

6 March 2018

Newsletter to Parents – The March Edition

Dear Parent/Guardian,

Secondary school is a period in which students begin to explore themselves – their interests and passions, the learning environment that best suits them, the best way they learn to work individually and with others. It is for this reason that we place great emphasis on helping our students identify their interests and passions not only through our Education and Career Guidance programme, but, through the suite of learning experiences ranging from Co-Curricular Activities to enrichment programmes like Coding@Xinmin, we provide for each and every one of our students.

On 2 March, we had our Educational Pathways Talks for parents of Secondary Two to Five students. During the session, the invited speakers from the Institute of Technical Education (ITE), polytechnics and junior colleges shared useful information about their respective institutions, including eligibility criteria, teaching and learning in their institutions, and also advice on how students should choose their post-secondary pathways. The overwhelming turnout, together with the thoughtful questions posed to the speakers, are testament to the great importance parents place on your children's post-secondary options.

Changes in the Further Education Landscape and the World of Work

It is against the backdrop of changing demographics, disruptive technologies and shifts in the global economy that the world of work, and consequently, our education landscape have changed. Having good academic grades is no longer going to guarantee that our students will be able to secure good jobs when they graduate. How well our students do in the world of work in future will be dependent on how well they are able to learn, relearn, adapt and grow. It will depend on how well they are able to think critically and creatively. It will depend on how well they are able to collaborate with people who are different from them. It will also depend on whether they have the disposition to bounce back and learn from failure. In short, beyond good academic grades, our students will need to possess 21st century competencies.

Finding One's Purpose

In Xinmin, we are deeply committed to preparing our students well for the future. I am thus particularly worried when students tell me that they have no idea what their interests are, or that they would only decide on their post-secondary pathways after they have received their national examination results. Such a lack of purpose may consequently have an adverse impact on the child's motivation and the joy they find in their studies, and subsequently, work.

It is important that parents support your children in finding their purpose in life. It may not be realistic for us to expect teenagers to be able to identify conclusively their purpose in life. However, this should not stop both the school and parents from encouraging them to continue discovering and clarifying their sense of purpose.

Remaining Flexible

On the other hand, some of our students are very clear about their life goals. I recall a conversation with a student who recounted that she aims to go to a particular junior college because she wishes to articulate to the Yong Loo Lin School of Medicine in the National University of Singapore. When asked what would happen if she did not make it to the medical school, the student retorted that such an eventuality would never happen because she is resolved to work doubly hard to achieve her aspirations.

Although these students are clear about what they want to do upon graduation from Xinmin, I worry for them too. The reason for this is that this fixation on a singular pathway would bring about tremendous stress and would compromise our students' capacity to truly learn. Rather than be fixated on a singular occupation or pathway, it would be helpful for our students to broaden their career goals and remain flexible towards alternative pathways and options. For example, rather than be fixated on being a doctor, the student could broaden her career aspiration to helping people regain their health. This adjustment would open up other career possibilities such as being a physiotherapist, pharmacist, radiographer or nurse.

Focus on the Learning Process

Secondary school is a time for students to explore their interests and acquire important 21st century competencies through engaging in the different learning experiences provided by the school. It is thus important that our students fully engage in learning, both in the classroom and during the non-academic learning opportunities in school. It is thus useful for parents to encourage our children to participate actively in the various aspects of school life in Xinmin.

It is also useful for parents to shift the tone of our conversations with children. Rather than ask how our child did in school, it might be useful to ask what he had learnt instead. Only then would we be able to encourage our children to focus on the process of learning rather than be distracted by academic grades, and in so doing, help them find joy in learning both in school and for life.

We will provide you with feedback on your child's learning in Term One at the Parent-Teacher Meeting on 23 March (Friday). My teachers and I would like to thank you for your patience and understanding, as well as your support to the school. I hope you will be able to find time to make contact with the Form Teachers to discuss how we may better support the learning of your child in both the academic and non-academic areas.

UPCOMING EVENTS IN MARCH

Xinathon 2018 (9 March)

Our school will be conducting Xinathon, a Cross-Country event that happens once every two years, alternating with our school's Night to Day Run. It will be from 7.30 am to 12 pm on 9 March (Friday) at Seng Kang Hockey Pitch 1. Please contact Mr Jeremy Tan (Overall-in-charge for Xinathon 2018) at tan_kian_seng_jeremy@moe.edu.sg or 62889382 for more information.

Level 3 Student Leaders' Training (12 to 13 March)

This Level 3 training is organised by the Student Leadership Department. About 70 Secondary Three students will be nominated by their CCA teachers-in-charge to attend this training. Skills such as proposal writing, project management and experiential learning using the Leadership Challenge Model will be taught during the two-day workshop. This workshop aims to further develop our students' leadership skills so that they can better lead their CCA, class or school events effectively. You may contact the teachers-in-charge, Mr Ganesan and Ms Low Yan Jin at ganesan_selvarathnam@moe.edu.sg and yan_jin_low@moe.edu.sg respectively for more information.

Mother Tongue Languages (MTL) Festival (21 to 29 March)

The MTL Festival is a two-week event from 21 March (Wednesday) to 29 March (Thursday) that encourages the love of Mother Tongue Languages through various programmes, enrichment activities and learning journeys. It also creates an immersive environment for the learning of these languages outside academic lessons through hands-on and practical activities. These activities aim to raise students' awareness of the value and practicality of conversing in their mother tongue languages in real-world contexts and, at the same time, enable them to appreciate their cultural significance.

