

8 Feb 2022

Newsletter to Parents – The February Edition

Dear Parent,

Wishing everyone a healthy and prosperous Year of the Tiger! I hope that, despite the SMMs, we all managed to spend some time with our loved ones over the Chinese New Year (CNY) break. Also, hoped that we managed to take some time to rest and recharge as we are steadily approaching the middle of Term One.

The celebratory mood in our school kick-started with our annual CNY Classroom Decoration, which doubled up as an authentic platform for our students to develop their oracy skills in the Chinese Language. The celebrations built up to a climax last week when we had our CNY Celebration concert. The concert showcased the talents of our Visual and Performing Arts groups, including students from our very own Malay Literary, Drama and Debate Society who presented a rousing *Dikir Barat* item extolling the virtues of resilience and courage.

Celebrating our Students' Successes

Continuing with the celebratory mood, I am very pleased to share the achievements of our Class of 2021. 100% of our Sec 4N(A) students are eligible for progression to Sec 5, 46.7% were eligible for the Polytechnic Foundation Programme (PFP), and 94.7% were eligible for the Direct Entry to Polytechnic Programme (DPP). All our Sec 4N(T) students were eligible to progress to the Institute of Technical Education (ITE).

Our Sec 4E and Sec 5N(A) cohorts also achieved very credible results with over 90% of our Sec 4E eligible for promotion to JC and close to 78% of our Sec 5N students eligible to progress to a polytechnic.

All in all, a very credible set of results in spite of the disruptions brought about by the COVID pandemic! We are especially proud of how our students demonstrated the value of resilience in circumventing challenges as they slowly but steadily work towards their goals.

Celebrating Learning

As I was sharing with my colleagues, the results at the national examinations is hardly ever just the result of the efforts put in in the graduating year. It is a culmination of our students' and teachers' work over their four or five years in the school.

The world of further education and work has changed and this has a knock-on effect on the demands of curriculum and assessment in secondary education. Gone are the days where it was sufficient to just do lots of practice questions, memorise facts and regurgitate them at the examinations. The national examinations today require students to be able to make sense of what they learnt, be able to grasp the big ideas and apply them in authentic and novel situations.

This is why the way we teach has also changed over the years. We have been slowly shifting away from relying just on frontal teaching. Instead, we are getting students to engage in more inquiry-based learning in class, like how our Sec 1 students got to apply what they learnt about historical sources, evidence, accounts and chronology by exploring our school's Heritage Gallery and artefacts around the school.

We also try to, as much as the Safe Management Measures (SMM) permit, provide authentic platforms for our students to apply what they have learnt in class. For example, we would send selected students from our Level 3 Mother Tongue Languages Talent Development programme to serve as docents for the annual River Hongbao exhibitions.

Of course, a significant way that teaching and learning has changed would be the introduction of the Personal Learning Devices (PLDs). Although our Sec 1 students have not been issued their devices yet, based on our experience last year, having each student empowered by a PLD would better enable teachers to differentiate instruction according to their students' learning needs. Technology also facilitates the development of collaboration skills and makes it easier for teachers to incorporate regular assessments for learning and give students timely feedback on their learning.

Celebrating Friendships

Learning is a social endeavour. The evidence from research tells us this. Our students' and teachers' experiences of teaching and learning under the SMM verifies this. When students had to adopt exam style seating arrangements rather than group/cluster seating, learning seems less engaging and less effective.

Why is this so? Essentially, whenever we learn something new, it would likely entail us understanding different viewpoints and broadening our own perspectives. This exchange of ideas is especially important when students start to apply what they learnt to novel or real life situations. This is what is prioritised in many of the recent syllabuses. And this is something that needs to happen through collaborative learning. It is very important that our students learn how to learn together.

This is why, when we design learning experiences for our students, we will try as best as we can to include opportunities for them to work together. Sure, there will inevitably be differences and disagreements. This is only natural. What is more important would be for us to teach our students to work out those differences and disagreements and learn how to collaborate effectively with one another.

It is not just about collaborating in academic learning. School is where our students develop social skills in order to be better members of their family, community, country and the world. In Xinmin, our students not only learn to interact well with others, but also develop the moral courage to stand up for their friends and support them in times of need. This is what has enabled us to step in to intervene or provide additional support to our students in a timely manner.

Of course, none of these would happen without strong support from you – our partners in supporting the learning and growth of your children through their time in Xinmin. I hope we will continue and strengthen our partnership as we work together to give your children an enriching secondary school experience!

UPCOMING EVENTS

Total Defence Day Commemoration (15 Feb)

To commemorate Total Defence Day on 15 Feb, Form Teachers will engage students in understanding the six pillars of Total Defence during Form Teacher Time on 15 Feb (Tue). This year's theme of 'Together We Keep Singapore Strong' is a continuation from previous years, focuses on the many ways we can put Total Defence into action in our everyday lives.

