

29 June 2018

Newsletter to Parents – The July Edition

Dear Parent/Guardian

Welcome back to school for a very exciting Semester Two! Looking at the number of planned activities over the June holidays, our students were indeed kept very busy. Nevertheless, amidst the busyness, we hope that our students managed to find some time to rest and spend quality time with family and friends.

Activities and Programmes over the June Holidays

Why was there a need to plan so many activities over the June holidays? We wanted to provide our students with different learning experiences that might not be possible to organise during term time. For instance, our potential student leaders embarked on a Leadership Adventure Camp that was completely designed and run by our teachers and existing student leaders to bring them to the great outdoors. This experience challenged them to venture out of their comfort zones and, in the process, helped them develop further as leaders. We also had groups of students from the Outdoor Activities Club and the Boys' Brigade venturing on adventure camps in Kota Tinggi and Mount Ophir, respectively.

As part of our Education and Career Guidance efforts, our students participated in the Advanced Elective Modules (AEMs) offered by the various polytechnics. Students who participated in the AEMs shared that it gave them a first-hand experience of what studying in a polytechnic was like. Others added that the AEM allowed them to deepen their interest in an applied area of study and inspired them to want to pursue it in their post-secondary education.

Managing the use of Digital Devices

The June holidays also provided us with time to render additional academic support to students. In addition to the remedial lessons and consultations, the School Leaders, Year Heads and Form Teachers had the opportunity to meet with the academically at-risk students and their parents.

Through my conversations with them, I discovered that our students performed poorly in the examinations due to different reasons. Some were familiar with the content but lacked examination skills and could not complete their papers on time. Others relied heavily on memorisation and could not apply what they had learnt to unfamiliar contexts. What worried me most was the group of students who failed to prepare sufficiently for the examinations because they were spending too much time on their mobile devices.

Over the past Semester, my colleagues and I had also received valuable feedback from parents that their child seemed to be spending a disproportionate amount of time on their mobile devices. When asked, the excuse often given by our students was that they were doing assigned work on the devices.

Might we consider banning the use of mobile devices in Xinmin? Technology has pervaded many aspects of our lives and will continue to do so in the future. In preparing our students to be future-ready, we need to teach them to engage with technology and the virtual world responsibly. This

will not be possible in an environment where students have no access to technology. Moreover, technology, when used appropriately, can help our students learn better. It is thus irresponsible for us to ban the use of mobile devices in the school.

The introduction of our Flipped Classroom approach and the Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) initiative (to the 2018 Secondary One cohort) were our attempts to harness the power of technology to help our students learn better. In the course of the semester, it is increasingly evident that we also need to teach our students how to use technology effectively for learning. It is for this reason that we are looking to organise a workshop for parents on managing our students' use of devices at home. In the meantime, we welcome you to share any suggestions you might have on how we could partner you to help your child better manage his device use in school and at home.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Below are the events happening in July that you may wish to take note of.

Homecoming Day (30 June)

The long-awaited annual Homecoming Day will be held on Saturday, 30 June from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., and the objectives of Homecoming Day this year are twofold. First, we anticipate that Homecoming Day will be an excellent platform for past and present students to demonstrate gratitude through their emotional links with their alma mater. Second, we hope that through the careful planning and organisation of the various stalls and sales, students will have an opportunity to develop entrepreneurship, courage and confidence. In total, there will be more than 60 food and games stalls and we warmly welcome all parents to be a part of Homecoming Day as well!

Youth Day Celebrations (5 July)

Youth Day will be commemorated on Monday, 2 July this year and it will be a school holiday. As part of our school's Youth Day celebrations, all students will be treated to ice-cream during recess on Thursday, 5 July, generously contributed by all teachers as a demonstration of their love and care for youth on this special day.

Interschool Combined Sports Meet (13 July)

The Interschool Combined Schools Sports Meet with Nan Chiau High School will be held on Friday, 13 July at Hougang Stadium. Students are expected to report to Hougang Stadium by 7.30 a.m. Subject to inclement weather, the event is estimated to end between 12 to 12.40 p.m. Non-student athletes will need to don the school PE t-shirt and shorts and athletes will wear their track and field jerseys. A briefing will be conducted by the PE department to provide students with more information about the event. If you have any queries, please contact Mr Gabriel Tay (HOD PE/CCA) at tay_lye_hock_gabriel@moe.edu.sg.

