

11 May 2022

Newsletter to Parents – The May/June Edition

Dear Parent/Guardian,

How are you?

I hope that, like us, you breathed a sigh of relief at the recent relaxations of the Safe Management Measures (SMM). Even though we may have to still live with some degree of SMM (e.g., keeping our masks on indoors), it is good to be able to gradually bring back some degree of vibrancy to our students' school experience! While COVID has wrecked quite substantial havoc to our students' learning and school life, it has also offered us some valuable lessons. One of which would be that we should never take the little things for granted – like how we could not have our daily flag raising ceremonies as a school for close to two years!

Another, perhaps more important lesson is that we need all our students to learn to be self-directed in their learning. Over the past two years, the disruptions (e.g., pivoting to full HBL) meant that our students could not receive the same degree of face-to-face attention from their teachers. There is a fair bit of learning that, with the support of technology, they must do on their own. It is for this reason that Blended Learning was implemented in all secondary schools and JCs nationwide.

Take Charge! Own Your Learning!

The HBL component of Blended Learning is designed precisely to provide students with the opportunity to learn on their own. Except for the few stipulated synchronous online lessons, students can choose when and where to complete their assigned tasks. There is further flexibility given to students to explore and/or deepen their interests in the Student Initiated Learning component during their fortnightly HBL days.

In addition to Blended Learning and Student Initiated Learning, we also provide lots of other opportunities for students to take charge of their own learning and design their own secondary school experience. These opportunities come in the form of school, level or class activities, as well as the various enrichment programmes and activities organised by the different departments and CCAs. While we understand that engaging in these activities might take up time and effort, we believe doing so will enrich your child's learning experience.

Many of our (past and present) students harnessed these opportunities to explore and deepen their interests. They also documented their learning from these experiences in their portfolios when applying for early admissions exercises or scholarships after graduating from Xinmin. As such, it would be good for you to encourage your child to take a second look at the buffet of enrichment opportunities we provide in the school and urge them to participate actively in them.

Taking Responsibility for the Small Things

Of course, taking charge of their learning does not only mean participating in enrichment activities. In fact, we can help our students learn to take charge of their learning (and their lives!) by starting with the small things, like their attire, behaviour and Chromebooks.

Of late, we noticed that some students have not been adhering to the school rules when it comes to their hair and attire. While some might argue that these are irrelevant to the students' learning, we noticed that students who failed to adhere to the hair and attire standards also performed poorly in other aspects of school (e.g., their academics). Why might this be? Well, if students can disregard the hair and attire rules, it would be reasonable to expect them to disregard other rules such as being prepared for lessons and paying attention in class. As such, it would not be surprising for their academic learning to be adversely affected.

The same goes for their behaviour in class and how they interact with one another. We find that students who generally adhere to the school rules (e.g., be punctual for school, respectful when interacting with others) tend to achieve better all-round performance.

A recent significant change to our students' lives is the introduction of Chromebooks. While most students were able to harness the affordances of the device to enhance their learning, there are some students who seem to have difficulties doing so. There were times when students forgot to bring their Chromebooks or left it unattended somewhere in the school. There were other times when students forgot to charge their Chromebooks or rough-handled them (e.g., dropped them through carelessness). These are all behaviours that suggest a certain lack of responsibility on the part of the student. While we endeavour to correct such irresponsible behaviours when we see them in school, we would need to look to you to reinforce the message in your conversations with your child at home.

Having the Space to Try, Fail and Learn

One last aspect about students taking charge of their learning is about failure. As our children grow up, it is normal for us to gradually release responsibility and expect them to progressively take greater ownership of their lives (and learning). Now, as students find themselves entrusted with greater autonomy in their learning, it would be reasonable for us to expect that not all of them would know how to exercise that autonomy productively.

To illustrate, we have some students who did not manage to make good use of the flexibility during their HBL days to learn on their own. They also did not manage to use the ringfenced time and space to explore or deepen their interests (i.e., Student Initiated Learning).

