

11 May 2021

Newsletter to Parents – The May and June Edition

Dear Parent/Guardian,

How are you?

Just the other day, I was sharing with colleagues that we are glad to be able to resume quite a number of activities for students (e.g., NSG, SYF, XinminCares) this year. Notwithstanding the adherence to Safe Management Measures, students (and teachers!) welcomed the opportunities to explore their interests and showcase their talents. After a year of hiatus, we are all glad to regain some form of “normalcy” in our lives.

That said, this also means students might, again feel stressed at having to manage their CCA commitments and the weighted assessments. Our graduating students would also be feeling the stress of having to prepare for their mid-year examinations.

It's Okay to be Not Okay

Ensuring our students' overall well-being is something we have been taking very seriously in Xinmin. While most of our students have adapted well and developed resilience to overcome their challenges, we do have some students who are still grappling with stressors such as meeting their own expectations, relationship with peers and negotiating family tension.

Stress is an inevitable part of our lives. Sometimes, stress can spur us on to achieve things that we thought were not possible. However, stress may also incapacitate us. Rather than avoid stress altogether, it might be more useful for our students to learn how to cope with the different stressors in their lives. This skill will come in very useful in the future.

The first step to coping with stress is for our students to be aware of their own thoughts, feelings and behaviours. Students can also use strategies such as journaling their worries, having sufficient sleep and exercise and unfollowing or muting social media accounts that affect them negatively. Another effective way of coping with stress is for students to ask others for help.

Contrary to what some might think, asking for help is not a sign of weakness. We need to realise that it is okay to feel not okay. Sometimes students may feel overwhelmed by everything coming together. Rather than try to cope on their own, it may be more effective for the student to reach out to someone they trust. Even if that someone could not help solve all the problems, having someone hear them out and perhaps share a different perspective may help to reframe the problem. This will help relieve the stress somewhat.

Checking-in as a Protective Factor

Of course, as parents, we can help our children cope with stress too. How so? By providing S.P.A.C.E.

- Support
I understand we are all busy with our work and our lives, but do try to spend some quality time with your child. Have a conversation with them about their time in school (without coming across as interrogating them!) and their views about things. Show an interest in what they say.
- Problem Solve
No. We should not aim to solve our children's problems for them. Instead, we should work with them, help them to think about the problems and issues and guide them to look for solutions of their own. Rather than prescribe what your child should do to solve the problem, try asking them questions and getting them to think about different alternatives.
- Affirm
Before proceeding to advise our children on what they can (should?) improve on, it is good to affirm them for their effort in doing the right things right. This would help to build self-confidence in our children and help them feel that you care about them and appreciate their effort.
- Cheer
We are our children's greatest cheerleader. Sometimes, when things just do not seem to go right in our child's day, it will be good for you to encourage them and keep their spirits up. Share an inspirational story or two with them. Better yet, share some of your personal stories of how you overcame adversity through being resilient.
- Empower
We love our children and are willing to go through all lengths to protect them. However, it is also important that we allow our children to learn to be independent and fend for themselves. This is where the school environment comes in very useful. In our school, we provide many opportunities for our students to go through new experiences, and challenge themselves by taking a step out of their comfort zones. It will be helpful for you to encourage your child to seize these opportunities. Encourage them to learn from the experience, regardless of whether they achieve success in their attempts.

I extracted the above tips from a MOE Schoolbag article. You may wish to access the full article (which has more tips and resources) via <https://www.schoolbag.edu.sg/story/connecting-with-our-children-caring-for-their-well-being>.

Working in Partnership with the school

Ensuring our children's mental well-being requires the family and the school to work together. One way we can do that is through open communication, including the sharing of information that will be helpful in helping the child manage.

Apart from your child's Form Teacher and Year Head, we also have a School Counsellor who is very experienced in working with students to process their thoughts and feelings, and give them some handles in coping with their stressors. She is also able to link you and your child up with external resources if need be.

We hope you will continue to partner us so that we can work towards helping offering our students a happy and enriching secondary school experience!