Singapore is facing a wider range of challenges and threats. They are complex and multi-faceted. They are also increasingly targeted at hearts and minds, aimed at breaking social unity and unsettling commitment to the nation. Hence, it is crucial for us to step up and play our part to strengthen our unity, resilience, and resolve in the face of these challenges and threats. Through our activities and engagement, we hope that Total Defence would continue to help to rally Singaporeans through threats and challenges, and be resilient as we manage the effects of Covid-19.

School Dental Programme (7 Mar to 31 Mar)

The Health Promotion Board will be providing free dental checks for all Sec 1 and 3 students from 7 Mar to 31 Mar (excluding the term break). Parents will need to give their consent before their children can receive such services. Sec 1 parents may log on to <https://childconsent.hpb.gov.sg> to give your consent using your Singpass. Parents who encounter difficulties in accessing the portal may obtain hardcopy forms from our General Office.

Student Council Investiture Ceremony (8 Mar)

The Student Council Investiture Ceremony will be held on 8 Mar during Form Teacher Time. The annual ceremony formally recognises and welcomes the Student Council Interns who have passed their 6-month internship into the Student Council family. As newly-minted Student Councillors, they will embark on a journey of discovery as they learn to work together with one another as student leaders of the school. The event also publicises some of the events and duties managed by the Student Councillors and invites interested students to submit their application to join the Student Council.

NRIC Registration for 15 year-old SC and SPR (8 Mar)

ICA will be conducting an NRIC registration exercise for all 15 year-old Singapore Citizens (SC) and Singapore Permanent Residents (SPR) on 8 Mar 2022 in our school. Parents should have received an ICA notification letter concerning the details of this registration exercise. Students are to approach General Office if they did not receive their notification letter.

Geographical Investigation for Sec 4 Geography students (8 Mar and 9 Mar)

Sec 4 Pure Geography students will be going for a Geographical Investigation (GI) Fieldtrip to Pasir Ris Park organised by the Humanities Department.

GI is an essential component for the Pure Geography syllabus and the cohort was unable to experience it last year due to the disruptions brought about by COVID-19. It is thus important that the students experience this GI fieldwork which cannot be replicated through class-based activities. Please be assured that your child/ward will be briefed on the safety aspects in the field and also safe management measures which will be adhered to strictly.

The dates, time and classes involved are shown below:

Date	Time	Classes Involved
8 Mar (Tue)	3.30 pm – 6.30 pm	402 and 404
9 Mar (Wed)	4.00 pm – 6.45 pm	403

Please note that two-way transport is provided and your child/ward will be dismissed from school after the GI Fieldtrip. A consent form will also be sent via Parents Gateway for your reference and approval.

Elective Modules (Category A) for Sec 4 Normal (Technical) students (21 Mar to 24 Mar)

The Sec 4 Normal (Technical) students will be attending their Category A Elective Modules on 21 Mar to 24 Mar. These courses are developed to provide a broader learning experience to the students as well as to expose them to the educational progression and career pathways available. The students have selected their modules for the 4 full-day course.

The modules and venues are as follows:

Category A Elective Module	Venue
Interactive Electronics	College West
Digital Marketing	College West

USEFUL RESOURCES

Parents@Xinmin (P@X)

An excellent way for parents to keep in touch with the school is via our Parents@Xinmin (P@X) platform.

Here are our P@X EXCO members for 2022:

- Chairperson - Ms Hazel Yeo
- Vice-Chairperson - Ms Joanna Lye
- Level Coordinators
 - Sec 1 Coordinator – Ms Eunice Sim
 - Sec 2 Coordinators – Ms May Chong and Alice Wong
 - Sec 3 Coordinators – Ms Aniza Aquavella and Mr Thong Kwok Wah
 - Sec 4 & 5 Coordinator – Ms Jacqueline Ee

If you need more information on P@X, feel free to email the group at xmss.pax@gmail.com. We hope you would find time to participate in some of the activities organized by P@X and network with other parents. Do also feel free to share your ideas and suggestions with them. We look forward to have you in our P@X family!

Education and Career Guidance (ECG) Counsellor

As part of the school's support in guiding your child's education and future career, our ECG Counsellor, Ms Catherine Ng, conducts one-to-one or small group ECG counselling, classroom sessions, talks and other activities to help students explore their strengths and

interests in relation to their aspirations. She will also guide students and their parents in planning and making informed decisions for their education and career pathways, as well as work with teachers to create strategic ECG programmes and experiences for the students. If you wish to speak with Ms Ng, please contact her at ng_hui_fong_catherine@schools.gov.sg. To make the consultation session more beneficial, your child should be present with you.

Your partner in education,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tan Kuo Cheang', written over a horizontal line.

Mr Tan Kuo Cheang
Principal