In these cases, we would need to give them some structures to help scaffold their self-directed learning and remind them to remain on-task in their learning at home. Of course, it would be best if you could also support us by similarly reminding your child to take their HBL seriously and actively engage in their Student Initiated Learning.

Developing lifelong learners who take ownership of their learning and growth is not an easy task. But it is an essential one, especially given the shape of things to come in the further education and work landscapes. As we continue to do all that we can to nurture competencies and dispositions for lifelong learning in all our students, we hope you will partner us in emphasizing some of these in your interactions with your child at home too!

SCHOOL EVENTS

Timed Practice for Sec 4 and 5 students (16 Apr to 20 May, 20 Jun to 24 Jun)

With the removal of the Mid-Year Examination, the graduating cohort will instead be provided with timed practices for all subjects commencing after CCA stand down in Term 2, as well as the last week of the June holidays. These timed practices ensure that students have the opportunity to sit for full-length papers so that they would be sufficiently prepared by way of examination

conditioning. Therefore, students should attend the planned sessions and absence need to be supported by valid reasons.

Study Club for Sec 4 and 5 students (from 25 Apr to 25 May)

Conducive spaces in the school have been prioritised for the graduating cohort to utilise for their revision and self-study in the afternoons with the stand-down of CCAs. Subjects have been rostered each day to guide students in revising for all their subjects. Teachers have also prepared and availed revision materials at these venues. Students are strongly encouraged to commit to the Study Club and maximise the support provided by their subject teachers such that they kickstart their revision process early.

Vesak Day (16 May)

Vesak Day falls on 16 May (Mon) and it is a public holiday.

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 students sitting for the GCE O-Level MTL Examination on 30 May (Mon). These students will have their timetabled lesson as normal during this period. MTL teachers will arrange for small group consultations after school with the students who needed additional support in learning MTL or preparing for the upcoming GCE “O” Level MTL Examination.

Last Day of Semester Programme for students (26 May)

To conclude the semester, the school will be having a Last Day of Semester Programme for all students on 26 May (Thu). The programme aims to allow students to reflect and consolidate on their learning and growth in the first half of the year.

There will **not** be Home Based Learning for Upper Secondary students on that day and all students are required to attend school. More details will be sent out to the parents via Parents Gateway closer to the date.

Parent-Teacher Meeting for all levels (27 May)

This year Parent-Teacher Meeting (PTM) will be held on 27 May (Fri) from 8 am to 6 pm for all parents. There will be no lessons on that day.

The PTM will be done through Zoom. Parents and students will be expected to attend the session together. The PTM booking period is from 18 May (Wed) to 20 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 (30 May)

The GCE “O” Level MTL Examination will be on 30 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 3 Jun)

To support our Sec 4 and 5 students in their learning, supplementary lessons will be held from 1 to 4 June. Teachers will be helping the students attain content mastery in preparation for the GCE "O" and "N" Level Examinations. The class timetables for the supplementary lessons will be made available on the school website.

Xinmin Model Parliament for Sec 3 E/N(A) students (2 Jun)

As part of the Humanities Department's efforts to nurture passion and grow talent in the Humanities, we are creating this platform to allow Sec 3E/N(A) students to come together and debate about current issues that are relevant to Singapore today. Students have either volunteered or been nominated for this inter-class competition. They will also be provided with coaching sessions by the teachers to help them prepare well for this event.

Leadership Adventure Camp 2022 (6 Jun to 8 Jun)

Selected Sec 2 students from each CCA, as well as Sec 2 Student Councillors, will be participating in the Leadership Adventure Camp (LAC) 2022 from 6 Jun (Mon) to 8 Jun (Wed) in school. The day camp (non-residential) is 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 Harvinder Singh at Harvinder_Singh@schools.gov.sg for more details.

Advanced Elective Modules for Sec 4 N(A) students (6 Jun to 17 Jun)

Sec 4 N(A) 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 parents via Parent Gateway.

