

4 September 2019

## **NEWSLETTER TO PARENTS – The September Edition**

Dear Parent/Guardian

We will be bidding farewell to Term 3 with our traditional All Staff Day celebrations in school. It is a special day because it presents an opportunity for our students to appreciate all those who contribute to their growth and learning in the school.

You might notice that we have termed the day “All Staff Day” as opposed to “Teachers’ Day” in our school. The reason for this is that we want our students to also appreciate our team of dedicated non-teaching staff who also contribute to their school experience.

### The Science behind Gratitude and Appreciation

I recently got re-acquainted with Positive Education. Having first encountered it in a course I attended a few years ago, I decided to delve deeper by reading some books and articles related to the field. At the core of Positive Education is the field of Positive Psychology. Although one could trace the origins of Positive Psychology to the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, it took about a century later before Positive Psychology became a scientific field of study. This shift was motivated by an increasing realization that the field of psychology had, up to that point, been almost entirely focused on abnormal behaviours and mental illnesses. The founders of the field thought there was value in also studying the positive aspects of human nature (i.e., looking at “what works” rather than only focusing on “what was broken”).

Since then, there has been a growing body of evidence for the benefits of Positive Education interventions (e.g., developing hope, gratitude, resilience, serenity and building character strengths). In particular, the practice of gratitude was found to lead to better individual well-being and improved relationships with others. While the little notes and small presents we receive on All Staff Day go a long way to warm our hearts and motivate us to do even better for our students, I hope that our students would continue to practise gratitude and appreciate others on a daily basis.

### Building Other Positive Habits

Just as how we would hope to cultivate in our students the practice of gratitude, we also aim to work alongside you to cultivate other good habits in our students.

An article published in the Straits Times on 15 Mar 2019 reported that 62 per cent of Singaporeans aged 18 and older were not getting sufficient sleep. A related podcast reported that over 85 per cent of youths were not getting the recommended amount of sleep (i.e., minimally 7 hours of sleep). While there were many reasons for this, one of the main reasons was late bedtimes, which is a habit formed from young. The research findings show that the lack of good sleep habits in youths would, in the short run, lead to tiredness and impact learning in class. Prolonged sleep deprivation might also lead to conditions like insomnia and would ultimately compromise one’s productivity and relationships.

Given that our students will be facing the (school and national) examinations in Term 4, we would like to enlist your help to remind them to get sufficient rest. One way to do this is to get your child to start their revision early. Often, many will work late into the night trying to do their last-minute revision for the examination on the next day. Based on the experiences of past cohorts of students, this

method did not work. The reason is that a sleep-deprived brain is unlikely to be performing at an optimal level. This will, in turn, compromise their subsequent performance in the examination.

Another positive habit that we hope to build in our students is that of punctuality. Perhaps a consequence of not sleeping early, we noticed that a number of our students seemed to be struggling to be punctual for school. Many of them have been aiming to get into school by 7.29 am and giving themselves little or no allowance in terms of unforeseen circumstances. While our school rules are fairly forgiving when it comes to late-coming (i.e., so long as the student is in school by 7.30 am, he is not considered late, even if he is not with the class during the flag raising ceremony), other situations in life may not be so.

At a recent dialogue with some student leaders, I asked them to imagine themselves to be interviewees seated at an office on the 10<sup>th</sup> floor of a building for an interview scheduled at 9.30 am. If the interviewee managed to step in to the building at 9.30 am but took 2 minutes to get to the office, would he be considered late? The student leaders unanimously responded that they would consider the interviewee late. Translating this scenario back to the school, I think we need to inculcate the habit of punctuality in all our students, and that of giving themselves some buffer time to get to where they need to.

As always, we look to you as our invaluable partners in education and would like to enlist your help in building these good (life) habits in all our students.

## **RECENT ACHIEVEMENTS**

### *Student Achievements*

#### Singapore Junior Biology Olympiad

The Singapore Junior Biology Olympiad (SJBO) is organised by the Singapore National Institute of Biology for Upper Secondary students. SJBO promotes the advancement of Biology for Secondary School students and encourages the improvement of education in Biology and the training of those interested in Biology. Fong Kei Min (401) obtained the Bronze Medal, and Brandon Shaun Kagoo (403) clinched the Silver Medal.