MATTERS TO NOTE

Updates to Safe Management Measures (SMM) in Schools

In response to the rising number of community cases in the recent weeks, there will be a strengthening of Safe Management Measures (SMMs) in schools. These measures are based on the following considerations:

- a. Minimising disruption to core curricular programmes and students' learning;
- b. Cohortising students by classes and CCAs;
- c. Reducing overall activity sizes to a maximum of 50 individuals and group work size to 5; and
- d. Minimising the intermingling of students and staff across schools and with public.

We will continue to remind our students to adhere closely to SMM guidelines, while we monitor the national situation.

a) TraceTogether

From 17 May 2021, students will be required show their TraceTogether (TT) token or app to their teachers in class during daily attendance and temperature taking. Students will not be required to show the TT token/app at the entrances to prevent congestion. Throughout the day, the students should have their TT token or TT app with them to facilitate contact tracing if the need arises.

On a side note, while both the TT token and smartphone app will facilitate contact tracing, we also observed that some students are easily distracted when they have their mobile phones with them all the time. Hence, we would recommend for students to use the token instead of the app to prevent them from being distracted by their phones. Parents may collect the TT token for their child from any community clubs.

b) Travel declarations

For the upcoming June holidays, students are advised to continue to defer all travel overseas unless it is permissible under the prevailing MOH's travel advisory. Only students intending to travel are required to submit their travel declarations to the school.

Admission into Post-Secondary Institutions

a) Direct School Admission – Junior College (DSA-JC)

DSA-JC Exercise provides Sec 4 Express and Sec 5 Normal (Academic) with the opportunity to seek admission to a Junior College (JC), based on a diverse range of academic and non-academic achievements and talents that they can demonstrate beyond the GCE O-Level Examinations.

b) Polytechnic Early Admissions Exercise (Poly EAE)

Poly EAE is an admissions exercise that allows Sec 4 Express and Sec 5 Normal (Academic) students to apply and receive conditional offers for admission to polytechnic based on their aptitude and interest before taking the GCE O-Level Examination. It allows the polytechnics greater flexibility in selecting students on a broader measure of criteria other than academic grades, thus allowing a wider range of talents to be recognised. Please refer to the EAE Polytechnic website at <https://eae.polytechnic.edu.sg> for more information. Interested applicants may also visit the respective websites of the polytechnics for more details on the courses offered. Applications are from 25 Jun to 1 Jul.

c) ITE Early Admissions Exercise (ITE EAE)

ITE EAE is an aptitude-based admissions exercise that allows Sec 4 Normal (Technical) students to apply and receive a conditional offer for admission to ITE, based on their aptitude, passion and interest before taking the GCE N-Level Examination. Please refer to the ITE webpage at <https://go.gov.sg/ite-eae> for more information. Applications are from 27 May to 3 Jun.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Hari Raya Puasa (13 May)

Hari Raya Puasa falls on 13 May (Thu) and it is a public holiday. Muslim students will be dismissed earlier at 11 am on the eve of Hari Raya Puasa, i.e. 12 May (Wed). Graduating students will be having their mid-year examinations on that day and they may leave the school after their last paper.

Normal lessons will resume for Sec 1 to 3 students on 14 May (Fri). As there are no mid-year papers scheduled for 14 May (Fri), graduating students do not need to report to school on that day.

Mother Tongue Languages (MTL) After-School Consultation (17 May to 27 May)

MTL After-School Consultation will be carried out from 17 May to 27 May for 4E, 4N(A) and 5N(A) students sitting for the GCE O-level MTL Examination on 31 May (Mon). These students will have their timetabled lesson as per normal during this period. MTL teachers will arrange for small group consultation after school with the students who need additional support in learning MTL or preparing for the upcoming GCE O-Level MTL Examination.

Vesak Day (26 May)

Vesak Day falls on 26 May (Wed) and it is a public holiday.

Last Day of Semester Programme for students (27 May)

To conclude the semester, the school will be having a Last Day of Semester Programme for all students on 27 May. The programme aims to allow students to reflect and consolidate on their learning and growth in the first half of the year. More details will be shared with you via PG at a later date.

Parent-Teacher Meeting for all levels (28 May)

This year Parent-Teacher Meeting (PTM) will be held on 28 May (Fri) from 8 am to 6 pm for all parents. There will be no lessons on that day and students are to stay at home instead of coming to school.

