

2 August 2018

Newsletter to Parents - The August Edition

Dear Parent/Guardian

It is the month of August and we will be celebrating Singapore's 53rd National Day in school. This year's theme for our National Day Parade is "We Are Singapore". It celebrates our diverse community coming together and overcoming challenges to build our home in Singapore. It also reminds us that we have a responsibility to collectively shape Singapore's future.

Alongside the core values, dispositions and competencies, we hope our students would also develop a commitment to contribute to Singapore. One of the key platforms for developing these desired outcomes is National Education (NE). Given the recent discussion on how NE was taught in schools, I thought it would be a good opportunity for me to share our school's approach to National Education.

NE is more than the six messages and the four key events

I once asked some ex-students what they remembered about NE. Some mentioned it was the six messages; others enthused about the activities they did in the four key events (i.e. Total Defence Day, International Friendship Day, Racial Harmony Day and National Day); there were a handful of cynical students who say that NE is propaganda.

In our school, we hope to offer meaningful learning experiences that help our students discover what being a Singaporean means. We want our students to be aware of some of the contemporary issues we are facing as a nation. However, we also want them be able to face the future with a sense of hope and optimism. Lastly, we want to nurture in our students a sense of belonging to Singapore, and a commitment to want to make a difference to their community.

Importance of the Humanities

As we seek to realise an appreciation of NE among students, herein lies the importance of the Humanities (i.e., Geography, History, Social Studies). The Humanities present rich platforms to help students understand the realities and challenges faced by Singapore. In fact, teaching and learning these subjects have gone beyond regurgitating facts to emphasising the development of skills and 21st century competencies. How so? Students will have more opportunities to discuss issues with their classmates. Through discussions in class, they will develop critical thinking skills that will be useful for discerning between fact and fake news. They will also learn to understand different perspectives, a key competency for them to live harmoniously in context of greater diversity in society.

The Heart of the Matter

NE is not just head knowledge. It also touches the heart. The question of whether one is able to contribute is quite different from whether one wants to contribute. We nurture in our students this sense of belonging and commitment to contribute to Singapore by giving our students the experience of making a difference to their immediate community.

We are probably braver than other schools in letting students plan and organise school-wide events. A recent student-organised event that I was particularly proud of was Top Kek II organised by students from class 305.

The project began when some students from the class felt very disturbed by how bystanders cast judgmental looks on a child with Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) having a meltdown in public. These students wanted to stand up for these children. They wanted their peers to better understand that these children with ASD are not acting spoiled, but were truly disturbed by over-stimulation by the environment. As such, they decided to organise a fund-raising concert to raise awareness about ASD in the school community, and succeeded in raising \$2000 for the building of AWWA School 2 in Bedok which will benefit 300 students with ASD, aged 7 to 18.

Through the process, students from the class learnt how to empathise with others better, and learnt about being more inclusive towards people who might seem different than they are. In the process, the students also developed competencies such as collaboration and communication. More importantly, the students felt good that they were able to play a small part to make Singapore a more inclusive home for all of us. What made it even more heartening was that through the promotion of the event during the school's morning assembly and the conduct of the concert itself, the awareness of ASD was heightened among Xinmin students. The thing that really made my day was when a member of the public wrote to me last week commending three of our students – Zachary Wee and Hubert Tan from 205, and Lim Jun Qi from 206 – for their timely and thoughtful act towards a child with ASD at the nearby Ci Yuan food court. Their awareness of ASD and exercise of empathy towards the child helped prevent the child's inappropriate act from being further escalated. This, to me, is what NE looks like in Xinmin Secondary School.

UPCOMING EVENTS

National Day Celebrations (8 August)

The school will be celebrating National Day 2018 on 8 August (Wednesday) with a concert and the CCA student leadership handover ceremony. Students will be dismissed at 10.30 am and do not need to report to school on 9 August (Thursday), which is a public holiday, and 10 August (Friday) which is a school holiday. The theme for this year's National Day Parade is "We Are Singapore", which celebrates our people, our nation and our home. A pledge of unity and togetherness among our diverse cultures, "We" in this year's theme emphasises the collective, where regardless of our origins and wherever we are, Singapore is our way of life and will always be our home. "We Are Singapore" defines the Singapore Spirit, invoking the strength and resilience which built Singapore and empowers Singaporeans to overcome future challenges and adversities together. It reminds us that we will collectively shape and be responsible for Singapore's future. During Character and Citizenship Education (CCE) lessons, teachers will deepen students' understanding of how this year's theme relates to our national anthem, Majulah Singapura, and facilitate students' learning about the Singaporean identity.

Cyberwellness Workshop on Teen Digital Addiction for Parents (25 August)

Do you find your child spending too much time immersed in playing computer games? Do you find them glued to their smartphones constantly to check their messages and their Instagram? Do you find it increasingly difficult to get them to part with their devices to interact with you or your family members? If you find yourselves nodding to the above questions, then this workshop is for you!

This workshop aims to share trends on gaming and social media to help you better understand digital addiction, in particular smartphone addiction. You will learn how to recognise symptoms and the effects of excessive gaming. Through the use of real-life case stories, you will also be introduced to some practical tips on how you could more purposefully engage your child on their mobile habits. This workshop is conducted strictly for parents.