#### Singapore Junior Chemistry Olympiad

The Singapore Junior Chemistry Olympiad (SJChO) is organised by the Singapore National Institute of Chemistry for Upper Secondary students. SJChO provides a platform for students to challenge themselves in chemical knowledge and skills. It also seeks to promote the excitement of learning and doing Chemistry, as well as to identify and develop talents. Brandon Shaun Kagoo (403) obtained the Bronze Medal, and Travis Tan (402) achieved the Gold Medal.

#### Singapore Junior Physics Olympiad

The Singapore Junior Physics Olympiad (SJPO) is a Physics competition organised by the Institute of Physics Singapore and is catered to secondary school students. This an annual competition encourages the study and appreciation of Physics among all secondary school students. Xu Xueer (402) and Yan Andong (301) received the Bronze Medal, and Tran Viet Khoa (401) clinched the Silver Medal.

#### The National Science Challenge

The National Science Challenge (NSC) seeks to stimulate, encourage and nurture the passion for scientific inquiry in youth. Students challenge themselves holistically in the mastery of scientific knowledge, thinking and communication skills, teamwork and the ability to apply science to scenarios

and situations in indoor and/or outdoor settings. This year, from a total of 42 teams in the Preliminary Round, our team comprising Lee Sien Yee, Alton, Mathew Marchel Lim, Rajesh Kaushal and Yan Andong (all from 301) made it to the Quarter-Finals.

#### Inter-School Malay Language Scrabble Competition

Four of our students took part in the Inter-School Malay Scrabble Competition “Sahibba 2019” organised by Riverside Primary School, Woodgrove Secondary School and Catholic Junior College and they emerged fourth place for the North Zone. The students who participated were Amirah Bte Mohamad Zailan (402), Siti Aa’isyah Binte Zulkiffli (304), Mohammad Syauqi Bin Nowawie (302) and Nadya Cahyani Widiyantomo (303).

#### Malay Language Infographic Competition

Four of our students represented the school in the Malay Language Infographic Competition at Unity Secondary School, where they had to produce infographics about the use of Malay Language in daily life. The students who took part were Muhammad Arfan Bin Arman, Muhammad Ghazi Al Muhandis Put, Muhammad Ilyia Kamal and Aadam Airwan of 204.

#### Student Guides

24 Secondary Two and Three students were trained as student guides for the *New World, New Life Exhibition* organised by the Singapore Federation of Chinese Clan Associations as part of Singapore’s Bicentennial celebrations. These students began their training in October last year. They gave guided tours to school students and guests-of-honour, including President Halimah Yacob and Minister of Education, Mr Ong Yee Kung this year. The student guides are:

Goh Ziqi	201	Jairus Ng	204	Cha Yi En	301
Goh Joon Cher	201	Liang Jiwen	204	Koo Wen Qi	301
Tian Xinran	203	Li Si Ying	206	Koh Wei Shan, Kelly	302
Easton Sim Jia Rui	203	Lin Jingyi	206	Ng Ying Hui	302
Liu Shi Jie	203	Ong Lixin, Clara	206	Francis Clarissa	303
Chern Yong Ren	203	Verlin Lee Tian Xin	206	Jolyn Ng Xinyi	303
Lee Xin Ying Melva	204	Ong Yi Yang Issac	206	Tessa Tay	303
Nguyen Phuong Uyen	204	Koh Jin Jie Gerald	301	Se Zi Ning, Sammi	304

#### Chinese Language Text Recital Competition

Eight students took part in the second edition of the Text Recital Competition for Primary and Secondary Schools, where they clinched the Bronze Award. This competition was jointly organised by Committee to Promote Chinese Language Learning (CPCLL) and Anderson Primary School with the aim to raise students’ reading proficiency, ignite students’ love for learning the Chinese Language (CL), and deepen their understanding of the Chinese texts found in their textbooks. The students who took part were:

Lower Sec (Individual): Tham Jing Tao (104)