The PTM will be done through Zoom meeting. The PTM booking period is from 12 May (Wed), 3 pm, to 21 May (Fri), 3 pm. More details will be sent through Parents Gateway, by the respective form teachers. We hope that this PTM will support the school and the parents to have a shared understanding of the various roles that we play in the learning and development of your child.

GCE O-Level MTL Written Examination (31 May)

The GCE O-Level MTL Examination will be on 31 May (Mon) at the school Multi-Purpose Hall. More information will be provided during the National Examination Briefing to candidates.

The timing for the papers as below:

- Paper 1 : 8.00 am to 10.00 am
- Paper 2 : 11.00 am to 12:30 pm

Candidates are required to wear full school uniform and to bring their NRIC, entry proof and necessary stationery for the examination.

Sec 4 and 5 Supplementary Lessons (1 Jun to 4 Jun, 21 Jun to 25 Jun)

To support our Sec 4 and 5 students in their learning, supplementary lessons will be held from 1 to 4 June and 21 to 25 June. Teachers will be helping the students attain content mastery in preparation for the O-level and N-level Examinations. The class timetables for the supplementary lessons will be available on the school website from 26 May (Wed).

Leadership Adventure Camp 2021 (7 Jun to 9 Jun)

Selected Sec 2 students from each CCA, as well as Sec 2 Student Councillors, will be participating in the Leadership Adventure Camp 2021 from 7 Jun (Mon) to 9 Jun (Wed) in school. The day camp is entirely run by selected Sec 3 leaders, and overseen by the Student Leadership Committee teachers. Through a series of thoughtful activities organised by the student planning committee, the young leaders will learn more about what being a leader means, and the values a leader should have. LAC also provides a platform for the L3 leaders to practice their facilitation skills from their recent facilitation skills workshop. A consent form containing details of the LAC will be sent to parents via Parents Gateway. If you have any queries, please contact Mr Kevin Lu at lu_wenqi_kevin@schools.gov.sg for more details.

4NA Advanced Elective Modules (7 Jun to 18 Jun)

The 4NA students will be attending their Advanced Elective Modules (AEM) by the Polytechnics in Week 2 or Week 3 of the June Holidays. They have been informed of the modules they are attending and the respective polytechnic venue. The main objective of this program is to provide students an experience learning in the polytechnics and expose them to the various programmes/courses being offered. The notification letter with details has been sent to parent through Parent Gateway on 8 Apr.

In view of the recent restrictions are from May 8 to May 30 due to Covid-19, the school will monitor the national situation closely and keep the students informed if the externally-held AEMs have to be cancelled.

4NT Elective Module (Category B) (21 Jun to 24 Jun)

The 4NT students will be attending their mandatory Elective Module (Category B) in Week 4 of the June Holidays, i.e. 21 Jun to 24 Jun. The 4-half-day course will take place in school. This program aims to expose students to the aeronautical engineering industry and the related ITE courses. The notification letter with details will be sent out to parents through Parent Gateway soon.

Updates on Homecoming Celebrations

Homecoming 2021 which was originally scheduled on 3 Jul will be postponed to a later date. In line with the current safety management measures, there will also be a change in format from the traditional carnival style of the event. More details will be furnished at a later date.

GCE O-level and N-level EL and MTL Oral and Listening Comprehension Examinations in Term 3

Please take note of the following dates for the GCE O-level and N-level Oral and Listening Comprehension Examinations in Term 3:

- 6 Jul: O-level MTL listening Comprehension Examination
- 7 Jul: O-level MTL(B) Oral Examination
- 8 Jul – 16 Jul: O-level MTL Oral Examination
- 12 Jul – 16 Jul: N-level EL Oral Examination
- 22 Jul – 3 Aug: O-level EL Oral Examination
- 29 Jul – 2 Aug: N-level MTL and BMTL Oral Examination
- 4 Aug: O-level (SP) Oral Examination
- 11 Aug- 17 Aug: O-level HMTL Oral Examination

The candidates will be informed of the exact day for their respective oral examinations by their subject teachers.

Yours faithfully,



Mr Tan Kuo Cheang
Principal