Date: 25 August 2018 (Saturday)

Time: 0900 – 1145 (with a 15-minute tea break)

Venue: Xinmin Secondary School's Smart Rooms

Parents should register early at <https://tinyurl.com/xmSPARENTSTEEN1> as there are limited places available. You will receive a confirmation email and a reminder email nearer to the date.

All Staff Day Celebrations (30 August)

In conjunction with Teachers' Day on 31 August (Friday), which will be a school holiday, the school will be celebrating All Staff Day on 30 August (Thursday). Besides recognising the efforts of teaching staff, non-teaching staff will also take part in the celebrations so that students can show gratitude to these staff members who have helped create a conducive environment for learning. The Student Council will be getting students to write 'thank you' notes to express their appreciation for all staff. The council has planned a concert featuring performance items by talented students and the programme is expected to end by 10.30 a.m. In addition, our School Advisory Committee (SAC) will be hosting the All Staff Day lunch reception that day.

Xinmin Internationalisation Programme (30 August – 6 September)

41 Secondary Two and Three students will be accompanied by Vice-Principal Mdm Nurazian, teachers Mr Lim Kok Chong, Mr Effendy, Mdm Norliza and Ms Kee Bee Hwa on an internationalisation trip to China (Beijing) from 30 August (Wednesday) – 6 September (Thursday). During this trip, students will visit local cultural sites, and have three days of school immersion experience. There will be a pre-trip briefing for all participating students and their parents on 3 August (Friday) at 7 p.m. at the AVA room.

The Apprenticeship Collective Programme (13 October – 17 November)

As part of the school's Education and Career Guidance (ECG) programme, Secondary Three students will take part in an ECG mentorship programme offered by The Apprenticeship Collective (TAC). This is the second year that TAC will be collaborating with the school and the programme is in line with the national movement on SkillsFuture. We hope that the programme will prepare the next generation of Xinmin students for careers in the future. Through a diverse selection of apprenticeships, students will be given opportunities to learn about the world of work and professions from passionate volunteer mentors who are currently working in the field. Students are encouraged to stay open-minded with regard to which field they will be assigned to and learn about the skill-sets related to each field. Students will also be inspired to reflect on their own definitions of success and discover interests, passions and their life's purpose.

As the programme will commence after the end-of-year examinations, we are sharing with you the programme outline and dates in advance for your holiday planning. We hope for your support and child's participation in this meaningful learning experience.

| Programme | When? | What? |
|-----------------|---|---|
| Mission Brief | 21 August (Tuesday), held during CCE lessons | Students will be introduced to TAC and sign up (within the week) from the list of apprenticeships available. |
| Induction | 13 October (Saturday) | Students will be introduced to the mentorship programme and set their expectations on what they will want to achieve through participating in it. |
| Sessions 1 to 4 | 20, 27 October, 3, 10 November (four Saturdays) | Students will take the role of apprentices and learn from their mentors. |
| Touchdown | 17 November (Saturday) | Students share their experiences and reflections about the programme with one another. |

ACADEMIC AND CO-CURRICULAR MATTERS

Issuance of Term 3 Progress Report

Students will be receiving their Term 3 Progress Report on 21 August (Tuesday). They should review their academic results, targets and goals, as well as reflect on how they can continue to improve their strategies for learning. If you have any concerns about your child's/ward's academic progress, please do not hesitate to contact his/her Form Teachers and/or Subject Teachers.

Assessment Matters

The Preliminary and National Examinations for all Secondary 4 and 5 students will be conducted on the following dates:

| | Preliminary Examinations | National Examinations (Practical & Written) |
|----------|---|--|
| Sec 4E5N | 14 to 29 August | 4 October to 19 November |
| Sec 4N | Completed on 1 August. *Sec 4NA students offering Express syllabus papers from 14 to 29 August will sit for these papers before going for their regular lessons. | Part 1: 10 to 20 September <i>Normal lessons resume from 21 to 28 September.</i> Part 2: 1 to 12 October |

The End-of-Year Examinations for Secondary One to Two students will be conducted on 28 September (Friday) and 1 October (Monday), and from 5 October (Friday) to 11 October (Wednesday). Please note that lessons will take place on 2, 3 and 4 October (Tuesday to Thursday). For Secondary Three students, the examinations will be conducted from 28 September (Friday) to 11 October (Thursday). CCAs will stand-down on 10 September (Monday) and resume on 11 October (Thursday).

All examination schedules can be found on the school website. Annex A shows the format and list of topics which will be tested for the various subjects. You can also find the same information on our website: Study Here → Assessment → End-of-Year Exam Topics.

ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

The school will implement season parking for staff who drive to school with effect from 1 August 2018. Car park lots painted in red are reserved for season parking holders only. Parents and visitors are allowed to park in lots that are painted in white on a first-come-first-served basis.

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 clarifications. We can be reached via email at xinmin_ss@moe.edu.sg or you can call us at 6288 9382.

Yours faithfully



Mr Tan Kuo Cheang
Principal