



# Annual Report

2020-21 / 5781



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## Mission Statement

**Carmel School Association** is a Jewish International School committed to academic excellence through fostering intellectual curiosity, self-directed learning and the individual development of each child. Carmel is committed to teaching students about, and fostering a love for, Jewish values and traditions, and the Land and State of Israel, its language and culture.

Our personalised approach, with emphasis on growing caring, compassionate, global citizens, produces students who are independent thinkers and communicators and who will become leaders and contribute to the Jewish and wider world.

# Board Chair's Report

Dear Carmel Community,

This School year began in the hope that the impact of the pandemic would fade away and that we could all return to our normal lives. Instead, with the various challenges the pandemic continued to provide, the abnormal became our new normal.

The educational and administrative challenges Carmel School had to face were greater than ever and demanded flexibility, resilience and creativity from the school board and administration.

Both the School Board and management worked tirelessly to assess all possible scenarios and responses, allowing the School to continue to provide excellent education while considering the EDB guidelines, the needs of the children and the School community.

The School made the structural changes necessary to improve educational capabilities and better align the Elementary and High School curricula, while allowing for seamless transitioning between online learning to on campus, face to face learning across all campuses.

In consideration of the economic situation, the School has refrained, both this year 2020-21 and next year 2021-22, from a fee increase. This was achieved by reducing the cost

base while maintaining the educational offering across the campuses.

Once lockdown was relaxed partially and students could return to school in person for some of the day, we were able to relaunch the ELC (Early Learning Centre) which has been extremely successful and looks to become a permanent feature of the school in the future.

Special thanks to you, the Carmel families and stakeholders. Your ongoing support and confidence in the school are the main source of Carmel's strength.

I would like to take this opportunity to wish Mrs. Hasofer success in her relocation to Australia and success to Mrs. Nitzan Sagev-Levi in her new position as Head of Elementary.

Wishing you a pleasant and healthy summer break.



**Shay Razon**  
Board Chairman



# Principal's Report

Dear Carmel Parents and Stakeholders,

As we come to the end of a second 'altered' academic year, I am pleased to report excellent academics across all three campuses, professionally delivered with creativity and flexibility by our committed faculty. There has also been an increased and ongoing focus on wellbeing, with strategies such as starting online lessons with an informal class chat, increasing the virtual asynchronous Art and Sports projects and providing more personal and social health education opportunities. Each individual's wellbeing – be it students', faculty's, admin's or parents', – has been affected in some way and it is testament to our community school, so well supported by our proactive Board Chair, Board and PTA, that the care provided for students and for each other has been so valuable. My heartfelt thanks to all Carmel stakeholders, including our generous donors. We couldn't have achieved so much without your ongoing support.

At our Holly Rofé Early Learning Centre, Coordinators Annabel Baillie and Hagit Razon led enhanced eLearning programmes and children and parents were delighted to receive comprehensive home-learning packs with follow up on their progress and performance. L3 teachers created

and compiled a library of thematic activities adding more resources, and also enhanced the learning of hygiene and self-care for our youngest learners. L4 showcased the blending of PYP and Jewish themes, and provided a fun Purim Parade as well as a successful virtual Seder. L4 children are now excited to be exploring the 5 senses around the School in face-to-face learning as part of their final PYP Unit of Inquiry for the year. And it was with great excitement that the L4 Tefillah in the synagogue resumed last week, for the first time since February 2020!

At Carmel Elementary the sophistication of eLearning offerings and the seamless transitions between in-School and home learning continued and sustained student focus and attainment. The Jewish life celebrations were initially online, the highlight being home visits by the Elementary School Jewish Studies team to each family during school closures, with a hand-delivered Chanukah gift. It has been wonderful to be able to celebrate the Grade 1 Siddur, and G2 Chumash Parties, the K Shabbat party and the Grade 5 Stepping Up Ceremony in person, albeit with limited numbers. And the first ever Carmel School Grade 5 PYP Exhibition, closing the circle of the IB at our School, was an impressive face-to-face event.



At Elsa High School it was gratifying to see the students' passion for commitment to learning transcend the repeated transition to and from eLearning, and Grade 11 and G12 are to be commended for their good humour and resilience in the face of uncertainty. It was very much business as usual with the Carmel Elsa focus on innovation, dedication and professionalism from students and faculty alike. Online highlights included Debate Team successes, Battle of the Books and the hybrid December examinations. Everyone's relief at being able to mark Yom Hazikaron and Yom Ha'atzmaut in person was palpable and this year's DP Art Exhibition and MYP Personal Project Exhibition also took place face-to-face.

