing is the most important facet. Students are more engaged in their learning and when they make choices in consultation with the teacher in learning what they need to understand they own what they do and make a more concerted effort to achieve success and get good results.

What are your goals for Minaret students?

I love teaching math, and having this opportunity as the Head of Numeracy gives me the enormous chance to achieve the following for all students:

1. To be proficient in addition and subtraction by the end of Year 2.
2. To be proficient in multiplication and division by the end of Year 4.
3. To be proficient in fractions and algebraic thinking by the end of Year 6.

Technology: Bane or Boon in learning?

At Minaret, we use technology to supplement traditional learning methods, not replace them. It is a valuable tool, and used in conjunction with other activities that promote skill building, such as hands-on activities, games, and real-world applications, we enable mastery of learning.

It is a balance – it is essential we nurture future generations who are required to be tech savvy, while at the same time, ensure that they are not spending too much time on the screen, or being exposed to questionable content.

The college devices are an essential learning tool for our students, and we are mindful of the dangers of online content. As such, the devices that are assigned to students contain the apps that they will require for class lessons and homework. We have installed controls in the devices, that block users from installing new apps and web content filtering. In addition, the College monitors the content students view on these devices, and if a student attempts to visit any unsavoury sites, a report will be sent to the wellbeing team.

We are aware that students may use the device at home for purposes other than homework. The College relies on parents or guardians to monitor the usage of the devices at home. Refer to the story below for tips on ways to limit the use of devices at home.



Math and Tech: How our Head of Numeracy, Kevin Roberson Uses Tech to Teach Math Better

We are mindful of setting limits and boundaries in using devices in school. The importance of setting limits on screen time and ensuring a balanced approach to learning cannot be overemphasised.

I encourage parents to establish guidelines for when and how technology should be used for educational purposes and emphasise the importance of monitoring children's screen time to prevent over-reliance on devices. With balanced, quality screen time, your child could effectively use the device to build the skills required in numeracy.

In my years of teaching, technology has progressed with great speed, and Information Technology can help students learn better, and has improved teaching profoundly.

- 1. Interactive learning:** Technology offers engaging and interactive tools that can make learning more enjoyable for children.
- 2. Personalised learning:** Many educational apps and software adapt to the individual needs and pace of each child, providing individualised targeted support where needed.
- 3. Accessibility:** Technology can provide access to resources and learning opportunities that may not be readily available otherwise.

We only have a finite amount of time learning numeracy in the classroom (five one-hour sessions) and tech gives children the opportunity to have multiple exposures to vital learning skills, allowing ownership and mastery of essential learning skills in fun and engaging manner.

Minaret College endorses the use of programs such as Essential Assessment, Mathletics and Mathseeds to develop students' numeracy skills, and enable the mastery of vital number skills that will foster critical thinking, problem-solving, and analytical skills, essential for success in today's digital age. These programs are well-developed, balanced and thought-based, allowing Minaret College students to develop effective numeracy skills to equip them with the tools they need to succeed in the long term, both academically and in real-world situations.

Be in Control of Screen Time at Home

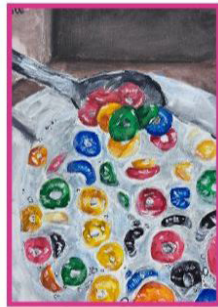
College devices are an essential part of your child's learning while in school, and at home, to complete homework. But how do you ensure that your child isn't using the device for other online activities while they're home? Here are some suggestions:

- 1. Set attainable expectations:** Create goals with your child to be intentional about reducing screen time.
- 2. Make them aware of what is acceptable content:** Have conversations with your child about what content is permissible in Islam.
- 3. Engage with your child:** At the end of each school day, set aside some time to speak with them face-to-face and give them your full attention.
- 4. Set device-free hours:** Set time periods where all devices put away or at a charging station so your child isn't distracted by them.
- 5. Create phone-free zones:** Designate areas where devices are strictly prohibited like in their rooms, or at the dining table.
- 6. Go outside:** Enjoying nature and being among Allah's (SWT) creations is a great way to get some exercise, and increase endorphins which will boost your mood.



Art Achievement Award

In December 2023, Senior Primary students from Springvale campus participated in the “Zart Art Prize” art competition organised by a company called Zart Art. From the pool of 4,000 entries in Year 3-6 Victoria category, the artwork of Sama Mizhir Alulaiwi from Year 6 (2023) was chosen for the Highly Commended Winner prize. In addition to receiving a certificate and gift voucher from Zart Art, her work will be exhibited in a number of venues in Australia selected by Zart Art. Congratulations Sama Mizhir Alulaiwi.



Category 2: Senior Primary (Level 3 – 6)
Sama M, Year 6 - Minaret College

Visit to an Aged Care Centre

Our Year 9 students enjoyed their visit to the Cardinia Aged Care Community Centre, where they spent time with the warm and welcoming staff and residents, fostering intergenerational connections. They had heartfelt conversations, engaged in activities like chess and pool, and listened attentively to the residents’ stories and experiences. Alhamdulillah, it was really nice to be able to make meaningful connections with the elderly residents.



The Making of Leaders

Our three campuses held investiture ceremonies for our primary school captains, recognising their exceptional leadership qualities. Campus heads shared words of encouragement, and important lessons to guide our young ones in their journey towards becoming effective leaders. Proud parents cheered their children on, in what was an amazing show of support. We wish our young leaders all the best, and may Allah (SWT) keep you steadfast in your duties. Ameen.



First Day of School Snaps

While some of our students walked through the school gates happily greeting their teachers and friends, our foundation and ELC students were starting a whole new exciting chapter of their lives. Across the three campuses, we kicked off the new school year with Qur'an recitations and du'as. May Allah SWT bless all the students and staff of Minaret College, and may this year be filled with beneficial learning and barakah.