Lower Sec (Group): Lee Yen Foong, Yeh Zhe Kai, Jhenuel Rinoah Batac Bacsal (102)

Lower Sec (Group): Chye Jing An Maximus, Lai Cheuk Wing Sherman, Ong Zhi Xian Edward (103)

Upper Sec (Group): Tan Miao Yi (407), Saw Yan Yi (406)

#### 17<sup>th</sup> National Secondary Schools Creative Writing Competition

Dai Shiyu (302) represented the school in the 17<sup>th</sup> National Secondary School Chinese Creative Writing Competition organized by the Singapore Hokkien Huay Kuan. This national competition aims

to promote the use of the Chinese Language and interest in creative writing among secondary school students.

### Volleyball 'C' Division

Our 'C' Division Volleyball (Girls) did the school proud by emerging as Champions in the North Zone, and top eight in the Nationals. We are also heartened by our 'C' Division Volleyball (Boys) who emerged third in the North Zone, and top 16 in the Nationals.

### Shooting 'C' Division

Our Shooters also did us proud with their various achievements:

'C' Division Shooting – Air Pistol (Boys): fifth in Nationals

'C' Division Shooting – Air Rifle (Girls): seventh in Nationals

'C' Division Shooting – Air Rifle (Individual): fourth in Nationals: Lee Yan Zhen (204)

Other finalists in the National Schools Shooting Championships include Ashley Goh (204), Afiq Putra Nur Hisham (206), Iris Lee (205), Chow Sinn Zhon, (205) and Lundvqist Peh (207).

### N1 Student Cluster Games 2019

On 26 August, Xinmin Secondary School and North Vista Secondary School successfully co-organised the N1 Student Cluster Games 2019. Students from non-sports CCAs competed in Badminton, Floorball, Basketball and Netball against teams from Bowen Secondary School, Seng Kang Secondary School, CHIJ St Joseph's Convent School and North Vista Secondary School. The Games provided our non-sports CCA students the opportunity to participate in sporting competitions. Our Xinmin Badminton girls and boys clinched second and third positions respectively. The Games also served as a fitting finale for our Schools Sports Partnership Programme with ActiveSG and students who enrolled in this programme applied their skills at the Games. The PE Department looks forward to more participation from students next year.

### *Staff Achievements*

#### National Day Awards 2019

The National Day Commendation Medal, *Pingat Kepujian*, is awarded to public officers who have distinguished themselves through commendable performance and conduct, or significant efficiency, competence and devotion to duty. Mr Michael Vincent Rodrigues (Biology Senior Teacher) was given this rare honour this year.

The National Day Long Service Medal, *Pingat Bakti Setia*, is awarded to public officers who are of irreproachable character and who have completed at least 25 years in the service of the Government. This year, Mr Kuo Yu-Hsuan (Science Teacher) received the Long Service Medal for his dedication towards students' learning in the Ministry of Education.

We congratulate both officers for attaining the National Day Awards for 2019!

#### National Chinese Literature Symposium 2019

Mr Tang Chun Chieh (Head of Department, Mother Tongue Languages) and Mr Lim Kok Chong (Chinese Language and Chinese Literature Teacher) represented the school at the National Chinese Literature Symposium. The symposium was organised by the Ministry of Education's Curriculum Planning and Development Division (Chinese Language Unit).

#### Student Learning Spaces (SLS) Open Classrooms

The Student Learning Spaces (SLS) Open Classrooms seeks to support teachers' professional development and deepen professional dialogue by encouraging teachers to invite colleagues from

other schools to observe and critique their lessons. On 26 August, our colleague, Ms Xiao Yan Fei (Chinese Language Teacher) opened up her lesson to Chinese Language teachers from various schools. Ms Xiao's project team comprises Project Leads, Mr Tang Chun Chieh (Head of Department, Mother Tongue Languages) and Mr Tau Jun Hui (Subject Head, Mother Tongue Languages), as well as team member, Ms Joanne Chan (Level Head, Chinese Language).

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### All Staff Day Celebrations (5 September)

In conjunction with Teachers' Day on 6 September (Friday), which will be a school holiday, the school will be celebrating All Staff Day on 5 September (Thursday). The Student Council has planned a concert featuring performance items by talented students and the programme is expected to end by 10.30 a.m.

