

19 Jul 2021

Newsletter to Parents – The July Edition

Dear Parent/Guardian

I hope this newsletter finds you well. Term 3 has always been the busiest of the four terms in school and this year, it is exceptionally so. Apart from having to manage regular updates in the Safe Management Measures, we are also implementing the Personal Digital Learning Programme (PDLP) and Blended Learning in our school this year.

In all that we do, our aim is to prepare our students well for their future. Of course, part of that would entail giving them a firm academic foundation that would prepare them for the different post-secondary courses. But the other, more important part is to inculcate in them the values and life skills that are necessary to navigate the future.

Sometimes, there is no spoon

As parents (and teachers), it is natural for us to want the best for our child. We go through great lengths to secure the best for our child. While this might help our child for now, it might not be helpful for him/her in the long run.

As students progress from primary education to tertiary education, they would increasingly need to learn to be independent and self-directed. I often like to share this conversation I had with some ex-students with parents. There was this time when I had the privilege to meet two university going students, C and L. C was a graduate from the school I worked in and L was from another school. My school prided ourselves to be very supportive of our students, especially the Science department. It was their practice to give our students lots of notes, practice papers and hold many remedial classes. All for the purpose of making sure our students score well in their exams. In contrast, L's school, being an IP JC, left quite a lot to their students. Not that their teachers did not care for their students. But students needed to do a lot more of the hard work there.

So back to the two young men I was talking to. When I asked how their JCs had prepared them for university, C shared that while he was grateful for the push our JC gave to him, the transition to learning in the university was very painful for him. Without the consultations from his tutors, the remedial classes, and the notes, he had to find his way to learn in the university. In contrast, L was used to learning on his own and he found it relatively easy to adapt to learning in the university.

Now, our students have incredible potential and all of them will progress to their post-secondary education. While we try our best to support them in achieving their post-secondary goals, we also want them to continue to thrive after they leave Xinmin. As such, a key competence we will need them to develop will be to learn how to be independent and self-directed.

While we try to incorporate these in our daily teaching and learning, we see Blended Learning as a good platform for our students to truly learn to learn on their own. Sure, some students might need a little bit more scaffolding and support. But we hope that in their four years in Xinmin, we will be able to gradually release the support structures as they develop into the self-directed learners we want them to be.

Living a Full Life

Life is not all about studying (or work). While it is important that we work hard to excel in our studies or work, it is useful to remember that having an interest – something we are passionate about, makes life worth living! Other than simply being respite from work, hobbies can also help us see things with a different perspective. This might give rise to new opportunities and open new vistas.

Other than people who launched careers out of their interests, pursuing an interest that may not be related to regular “work” might also help you see things from a different light. Take Steve Jobs, co-founder and previous CEO of Apple for example. The beautiful typefaces and font styles in Apple products could be attributed to the calligraphy classes he attended in college.

As such, we see value in ring-fencing time and space during HBL days for Student Initiated Learning (SIL). There is no need to worry about excelling at their interest area or learning something to a very polished extent. For us, the process of learning something they are interested in unassisted, is far more valuable than the product. So parents, do encourage your child to go forth and make full use of the time and space during SIL to learn something they are really interested in.

Being Comfortable with Uncertainty

Human beings are creatures of habit and it is often uncomfortable for us to change. We often like things to be predictable because we will know what to expect and it will enable us to be able to plan ahead. Yet, if the past two years are any indication, our students must learn how to manage changes and uncertainties.

How could we help our children learn how to manage changes? One way is to have them do their best in preparing themselves in ways that they can. Do not sweat over things that are beyond their control. And when things do not go their way, consider what they could do differently to improve the situation and apply it at the next opportunity they have. It is perhaps not so useful to talk about what other people should do differently because that is not within our sphere of influence.

In the same vein, even as we may do our best in planning for the PDLP and Blended Learning, these are still very new ways of teaching and learning. I hope that you will understand if hiccups might occur along the way, and that you will give our teachers and students an opportunity to learn from this and do better next time. Do not hesitate to share your feedback with us either through our school email, or via the P@X representatives. We will do whatever we can to improve things for all our students. As always, I look forward to your close partnership as we, together, help prepare our children for their exciting future ahead!

EVENTS

Hari Raya Haji (20 Jul)

Hari Raya Haji falls on 20 Jul (Tue) and it is a public holiday.

Racial Harmony Day Commemoration (19 - 23 Jul)

Racial Harmony Day (RHD) falls on 21 Jul this year. Students will commemorate RHD in Term 3 Week 4 (19 – 23 Jul). RHD serves to remind our students that social division that was experienced in the racial riots of 1964 cost us dearly and that race and religion are potential fault lines in our diverse society. We want students to understand and respect the customs and traditions of the different races and religions to co-exist peacefully. Acts of racism have led to many unfortunate

incidents and even tragedies on a national and global scale. During the CCE lessons, students will read about recent real-life incidents and reflect on how such incidents can be prevented in a racially diverse country like Singapore.