There have also been the beginnings of two whole-school projects: the buzzing "Upcycled by Carmel" facility, with visible student proactivity in collecting and sorting plastics in competition form has now launched this exciting new area; and we have seen the establishment of a Carmel School Garden at our SKW Campus. The launch coincided appropriately with Tu B'shvat and saw students from all three school sections plant seeds and nurture their young seedlings at home, to be brought and planted in our Garden. As we farewell Mrs. Mira Hasofer after a decade of dedicated service to Carmel School, we celebrate her achievements

and her legacy: a first-class international Jewish Elementary School, boasting excellence in secular and Jewish education, personalised care, individual growth and truly holistic education. We thank Mira for her tireless energy and determination and for her significant contribution to Carmel School. We wish her every success in her next journey.

I have great pleasure in welcoming Mrs. Nitsan Levi as our incoming Head of Elementary. Mrs. Levi has already left her mark in the classroom, both on the Elementary School and Elsa High School where she has also successfully led the Hebrew and Jewish Life Department. I very much look forward to working with her and seeing her leadership of Carmel Elementary continue and extend successes and growth.

Thank you all for your support. I wish the Carmel community a healthy and safe summer with much quality time with your children.



**Rachel Friedmann**  
Principal

*"It was gratifying to see the students' passion for commitment to learning transcend the repeated transition to and from eLearning"*

# Head of Elementary Report

Dear Carmel Families,

This year was memorable to many of us in many different ways. Apart from the 'new normal', 2021 will be remembered as a milestone year with a special meaning to each one of us.

One of our greatest losses last year was the untimely passing of our beloved Rabbi Jonathan Sacks, z"l. We constantly commemorate his greatness through his famous stories, one of which was that he once received two invitations for the same date at about the same time, one to lunch with the Prime Minister and one to take part in the opening ceremony of a new Jewish School in London. In deciding which to attend, he said 'Which takes precedence? ... Governments sustain society, but education sustains the world. On that occasion I regretfully declined the Prime Minister's invitation and opened the school'.

Personally, it is a time for me to reflect on almost two decades of working at Carmel School. I am drawn to memories of community members who, over the years, have each done their part to ensure that Jewish education in Hong Kong takes precedence. They have given, whether with time, money or an encouraging word. They have contributed to new technology, refurbishing classrooms, creating beautiful spaces on campus and helping make sure we always have enough of the most appropriate materials, programming, books, music, arts and professional development, so that our students can always be the priority. They are the champions that have supported and continue to support Carmel School.

I reflect, with such fondness, on working with our School Board and management, PTA, colleagues, caretakers, security guards - a community of lifelong learners, including many truly principled and wise people who have always given their best to the School with our children at the forefront of

their minds. They are the heroes that have sustained Carmel School from within.

I have been blessed to work with the children of our Hong Kong community since 2002, first as a teacher and then as Head of Elementary since 2010. Many Kindergarten students I taught in my early years have blossomed into proud Elsa High School graduates and gone on to leading Universities and careers, surpassing expectations and taking pride of place as citizens of the world.

Praise to each and every adult and child in our community for the part they have played in shaping Carmel into a school that has sustained what matters most to Jewish education in Hong Kong.

My most heartfelt gratitude goes to our esteemed Principal, Mrs. Rachel Friedmann, who has been my teacher, guide and coach for these past ten years. Mrs Friedmann always exemplifies resilience, determination and perseverance and teaches us all, daily, to strive for excellence and be proud of our Judaism.

I often quote from Pirkei Avot (ethics of the Fathers): 'You are not expected to complete the task, but neither are you free to desist from it.' (Rabbi Tarfon, Pirkei Avot 2:21).

I farewell Carmel knowing that the important task of education for our Jewish future in Hong Kong is ongoing. It continues with the dawn of a new era. May Carmel School of Hong Kong, with Hashem's help, go from strength to strength.



**Mira Hasofer**

Head of Elementary



*"Praise to each and every adult and child  
in our community ... shaping Carmel into a  
school that has sustained what matters most  
to Jewish education"*

# Financial Report

The global pandemic and difficult economic environment have continued to present challenges for Carmel School this year. Online learning has been a feature of life for large parts of the year as the School has worked diligently to protect the health, safety and wellbeing of its students and faculty, whilst maintaining the quality of the learning outcomes.

Facing an enrollment impacted by family relocations in the face of the ongoing uncertainties, we were prudent with the budgeted projections at the start of the year. We have been pleased that the numbers have not dipped and in fact, our current enrollment sits 5% above budget. Our newly launched Early Learning Centre afternoon classes in the JCC have enjoyed significant recognition from the community in the Mid-Levels vicinity. We remain optimistic of positive enrolment growth in this sector in the medium and long term.

Financially, we have benefitted from this year's one-off anti-epidemic grant by the Hong Kong Government and some cost saving measures across the School.

We are as always thankful for the steadfast support of the Ohel Leah Synagogue Trust and donations from our parent body and other supporters. As a consequence, the School has managed to move from breakeven into surplus this year and this helps us replenish our reserves from last year and ensure we are well positioned for future growth.

