

5 March 2019

Newsletter to Parents – The March Edition

Dear Parent/Guardian,

Recently, our Senior Parliamentary Secretary, Dr Muhammad Faishal Ibrahim, announced the introduction of guidelines of how parents and schools can work together to better support the learning and growth of our students. Built on mutual respect and trust, many points raised in the guidelines resonated greatly with me and I would like to share some thoughts with you.

Developing Good Habits

School is where we prepare our students for life. As such, it is also where students should develop good habits – habits that allow them to be well-rounded and lifelong learners. One of these habits that we hope to develop in our students is that of making consistent effort in learning.

It is with the intent of shifting our students' motivation away from learning for the sake of preparing for tests and examinations that we removed common tests and mid-year examinations for our Sec 1 to 3 students. With the changes made to our school-based assessments, the need to make consistent effort for revision becomes even more important. Students can no longer rely on cramming just before the mid-year examinations and end-of-year examinations to raise their overall scores. They would need to revise regularly, take every assignment and their homework seriously, and act on feedback provided by their teachers.

However, in my conversations with students, it appears that a number of our students have not yet developed this habit of making consistent effort. Some of them even asked for the mid-year examinations to be re-introduced so that they can be 'forced' to study.

Even as we continue to emphasise the need for our students to make consistent effort in learning, I hope parents can partner us to reinforce our message at home. After all, it is based on the experiences of our many past cohorts of students that we can conclusively say that last-minute work is often ineffective and would lead to high levels of stress and anxiety.

Managing Self

The ability to make sound decisions and to live with the consequences of these decisions is another skill that we want our students to learn. In order to support our students in honing this life skill, we provide our students with ample opportunities to make their own decisions while mitigating the risks that arose from some of these decisions. Inevitably, there would be times where things did not go their way. My teachers and I would always make it a point to seize these opportunities to help our students learn and move on from setbacks and disappointment.

For instance, in choosing their CCAs, we would, as far as possible, allocate a CCA within students' top three choices. However, in the event that a particular CCA was over-subscribed and we had no choice but to allocate students to other CCAs, we hope you could partner us to encourage your child to keep an open mind to learn from the allocated CCA. After all, we take pains to scrutinize the programme in all our CCAs to ensure that the learning students obtain from any given CCA is valuable. It would not be helpful if parents swoop in to ask for a transfer when the

student loses interest in their chosen CCA. Instead, students should be encouraged to live with the consequences of their decision as there is much that students can learn from all CCAs.

Working with the school to know and support your child

Without belabouring the point about how the future will be volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous, we aim to prepare our students for such a future by developing them holistically. This does not mean that academics are now unimportant. Rather, we should not focus squarely on preparing our students to have good examination results. As such, you will find that the school provides students with a spread of activities and expects them to be engaged actively.

Some of these activities, while not directly related to the academics, are equally essential for our students' future success. Important 21st century competencies like critical thinking, creativity and the ability to collaborate with others are developed through these programmes and it would be detrimental to our students if they did not acquire these while in school.

Other activities aim to help our students identify their interests and aspirations in the form of our Education and Career Guidance programme. While we introduce a range of different resources and activities to help our students make informed decisions about their post-secondary and career options, we hope parents can also engage your children in conversations about their options for further study and work. I also hope that you would encourage our students to seize different opportunities to venture out of their comfort zones to learn.

As you engage our students in conversations about their life after Xinmin, we also suggest that you encourage them to keep an open mind with regard to what might constitute success. Sometimes, in trying to get to the destination as quickly as possible, we may miss out on many potentially enriching life experiences!

UPCOMING EVENTS IN MARCH

Educational Pathway Talks for Parents (7 March)

We are organising a series of Educational Pathway Talks on Thursday, 7 March from 6.45pm to 9pm to keep parents and students updated about the entire suite of different post-secondary opportunities available for students. Representatives from various post-secondary education institutions have been invited to share the learning experiences their institutions offer. This information will help you and your child make better decisions with regard to their subject combinations and post-secondary education.

We encourage you to attend the talks with your child so that you could better guide your child in making his/her post-secondary choices. Please refer to Parents Gateway for details about this talk. If you have not downloaded Parents Gateway, you may refer below under Administrative Matters for instructions to download Parents Gateway.