Parent-Teacher Meeting (PTM) (23 March)

The first Parent-Teacher Meeting (PTM) this year will be held on 23 March (Friday) for parents of all Secondary One to Five students. 20-minute slots from 1.40 pm to 5.20 pm, and 6 pm to 8.20 pm will be available for online booking. Online booking will commence from 8 am on 9 March (Friday) to 5 pm on 16 March (Friday) on a first-come-first-served basis. Each class will be given a unique link for booking online and instructions on how to do the booking on 8 March (Thursday).

Parents are encouraged to use this opportunity to meet their child's Form Teacher to discuss their child's progress in school. We urge all parents to be punctual and to keep to the allocated timeslot as there will be many parents that Form Teachers have to meet that day. Please also understand that meetings with Subject Teachers will not be scheduled, but should you have questions for your child's specific Subject Teacher(s), Form Teachers will try their best to address your concerns or you can email the Subject Teacher(s) concerned.

Chinese Language Vocabulary Mahjong Session with Parents (24 March)

To most students, it is very difficult to master Chinese Language. With the objective of learning Chinese Language by playing Vocabulary Mahjong, the MTL Department will be organising the above-mentioned event on 24 March (Saturday) from 9.30 a.m. to 12 noon at Xinmin Secondary School SMART Rooms. During the session, participants will learn the rules of the game and there will be a mini competition at the end of the programme. We aim to enhance parent-child bonding through the activity, and interested parents may sign up together with their child through their Chinese Language teachers.

73rd Speech Day (29 March)

We would like to invite all parents to the school's 73rd Speech Day which will be held on 29 March (Thursday). Speeches and prize presentations will take place from 3 pm to 5.30 pm in the School Hall. All Secondary Four and Five students will attend the event. We are honoured to have Mrs Ong Hong Peng, our former Principal, as our Guest-of-Honour this year.

The theme we have chosen for 2018 is '*Xinmin – A Tradition of Excellence*'. Encapsulated in Xinmin's mission 'Leading Hearts, Leading Minds' lies the key focus of educating our students to be responsible and caring members of society who espouse sound values and a mindset for excellence. These core values will develop our students into positive role models who are able to thrive emotionally and intellectually in the 21st century. Please inform the school by 12 March if you wish to attend the event.

Arts Showcases by Performing Arts CCAs

As mentioned in the February Newsletter, the Performing Arts CCAs will be organising a series of showcases to educate and enrich participants' understanding and appreciation of the arts in March and April. The line-up is as follows:

CCA Involved	Name	Date	Time	Cost
Chinese Dance and MLDDS	Xinthesis VI (Chinese Dance & MLDDS)	Friday, 23 March	7.30pm	\$10
Chinese Opera Troupe	Xinthesis VI (Chinese Opera)	Saturday, 24 March	9am	Free-of-charge
English Drama	Drama Night	Thursday, 29 March	4.30pm and 7.30pm	\$8 (4.30pm) \$10 (7.30pm)
Band	Xinfony	Saturday, 31 March	7.30pm	\$10
Choir	Melizo	Friday, 6 April	7.30pm	\$10
<i>Guzheng</i>	Xinthesis VI (<i>Guzheng</i>)	Saturday, 7 April	3.00pm* and 7.30pm	\$8 (3.00pm*) \$10 (7.30pm)

**Please note the amendment of timing for the afternoon Guzheng showcase.*

You may purchase/ obtain tickets to the showcase(s) through your child/ward from Week 8. For more information, please contact Mr Josh Wong, SH/ Arts Education at wong_han_xian@moe.edu.sg.

ACADEMIC AND CO-CURRICULAR MATTERS

Term 1 Common Tests

The Term 1 Common Tests (CA1) were conducted in Weeks 8 to 10, and your child should receive his/her results by the first week of Term 2. For information related to the weighting and computation of CA1 in the overall assessment for the year for Secondary One to Three students, please refer to February's newsletter given out on 6 February. For Secondary Four and Five students taking their national examinations at the end of the year, CA1, SA1, and SA2 results will be reported in the form of progress reports and result slips. However, SA2 (the Preliminary Examinations) will be computed as 100% of their final results. Nevertheless, these graduating students may still be exposed to various modes of assessments such as e-Learning assignments and projects, but they will not be formally assessed on them. You may also refer to the following link on our school website (www.xinminsec.edu.sg/xinminss) for the information:

“Study Here” → “Assessment” → “Assessment Plan”

Education and Career Guidance (ECG) Counsellor

As part of the school's support in guiding your child's education and future career, our ECG Counsellor, Ms Catherine Ng, conducts one-to-one or small group ECG counselling, classroom sessions, talks and other activities to help students explore their strengths and interests in relation to their aspirations. She will also guide students and their parents in planning and making informed decisions for their education and career pathways, as well as work with teachers to create strategic ECG programmes and experiences for the students. If you wish to speak with Ms Ng, please contact her at catherine_ng@moe.gov.sg. To make the consultation session more beneficial, your child should be present with you.

ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

Travel Plans for March School Holidays

If your child is travelling out of Singapore during the March school holidays, kindly keep the school informed of his/her travel plans. This is one of our practices to ensure emergency readiness. An online travel declaration form has been made available on the school website. Parents/ Guardians may access this link at <http://tinyurl.com/XMS-eTravelDe> to submit your child's/ ward's travel plan(s) by 8 March (Thursday). A hardcopy of this form is also made available via the school website or at our General Office. A NIL reply is required.

We thank all parents for your continued support of the school and our programmes. Please do not hesitate to contact us if you need further clarification. We can be reached via email at xinmin_ss@moe.edu.sg or you can call us at 6288 9382.

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