### Graduation Ceremony

On the afternoon of 2 October (Wednesday), there will be Graduation Ceremony for all Secondary Four and Five graduating students at 2.30 pm at the Reflections Theatre to mark the completion of their secondary school education at Xinmin. This occasion symbolises the culmination of their preparations for the national examinations, and receiving best wishes from their teachers and peers to motivate them to put in their best performance. The ceremony is estimated to end by 4.30 pm.

### Study Break

Secondary Four Normal Academic and Normal Technical graduating students will begin their study break from 2 October (Wednesday). Secondary Four Express and Five Normal Academic graduating students will begin their study break from 3 October (Thursday). Students who wish to seek their subject teachers' help for consultations and additional coaching in school may do so until the end of the national examinations.

### The Astronauts Collective Programme (12 October – 16 November)

As shared in our August Newsletter, Secondary Two and Three students will take part in an ECG mentorship programme offered by The Astronauts Collective (TAC). This is the third year that TAC will be collaborating with the school and the programme is in line with the national movement on SkillsFuture, where students get to learn about the skill-sets related to the field they have been assigned, as well as be inspired to reflect on their own definitions of success and discover interests, passions and their life's purpose. TAC will commence after the end-of-year examinations, and we are sharing with you the programme outline and dates in advance for your holiday planning.

Programme	When?	What?
Mission X	22 August (Tuesday), held during Form Teachers' Time	Students were introduced to TAC and signed up (within the week) from the list of apprenticeships available.
Take-off	12 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.
Hyper-drive	19, 26 October, 2, 9 November (four Saturdays)	Students will take the role of apprentices and learn from their mentors.
Touchdown	16 November (Saturday)	Students share their experiences and reflections about the programme with one another.

## Important Events in Term 4/2019

For your prior information and planning, the following school activities will take place in October and November:

- Xinmin Chorale's *Limelight* Concert, 30 October 2019
- Open House on Saturday, 2 November 2019
- Overseas Service Learning Trips on Tuesday, 12 November to Saturday, 23 November 2019

The last day of school will be on Friday, 25 October 2019. The year-end school holidays will start on Saturday, 23 November 2019 to Tuesday, 31 December 2019.

## **ACADEMIC AND CO-CURRICULAR MATTERS**

### Issuance of Term 3 Progress Report

Students will be receiving their Term 3 Progress Report on 17 September (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	26 August to 23 September	3 October to 15 November
Sec 4N	Completed on 6 August.  *Sec 4NA students offering Express syllabus papers from 26 August to 23 September will sit for these papers before or after their regular lessons.	Part 1: 16 to 25 September  Normal lessons for 4NA resume from 24 September. Normal lessons for 4NT resume from 26 September.  Part 2: 7 to 18 October

### End-of-Year Examinations for Secondary One to Three Students

Please note that the timetables for the end-of-year examinations for Secondary One to Three students can be found on our website. The topics tested for the different subjects had also been uploaded to the school website. All CCAs will stand down from Saturday, 14 September to allow students adequate time to prepare for their examinations, and will resume on 11 October (Friday). All examination schedules, formats and lists of topics tested for the various subjects can be found on our website: <https://xinminsec.moe.edu.sg/study-here/assessment/end-of-year-exam-topics>.

### Post-exam Activities for Secondary One to Three Students

Here is the post-examination schedule. Please refer to the school website for the details of the programmes and further updates, if any.

Date/Day	Event
14 Oct (Mon)	Marking Day – Students <u>do not</u> need to come to school on these days except for CCA.