SCHOOL MATTERS

Review of Detention Policy for Student Late Coming

Recently we have undertaken a review of the late coming situation among students and found that the late coming rate has increased significantly over the years. In last year, the total number of late coming occurrences had nearly tripled that of the previous year. This is a cause for concern

because we are seeing an upward trend despite neither changing the start time of school nor any of our policies on punctuality.

The most common reason given by students is that they woke up late. A closer examination of the reasons students gave for coming to school late indicates poor habits, such as sleeping late, forgetting to pack their bags, or leaving home only at the last minute, as the main causes. We also noticed that students who are often late for school also tend to perform poorly in other aspects of school (e.g., their academics). Hence, I hope you will agree with us that there is a need for us to collectively address this issue.

In view of this we will be amending our policy for management of latecomers in Semester 2. Students will no longer get to choose which day they will serve their detention¹. They will be given after school detention on the day of late coming itself. If they have CCAs or other school related activities, we will manage it with the teachers-in-charge. In the event of outside school activities such as tuition, we will call parents/guardians to seek your support to make alternative arrangements. Students who are issued with detention will not be allowed to have their mobile phones with them until they complete their detention on the same day. In short, students should make every effort not to be late for school.

Students need to get sufficient rest and wake up early enough to do what is necessary to give themselves sufficient time to get to school. These are good habits that would serve the students well, both in school and beyond. These are also good habits that only you can help to instil at home. We hope you will partner us in this regard and ensure that your child/ward leaves the home in good time to be punctual for school.

Easing of Safe Management Measures

Following the announcement at the national level on the further easing of Community Safe Management Measures (SMMs) from 22 Apr, we can finally assemble as a school! We will have morning flag-raising ceremony as a whole school at the MPH on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays. This has brought back some sense of normalcy to our students, especially for the Lower Secondary students who had missed out the experience of having mass assembly since the start of their secondary school life.

Early 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 recognized. Please refer to the EAE Polytechnic website at <https://eae.polytechnic.edu.sg> for more information. Interested applicants

¹ Students who are more than half an hour late or late for the 3rd time onwards are issued with detention. The duration of the detention increases with each successive incidence of late-coming.

may also visit the respective websites of the polytechnics for more details on the courses offered. Applications are from 23 Jun to 29 Jun.

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 26 May to 1 Jun.

New English Language Assessment Syllabus (2023)

The new assessment syllabus introduced at the end of the last year include several revisions to the English Language examination. The changes impact the current Sec 1 to 3 student cohorts, with the Sec 3 level being the first batch to sit for it at the GCE national examinations in 2023. The oral examination which is Paper 4 used to comprise two components – Reading (10 marks) and Spoken Interaction (20 marks). It has been revised as follows:

New oral examination components (for Sec 1 to 3 Express & Normal Academic courses only)

- Planned response (15 marks) – students will be given a set question while watching a short video clip. They will be given 10 minutes to view the video and take notes on whatever is helpful to construct their response.
- Spoken interaction (15 marks) – students will respond to various questions that may or may not be thematically linked to the video to assess their ability to speak in a sustained and coherent manner.

Oral examinations for Sec 1 to 3 levels

- Lower secondary levels will be taking their oral examinations in the form of a self-directed lesson assigned on the Student Learning Space (SLS). It will be carried out via a live Zoom session during a HBL day (Odd Thursdays). The assessment must be completed within the HBL period under the supervision of the subject teacher. The oral component makes up 20% of the EOY grade. Only students who meet with technical difficulties or have valid absence will be granted another session to re-take their oral examination.
- Sec 3 students will be assessed under examination conditions in Term 3 after CCA stand down. The oral component makes up 20% of the EOY grade. Only students with valid absence will be granted another session to re-take their oral examination.

For queries or clarifications, please approach your child/ward's English Language teacher.

Your partner in education,



Mr Tan Kuo Cheang
Principal