



19 Aug 2021

Newsletter to Parents – The August Edition

Dear Parent/Guardian

How are you?

In this year's May-June edition of the newsletter, I touched on the issue of ensuring our students' mental well-being. Then, I shared about how some of our students were grappling with different stressors and that it was important for them to learn how to cope with these stressors and reach out for help when they need to.

I also suggested that as parents, you could support your child's mental well-being through the acronym S.P.A.C.E. (i.e., support them, guide them in problem-solving, affirm their effort in doing the right things right, cheer them on, and empower them to learn to be independent and fend for themselves).

Mental Health in School and at Home

Mental health has always been part of the holistic education we want to offer to our students. However, with our students spending more time on social media, compounded by stressors brought about by Covid restrictions, ensuring our students' mental health has become more even important.

This is why mental health has been highlighted as one of the five content areas in the new Character and Citizenship Education (CCE) syllabus¹. We have implemented the new syllabus for our lower secondary students this year, and will be implementing it for our upper secondary students next year.

While we try to raise our students' awareness and equip them with some skills to manage their own, and their friends' mental health in school, we need you to partner us in ensuring your child's mental health at home too. Other than using S.P.A.C.E., parents should also encourage family meal times, healthy sleeping hours, healthy screen habits and physical exercise.

Many of our students share with us that they feel stressed because of the high expectations you have of them. While it is perfectly okay for parents to spur your children on to do their best, it is also useful for you to embrace a growth mindset regarding learning and academic success. Instead of focusing on the grade or the mark, look at how you and your child could work together to close learning gaps that surfaced during the assessments.

¹ Parents who are interested may access the syllabus via the following link: <https://www.moe.gov.sg/-/media/files/secondary/syllabuses/cce/2021-character-and-citizenship-education-syllabus-secondary.pdf?la=en&hash=D41C87D627D3AA6CF52C14538121EA5E1B9E0B44>.

Neuroscience of Gratitude

According to neuroscience research, gratitude could function as a 'natural anti-depressant'. Other than enhancing self-compassion and empathy, gratitude would also give rise to long-lasting happiness and contentment, and can help in stress regulation². Gratitude has also been shown to improve one's relationship with others. These are all protective factors that will safeguard the mental well-being of our children.

As such, you could encourage your child to set aside some time to reflect on their day and identify for what and to whom they are grateful. Better yet, role model this in your conversations with your child as you ask how their day went.

Gratitude on All Staff Day

All Staff Day (this is what we call Teachers' Day in Xinmin – because we want to appreciate our non-teaching staff even as we appreciate our teaching staff) has always been about gratitude. It offers our students the opportunity to thank their teachers, and our non-teaching staff, for supporting their learning and growth in their time in Xinmin.

Over the past year, our staff have had to put in additional effort to overcome the challenges brought about by Covid, and learn new ways of teaching and learning in light of PDLP and Blended Learning. While this was not easy, we set our mind to overcoming these challenges because we know it is best for our students. It will thus mean a lot to our colleagues if our students could affirm their teachers and the non-teaching staff in our school on this special day.

Even as we work hard to support our students to achieve their goals and aspirations, let's work together to help them grow and develop into grounded young adults who are grateful to all those who contributed to their success and pay it forward in the future!

EVENTS

HPV Vaccination (1st Dose) for Sec 1 and 2 girls (30 Aug to 31 Aug)

The Health Promotion Board's appointed vendor will be administering the first/second dose of the HPV vaccination to our Sec 1 and 2 girls on 30 Aug and 31 Aug respectively. We will inform the students of their schedule closer to the date. Sec 1 parents are reminded to submit their consent via Child Consent Portal, using their Singpass or hardcopy consent forms (available at General Office). On the actual day of the HPV vaccination, students are required to bring along their Covid-19 vaccination records for verification as it is recommended to have a minimum interval of 14 days before or after any other vaccines. For any queries or assistance on the National School-based HPV Vaccination Programme, please email HPB_SHC@hpb.gov.sg or call 6435 3895.

All Staff Day Celebrations (2 Sep)

In conjunction with Teachers' Day on 3 Sep (Fri), which was a school holiday, the school will be celebrating All Staff Day on 2 Sep (Thu). Please note that students would be dismissed at 10.30 am on 2 Sep.

The Student Council planned a class-based programme to celebrate and appreciate our Xinmin staff for their care, hard work and dedication in keeping students safe, healthy and happy. Please follow our Facebook and Instagram to see how we celebrated our staff on this special day.

² Research studies have shown that gratitude interventions alone may not be sufficient in addressing anxiety or depression.

SAFE MANAGEMENT MEASURES

Resumption of selected school activities from 10 Aug

As Singapore transits towards the endemic state with the gradual easing of community safe management measures (SMMs), the ministry has announced the resumption of selected activities in schools from 10 Aug 2021. For instance, in-person Co-Curricular Activities (CCA) can resume, including those involving external vendors and at external venues, with a cap of 50 pax. All mask-off indoor activities remain suspended. Mask-off outdoor activities (e.g. for sports) and all indoor or outdoor mask-on activities are allowed for groups of up to five, subjected to the prevailing SMMs.

With the resumption of in-person CCAs, CCA coaches/ instructors are required to undergo Fast and Easy Test (FET) for Covid-19 swab once every 14-day cycle prior to the CCA sessions where students are unmasked. These CCA coaches/instructors can only conduct the CCA face-to-face sessions provided their valid swab test result is negative. In addition, PE teachers and selected CCA teachers are required to go through the FET once every 14-day cycle as part of the proactive surveillance measures too.

In addition, MOE school staff will have to undergo regular COVID-19 testing regime from 1 Oct 2021 for those who are not yet fully vaccinated, unvaccinated or medically ineligible for the vaccination under the “Vaccinate or Regular Test” regime.

The testing regime for CCA instructors/coaches and staff will help to keep the school community safe and give everyone the peace of mind to focus on the holistic development of our students.

UPDATES TO SCHOOL RULES

In line with our school's efforts to improve our students' wellbeing and to create a better learning environment, each student is assigned a locker outside his/her classroom to store their Personal Learning Device (PLD) and valuable items such as mobile phones during the school day.

Starting from 11 Aug 2021, Xinmin students are to lock their personal mobile phones in their assigned lockers during curriculum time. Students may access their personal mobile phones during recess and lunch breaks only. If students are found to have their mobile phones with them during curriculum time, they will be instructed to lock it in their lockers. Refusal to do so will result in confiscation of the mobile phone for 5 days. In addition, students are not allowed to use their mobile phones during free periods. Students should use their free periods within the timetable to catch up on their studies or review their work.

The new Rules and Regulations will be uploaded to the school's website in due course.

Yours faithfully,



Mr Tan Kuo Cheang
Principal