Xinathon 2019 (15 March)

We will be conducting our Cross – Country event, Xinathon, at Seng Kang Riverside Park, from 7.30 am to 12 pm on 15 March (Friday). The gathering point will be Seng Kang Sports Hall. Please contact Mr Ganesan (Overall-in-charge for Xinmin Cross – Country 2019) at ganesan_selvarathnam@schools.gov.sg or 62889382 for more information.

Level 3 Student Leadership Workshop (18 to 19 March)

This Level 3 workshop is organised by the Student Leadership Committee. About 80 Secondary Three students will be nominated by their CCA teachers-in-charge to attend this two-day workshop and skills such as proposal writing, project management and conflict resolution using

the Leadership Challenge Model will be taught. 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, Ms Low Yan Jin at yan_jin_low@schools.gov.sg, Mr Loo Wen Bin at wen_bin_loo@schools.gov.sg or Mr Nicholas Choy at choy_mun_kheong_nicholas@schools.gov.sg for more information.

Mother Tongue Languages (MTL) Festival (25 March to 4 April)

The MTL Festival is a two-week event from 25 March (Monday) to 4 April (Thursday). The theme for this year's MTL Festival, 追本溯源, 情系母语 (Kenali Budaya, Cintai Bahasa, Semarak Bangsa), encourages the love of MTL 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 MTL in real-world contexts and, at the same time, enable them to appreciate their cultural and historical significance.

Chinese Language Vocabulary Mahjong Session with Parents (29 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 29 March (Friday) from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m 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.

74th Speech Day (5 April)

We invite all parents to the school's 74th Speech Day on 5 April (Friday). 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, and the theme we have chosen for 2019 is 'Xinmin – Where We Started'. Please inform the school by 15 March if you wish to attend the event.

Arts Showcases by Performing Arts CCAs

Some of the Performing Arts CCAs will be organising showcases to educate and enrich participants' understanding and appreciation of the arts. The showcases will also feature some of the performances our students will be presenting at the Singapore Youth Festival 2019 Arts Presentation in April, with the line-up as follows:

CCA Involved	Name	Date	Time	Cost
Band	<i>Xinfony</i>	Saturday, 23 March	7 – 8.30pm	\$4
English Drama & Chinese Opera	Drama Night	Friday, 29 March	6 – 7.30pm	\$4

You may purchase/obtain tickets to the showcases through your child/ward from Week 8 (25 February onwards). For more information about the showcases, please contact Mr Josh Wong, SH/ Arts Education at wong_han_xian@schools.gov.sg.

ACADEMIC AND CO-CURRICULAR MATTERS

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@schools.gov.sg. To make the consultation session more beneficial, your child should be present with you.

ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

MOE Parents Gateway Mobile App (with effect from 25 March)

Following our February newsletter, we wish to remind all parents and guardians that we will be implementing Parents Gateway with effect from Term 2, on 25 March. All parents and guardians are required to download the Parents Gateway mobile app by 24 March as we will be issuing online consent forms and announcements for your direct response. Please visit our school website at <https://xinminsec-moe-edu-sg-admin.cwp.sg/stakeholders/parents-gateway-mobile-app> for instructions and information about Parents Gateway.

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 15 March (Friday). A copy of this form is also available via our General Office.

Reminder on Mobile Electronic Device Restrictions on School Premises

We wish to remind parents that mobile electronic devices are restricted items in school. During timetabled time, students are not allowed to access mobile devices without direct teacher supervision. Timetabled time includes Recess. During Recess, if students need to access their mobile devices, they may do so only in the canteen. As students have been warned about mobile phone misuse numerous times, those caught accessing their mobile devices during restricted hours will have their mobile devices confiscated for five school days and receive one demerit point. These rules and others are clearly spelt out in our School Rules and Regulations on our website. We hope to have your support in ensuring that the young do not get addicted to mobile phone usage.

Reminder about use of photographs or video images in school

We wish to remind parents that photographs or video images of students or legal guardians may be taken during school activities and events such as classroom lessons, CCA, school camps, or school concerts. The school may use and publish such photographs or video recordings in school publications, the school's website, social media channels, or other communication channels.

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@schools.gov.sg or you can call us at 6288 9382.

Yours faithfully



Mr Tan Kuo Cheang,
Principal