

7 Oct 2021

## Newsletter to Parents – The October Edition

Dear Parent/Guardian

How are you?

There is an air of nervous energy about the school since the start of the term. This nervous energy has since intensified as our students sit for their examinations – both school-based and national. Yes, the examination season is upon us once again.

Examinations evoke many different reactions in different students. To some, it is a chance for them to shine and demonstrate their mastery over what they have learnt. To many, examinations are a stressful time when they deprive themselves of sleep and all things enjoyable. I also know that some students would secretly wish that there were no such things as examinations.

### Nothing scary about Assessment

Yet, examinations, as a form of assessment, are a crucial part of learning. It offers students an opportunity to see whether they have indeed mastered what they learnt in class. Why is this important? So that they would know whether they are ready for the next level of study. It also reveals gaps in students' learning and these gaps should be closed in order to get the student prepared for the next level of study.

Perhaps let me share an analogy. In a bid to get back in shape, I decide to follow a certain weight loss regime. This regime required me to put in considerable amounts of time and energy to exercise and watch my diet. Now, imagine if my weight were to creep up despite adhering to the regime conscientiously. That would be disastrous!

So I would need to weigh myself at various junctures to see if my weight did decrease. If it did, I would stick to it. If it did not, I would need either review how well I had adhered to the regime or look for another way of losing weight altogether.

The act of weighing myself in the process of my getting back in shape is like assessment in the process of students' learning. Without weighing myself, there is no way to ascertain whether my effort has earned me the desired effect.

### Reactions to Assessments

Of course, my reaction to my weight is a different thing altogether. If my weight increased despite spending all the time to exercise and control what I eat, I would naturally feel frustrated. But if this leads me to give up my goal of losing weight altogether, then my health would not improve.

This is similar when it comes to our students' learning. Sometimes, our students may feel disappointed, frustrated or even angry that the effort they put in to revise might not have given them the results that they wished for.

Nevertheless, this should not deter them from putting in the effort to continue learning. It would be much more productive for our students to take a good look at the feedback given by their teachers, understand them, and work on them. In the event they do not understand the feedback, it is always a good practice to proactively look for their teachers for clarifications.

On the other end of the spectrum, for students who have done well and gotten the results that they wanted, it is also good for them to reflect on how they prepared themselves for the assessment. It would be reasonable to conclude that the way they revised worked and it would be good for them to stick to how they prepared themselves for the assessment. Of course, there will still be scope for these students to study and work on the feedback given to them by their teachers. This would enable them to do even better next time.

### Emerging Stronger

When we were in Secondary 2, my friend John wanted to offer triple pure sciences in Secondary 3 because he aspired to be a doctor. Having been briefed the requirements to offer triple science in Upper Secondary, he worked very hard and managed to meet all the stated criteria. However, because the number of students who met the criteria was too small, he was not offered triple sciences eventually.

Needless to say, he was disappointed and angry at our school. But this setback did not get him down. He was determined to do well in all the subjects offered to him and did very well at the 'O' levels. Motivated by his strong desire to join the medical profession, he took the chance to offer Biology<sup>1</sup> at the 'A' levels without having offered it at the 'O' levels. Due to his diligence, John did well for the subject and he has since achieved his dream to be a doctor.

In life, sometimes, we may not get our way – for example, we may not get the results that we hoped for, or the subject combination that we wanted. But, if we apply ourselves and make the best of the opportunities given, we would inevitably be able to navigate our way back on course to achieve our aspirations.

I hope our students would learn this in their time with us and look to you to help share this with your child. Only then would we be able to get them ready to weather whatever challenges life throws at them.

## **KEY EVENTS**

### Graduation Ceremony (24 Sep)

The school had our Graduation Ceremony for all Sec 4 and 5 graduating students on the afternoon of 24 Sep 2021 to mark the completion of their secondary school education at Xinmin. This occasion symbolized the culmination of their preparations for the national examinations, and the graduating cohort received well wishes from their teachers and peers to motivate them to put in their best performance for the upcoming national examinations.

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<sup>1</sup> In the past, A-level Biology was a pre-requisite to read Medicine in NUS. This is no longer the case. Now, the pre-requisite to offer Medicine in NUS is a good H2 pass in Chemistry and H2 pass in either Biology or Physics (please see <https://medicine.nus.edu.sg/admissions/pre-requisites/>).

### Study Break for Graduating Students (from 27 Sep onwards)

The graduating students began their study break from 27 Sep. Students who wish to seek their subject teachers' help may do so through online consultations till the end of the national examinations. During the study break, please ensure that your child remain at home to reduce the risk of contracting COVID-19 from the community.

In the event that your child is affected by COVID-19 – i.e. confirmed case, placed on Quarantine Orders (QO), Leave of Absence (LOA) or Approved Absence (AA) – please inform the Form Teachers immediately so that the school can work with you to make the necessary arrangements. We understand that parents may be concerned about the impact on their child if they miss the national examinations due to COVID-19 reasons. We would like to assure you that students who miss any national examination paper(s) with valid reasons can apply for Special Considerations. All Special Considerations applications are assessed on each case's merit, and SEAB will ensure that the grades awarded are as accurate and fair as possible.

### End-of-Year (EOY) Examinations for Sec 1 to 3 Students (4 Oct to 14 Oct)

As mentioned in the July newsletter, EOY exams for Sec 1 to 3 students will be held from 4 Oct to 14 Oct. Please note that the timetables for the EOY exams for Sec 1 to 3 students can be found on our website. The topics tested for the different subjects had also been uploaded to the school website. All examination schedules, formats and lists of topics tested for the various subjects can be found on our website: <https://xinminsec.moe.edu.sg/resources/students>.

### Important Dates in Term 4/2021

Please note that 15 Oct (Fri) and 26 Oct (Tue) are our marking day and promotion meeting day respectively. There will be no lessons on both days and students do not need to report to school.

For your prior information and planning, the last day of school will be on 29 Oct (Fri). The year-end school holidays will start on 20 Nov 2021.

## **ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS**

### Students' Year-End Declarations for Travel

In view of the coming year-end school holiday, we would like to remind our parents to continue to defer their overseas travel unless it is permissible under the prevailing MOH travel advisory. International students (ISes) who are travelling out of Singapore should be reminded to apply for entry approval to return to Singapore via the Safe Travel Office (STO) online portal (<https://eservices.ica.gov.sg/STO>). Returning travellers from most countries/regions would be placed on Stay Home Notice (SHN).

To ensure a healthy and safe school environment, please declare your child's travel plans, if any, for the year-end holidays via Parents Gateway (PG). Those who are not travelling need **not** submit a travel declaration.

Yours faithfully,



Mr Tan Kuo Cheang  
Principal