Date/Day	Event
15 to 18 Oct (Tue to Fri)	Sec 3N students will attend their Elective Modules
15 to 18 Oct (Tue to Fri)	Checking and going through examination scripts
21 to 24 Oct (Mon to Thu)	Post-examination activities: <u>21 Oct (Mon)</u> Sec 1E Math trail Sec 1N Humanities Enrichment Programme Sec 2s CAEP Sec 3s Inter-class games and Survey <u>22 Oct (Tues)</u> Promotion Meeting – Students <u>do not</u> need to come to school except for CCA <u>23 Oct (Wed)</u> Sec 1E Humanities Enrichment Programme Sec 1N Math Trail Sec 2E Learning journey to National Museum Sec 2N Heritage Trail Sec 3s Inter-class games <u>24 Oct (Thu)</u> Sec 1s D & T Enrichment Programme Sec 2E Heritage trail Sec 2N Learning journey to National Museum Sec 3s Multi-Sports Carnival <i>*Please refer to the school website for updates and dismissal time nearer the date for the post-examination activities.</i>
25 Oct (Fri)	Last academic school day for all students – Students will receive their report books and do spring cleaning of their classrooms and the school.
25 Oct to 1 Nov (Fri to Fri)	Parent-Teacher Meeting – School Leaders and Form Teachers will meet parents of students who have underperformed in the exams.
29 Oct to 1 Nov (Tue to Fri)	Supplementary lessons for selected Sec 3s and Bridging lessons for selected Sec 1s and Sec 2s.

### GCE N-level and O-level Examinations

As mentioned in the August newsletter, the N-level Examinations will take place from 16 September to 25 September and from 7 to 18 October. Please note that NA and NT students are required to come to school for lessons in between the two examination periods. After the first part of the examinations, NA students will resume lesson on 24 September (Tuesday) and NT students will resume lessons on 26 September (Thursday) and their last day of lessons is 1 October (Tuesday) followed by the graduation ceremony on 2 October (Wednesday).

The O-level Practical Examinations for Secondary 4E5N Pure Science students will take place on 7 October (Monday), 10 October (Thursday) and 15 October (Tuesday). The O-level Practical Examinations for Secondary 4E5N Combined Science students will take place on 3 October (Thursday). All Secondary 4E5N students will be sitting for their written papers from 16 October (Wednesday) till 15 November (Friday). Sec 3E Higher Mother Tongue students will also be taking the Mother Tongue papers during the stated period.

The last day of lessons for Secondary 4E5N is 2 October (Wednesday) followed by the graduation ceremony.

Students must bring along their NRIC (or Student Pass for International Students) and Entry Proof for all papers. A personalised timetable can be found on their Entry Proof.

## ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

### Reminder on Punctuality

Our school rules state that “Students are to attend school, classes, CCAs and other school activities punctually”. This expectation is found under the section on Responsibility in the Student Handbook. Students are expected to be at the respective flag-raising venues with their classes to participate in the daily flag-raising ceremony, where the form teachers will mark their attendance. Stepping into the school gate just in time is not advisable for your child/ward as we have observed that students who do so will find themselves having to rush, which could in turn place themselves or others at risk of injury as they try to rush to the flag-raising venue. To ensure a good and safe start to your child/ward’s school day every morning, please ensure that he/she arrives in school before 7.30am on Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays, and before 8.30am on Wednesdays.

### Travel Declarations

If your child is travelling out of Singapore during the September 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 plans by 6 September 2019 (Friday). A hardcopy of this form is also made available via the school website or at our General Office. Alternatively, you may make your travel declaration directly via the Parents Gateway App.

### Parent Engagement Session for Secondary 2 Students Taking SBB subjects (21 September)

We are organising a parent engagement session for Secondary 2 students with SBB subjects on Saturday, 21 September from 9.00am to 10.30am to keep parents and students updated about the subject offerings at the upper secondary levels and the suite of post-secondary progression pathways available. 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 session with your child so that you could better guide your child in making his/her choices. Please refer to Parents Gateway for details and instructions to sign up for this session.

### Desired Xinmin Outcomes

As part of our school’s Re-Envisioning efforts and continued improvement journey, our Desired Xinmin Outcomes (DXOs) articulate the characteristics that our students would develop throughout their schooling experience, and by the time they graduate from Xinmin as leaders of hearts and minds. We would like to invite you to provide your views on the DXOs. Please refer to the announcement on Parents Gateway.

Thank you 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 [xinminss\\_email@schools.gov.sg](mailto:xinminss_email@schools.gov.sg) or you can call us at 6288 9382.

Yours faithfully



Mr Tan Kuo Cheang  
Principal