In the face of the current economic depression, we commend Mrs. Tara Diestel who has continued to work tirelessly to encourage donations from the parent body and stakeholders as well as introduce new donors, both of whom have all been generous in their support of the School.

Wishing you all a safe and healthy summer.

**Russell Davidson**

Board Honorary Treasurer

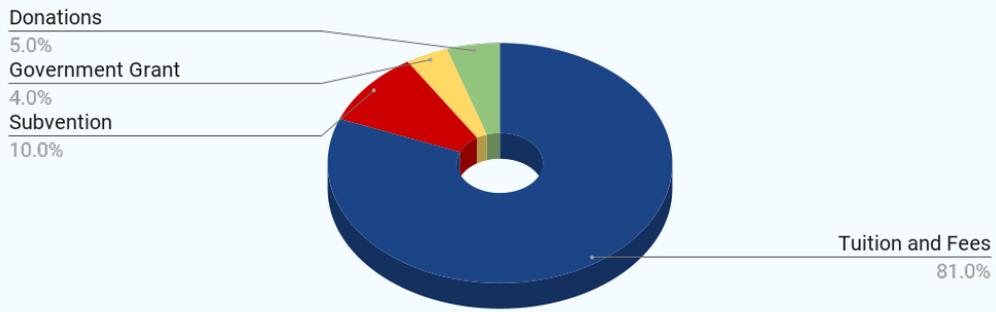
## Financial Highlights

	Actual 2019-20	Forecast 2020-21	Variance
<b>Total Enrollment</b>	384 students	376 students	(2.1)%
<b>Teacher:Student Ratio</b>	1:5	1:5	
	HK\$m	HK\$m	
<b>Total Revenue</b> (Excluding Subvention and Fundraising)	67.4	63.5	(5.8)%
<b>Total Expenses</b> (Including Capex and Provision)	83.2	76.1	(8.5)%
<b>Regular OLS Trust Subvention</b>	6.6	6.6	-
<b>Emergency OLS Trust Subvention</b>	2.0		
<b>Government Grant</b>	2.9	5.1	
<b>Breakdown for Fund Raising (Actual Received)</b>			
<b>Annual Fund</b>	2.3	2.5	
<b>Purim Basket Programme</b>	0.1	0.1	
<b>Other Donations</b>	-	-	
<b>Total Fundraising</b>	2.4	2.6	8.3%
<b>Net Surplus / Deficit</b>	(1.9)	1.7	

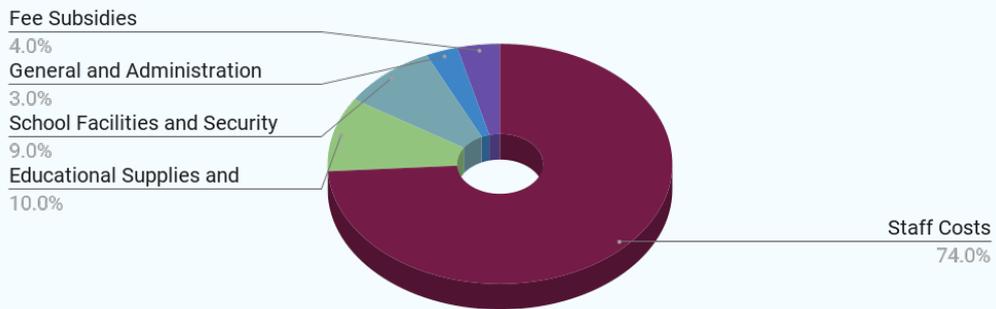
- 2019-20 extracts from the audited accounts for the year ended 31 July 2020
- 2020-21 extracts from full year forecast as of 31 May 2021, figures are subject to year-end adjustments
- Enrollment includes ELC and Tzutzik to G12 classes