Racial Harmony Day Commemoration (20 July)

The school will commemorate Racial Harmony Day (RHD) on Friday, 20 July. The theme for this year is 'Diversity Our Strength'. Racial Harmony Day 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.

The week of activities during Character and Citizenship Education (CCE) lessons will include a short film 'Wa is for Wayang' for Secondary One and Four students, and a dialogue session for Secondary Threes with Mr Salim, Head of Secretariat of the Religious Rehabilitation Group (RRG), on issues of integration and racial harmony in Singapore. The Secondary Twos will be undergoing cultural workshops ranging from Chinese Tea Appreciation and Rangoli, to Malay Calligraphy. The Secondary Fives will be engaged in discussions on racial stereotypes, where they will learn that when one fails to practise empathy and sensitivity, or hold racial prejudice and stereotypes, this will result in disrespect and disharmony in the community.

Orange ribbons have been adopted in Singapore as a symbol of harmony and respect – values that empower racial harmony in Singapore. On 20 July, students will be making a stand by wearing the orange ribbon to show their support for a united and harmonious multi-racial society we call home. Through these, our students will reflect on, and also celebrate, our success as a harmonious society that is built on a rich diversity of cultures and heritages.

ACADEMIC AND CO-CURRICULAR MATTERS

Structured Intervention Programme (3 July to 29 August)

We would like to inform you that the Structured Intervention Programme for the Secondary Four and Five students will run from Tuesday, 3 July to Wednesday, 29 August. There will be a Structured Intervention Programme for each subject at different timings and different days to better support students who did not perform satisfactorily in the recent mid-year examinations. Parents' letters will be issued to students who have been identified for the Structured Intervention Programme. We seek your support and assistance in ensuring that your child/ ward attends the Structured Intervention Programme faithfully if he has been identified. Any requests for exemption from the programme will be assessed on a case-by-case basis. The schedule is as follows.

Day	Subject	Sec 4E	Sec 5NA	Sec 4NA
Monday	English	4pm to 6pm		
Tuesday	Mathematics	4.30pm to 6pm	5pm to 6.30pm	
Wednesday	Science	3.30 to 5pm		
Thursday	Social Studies	Even Week 5.30pm to 7pm	Odd Week 3pm to 4.30pm	
	Pure Geography	Odd Week 3.30pm to 4.30pm		
	Elective Geography	Odd Week 4.30pm to 5.30pm	Even Week 3pm to 4pm	Even Week 3.30pm to 4.30pm
Friday	Design & Tech		1.30pm to 5pm	
	Art	2.30pm to 6pm		
	Food & Nutrition		Even Week 1.30pm to 3pm	

Assessment Matters

The 4NA Preliminary Examinations will take place from Monday, 23 July to Tuesday, 31 July. The 4NT Preliminary Examinations will take place from Tuesday, 24 July to Wednesday, 1 August. 4NT students who are offered Normal(Academic) syllabus papers on 23 July will sit for the papers on the stated date.

The Preliminary Examinations for 4E5N students will take place from Tuesday, 14 August to Thursday, 13 September. The examination schedules can be found on the school website. Please note that 4NA/NT and 4E5N students do not need to report to school on days that they do not have any paper. 4NA students who are offered Express syllabus papers on 15, 20 and 24 August will sit for these papers on the stated dates before going for their regular timetabled lessons.

The second round of Common Tests will take place from 23 July to 3 August for Secondary One to Three students only. The schedules can also be found on the school website.

Do also take note of the following dates for National Examinations:

- O-level Chinese Syllabus B Oral Exam: 3 July
- O-level Mother Tongue Oral Exam: 4 to 16 July
- O-level Mother Tongue Listening Comprehension Exam: 17 July
- O-level Higher Mother Tongue Oral Exam: 23 to 27 July
- O-level Malay (Special Programme) Oral Exam: 1 to 2 August
- O-level English Oral Exam: 13 to 28 August
- N-level English Oral Exam: 5 to 12 July
- N-level Mother Tongue Oral Exam: 31 July to 3 August

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