National Day Celebrations and School Holiday (6 to 10 Aug)

The school will be having our National Day Celebrations on 6 Aug (Fri).

The theme for this year's National Day Parade is 'Together Our Singapore Spirit'. 'Together' evokes our common Singapore identity and Singaporeans coming together as one united people. 'Our Singapore Spirit' calls on Singaporeans to draw new strength from our "can-do" spirit amidst challenging circumstances from COVID-19 and potential disruptions in the new decade. We hope to reinvigorate the Singapore Spirit - encouraging Singaporeans to embrace a "dare-to-try" attitude, and reinvent to overturn our natural and geographical constraints.

The day will begin with a virtual National Day Observance Ceremony led by student leaders of the various Uniformed Groups. Through a series of class-based activities planned for that day, students will reflect on the challenges of today, how we can tap on our collective spirit of unity, resilience, hope, to bring Singapore to greater heights.

Students will be dismissed at 11 am on 6 Aug. 9 Aug (Mon) is a public holiday and 10 Aug (Tue) is a school holiday. Students will report back to school on 11 Aug (Wed).

Leadership Handover Ceremony (6 Aug)

The Leadership Handover Ceremony aims to recognise the exemplary contributions made by our outgoing Sec 4 Leaders and welcome our incoming Sec 3 Leaders. At this ceremony, we celebrate the progress and journey of our Sec 4 Leaders who have put in tremendous amount of time and effort to lead their juniors in the various CCA groups. The ceremony also signifies the moment where the new leaders take on the responsibility to lead their CCAs. This year, the celebration will be held together with the National Day Celebrations. We hope that as we celebrate the strength and resilience of our nation, our new leaders will also be inspired to have the courage and fortitude to navigate through these uncertain times.

ACADEMIC AND CO-CURRICULAR MATTERS

Structured Intervention Programme (14 Jul to 1 Sep)

We would like to inform you that the Structured Intervention Programme (SIP) for the Sec 4 and 5 students will run from 14 Jul (Wed) to 1 Sep (Wed) to support students who did not perform satisfactorily. The name list had been put up on the class notice board. Letters to parents were also issued through Parents' Gateway.

We seek your support and assistance in ensuring that your child/ward attends the Structured Intervention Programme faithfully if he/she has been identified. Any request for exemption from the programme will be assessed on a case-by-case basis. The schedule is as follows:

4N4T	T3W3 Wed to T3W5 Tue	T3W7 Wed to T3W10 Wed
4E5N	T3W4 Mon to T3W8 Fri	

ODD WEEK

Day	Sec 401 - 405	Sec 501	Sec 406 - 408
Monday	Math: 1545 - 1715 Add Math: 1500 - 1630	Math: 1545 - 1715 Add Math: 1500 - 1630	Math: 1545 - 1715
Tuesday	Electives/Lit: 1530 - 1730	Electives/Lit: 1530 - 1730	POA: 1330 - 1500 Electives: 1530 - 1730
Wednesday	English: 1545 - 1700	Phy/Bio: 1500 - 1615	English: 1545 - 1700
Thursday		English: 1500 - 1630	
Friday	Drama: 1330-1600 Phy/Bio (401-403): 1330 - 1500	Art/Drama/F&N/D&T: 1330-1600 Chem: 1330-1430	Drama/F&N: 1330-1600
(On SLS)	SS	SS	SS

EVEN WEEK

Day	Sec 401 - 405	Sec 501	Sec 406 - 408
Monday	Chem (401 & 405): 1600 - 1700		English (406/407): 1400 - 1530
Tuesday	English: 1545 - 1700	English: 1600 - 1700	English (408): 1530 - 1700
Wednesday	Math & A Math: 1545 - 1715	Math & A Math: 1545 - 1715	Math: 1545 - 1715
Thursday	Pure Hum/Lit: 1430 - 1630		
Friday	Drama: 1330 -1600 Chem (404): 1345 - 1500	Art/Drama: 1330 -1600	Drama/D&T: 1330 - 1600 Phy/Bio: 1345 - 1445

Assessment Matters

Weighted Assessment 3 (WA3) for the various subjects will be paced out over a 4-week period from **3 Aug** to **27 Aug** for Sec 1 to 3 students. Students will be informed of the schedule and it will be uploaded on the school website by 26 Jul: Study Here → Assessment → Weighted Assessments Schedule.

The dates for our internal examinations are as follows:

- 28 Jul to 5 Aug: N-level preliminary examinations
- 11 Aug to 19 Aug: O-level preliminary Science Practical examinations
- 23 Aug to 1 Sep: O-level preliminary written examinations
- 4 Oct to 14 Oct: Sec 1 to 3 End-of-Year examinations

For 4NA students who will be taking the Express syllabus papers from 23 Aug to 1 Sep:

1. For the 1st paper: They need to return to their classes after they have sat for the paper;
2. For the 2nd or 3rd paper: They need to attend classes in the morning and report to the examination venue 20 minutes before the start of the paper.

All internal examination schedules are available on the school website.

Yours faithfully,

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

Mr Tan Kuo Cheang
Principal