## Actual (2019-20)

### Income



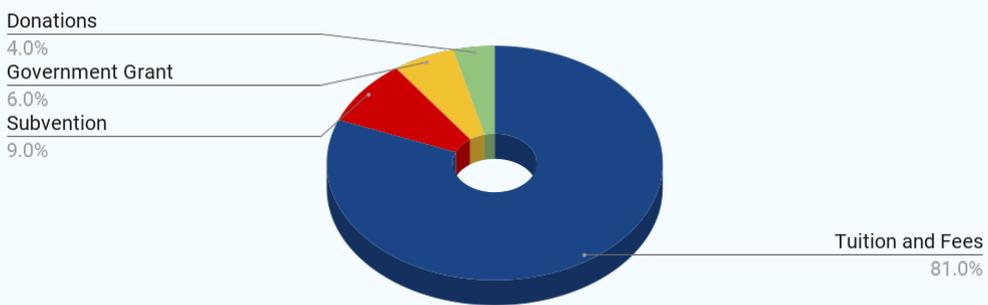
### Expenditure



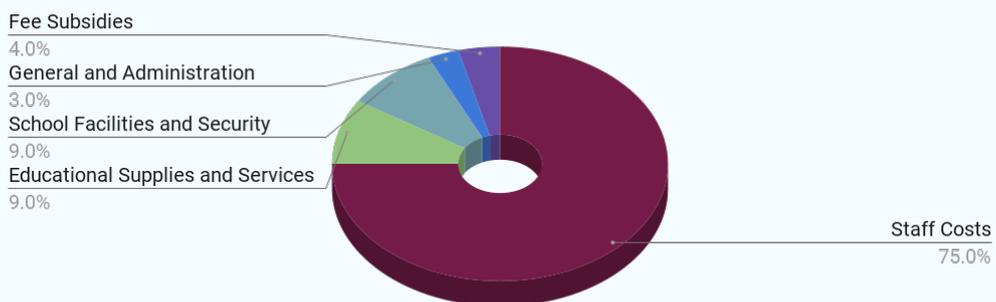
2019-20 extracted from the audited accounts for the year ended 31 July 2020  
Enrollment includes ELC and Tzutzik to G12 classes

## Forecast (2020-21)

### Income



### Expenditure



# Development Report

Who would have believed that a year later we would both literally and figuratively be in the same place? The 2020 – 2021 annual year still proved to be challenging to navigate despite everyone being accustomed to the “new normal”. Nonetheless, the Development Committee worked tirelessly, albeit quietly, to raise the much-needed funds that bridge the gap between tuition and costs. This year we saw the biggest participation in Quiz night with 18 houses and close to 200 participants. A huge success while following all social distance restrictions!!! Purim baskets were virtual for the second year in row and reached out to families globally, expanding our participation base.

We would like to thank the parent body, stakeholders and community members for supporting Carmel School. We look forward to celebrating 30 years of Carmel next year and bringing all of us together in spirit if not in body.

**Tara Diestel**  
Development Committee

# PTA Report

The PTA supported many events and initiatives throughout the year. Whether for fundraising or community ‘friend-raising’, the PTA plays significant role in the School’s activities.

The PTA and school faculty extend a special thank you to Mrs. Belinda Caviglia from for her contributions to the School. All the best to the Caviglia family on their return to Australia.

## PTA Events

- Food and Beverage for Celebrations and Events
- Graduation Photo Memorial
- Teacher Appreciation Gifts
- Year-End Fun Day

# Carmel School Board

**Chairman**  
Shay Razon

**Executive Committee**  
Shay Razon  
Russell Davidson (Honorary Treasurer)  
Jason Webber

**Board Members**  
Jason Budovitch  
Russell Davidson  
Tara Diestel  
Agnes Effron  
Seth Fischer  
Frederick Mocatta  
Shay Razon  
Atara Sivan  
Nahum Shemesh  
Jason Webber  
David Weiss  
Jonathan Zeman  
Deborah Khorsandy (PTA Representative)  
Belinda Caviglia (PTA Representative)

# Board Sub Committees

**Finance Committee**  
Russell Davidson  
Shay Razon  
Seth Fischer  
Jason Budovitch  
Anna Wong  
Rachel Friedmann  
Mira Hasofer

**Premises & Facilities**  
Jonathan Zeman  
Shay Razon  
Adam Fingrut  
Rachel Friedmann  
Mira Hasofer  
Kyle Ford  
Anna Wong

**IT and Marketing Committee**  
Shay Razon  
Nahum Shemesh  
Anna Wong  
Kyle Ford  
Alasdair Ong  
Rachel Friedmann  
Mira Hasofer  
Charles Allard

**Fundraising Committee**  
Tara Diestel  
David Weiss  
Frederick Mocatta

**Education Committee**  
Atara Sivan  
Rachel Friedmann  
Mira Hasofer

**Oversight & Risk Committee**  
Russell Davidson  
Atara Sivan  
Jason Webber

**Welcome Committee**  
PTA Representatives



*"Purim baskets were virtual for the second year in row and reached out to families globally, expanding our participation base."*

"The seeds of knowledge are in learning; and in all your learning, strive for understanding"

ראשית חִכְמָה, קִנְיָה חִכְמָה; וּבְכָל-קִנְיָנָה,  
קִנְיָה בִינָה מִשְׁלֵי ד', ז'

知识的种子是埋在学习中的 · 在学习过程中要尽力去理解而发现种子。

Les germes de la connaissance sont dans l'apprentissage; et dans tous vos apprentissages, efforcez-vous de comprendre.

[www.carmel.edu.hk](http://www.carmel.edu.hk)

Excellence, Community, Tradition

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