

3 March 2020

Newsletter to Parents – The March Edition

Dear Parent/Guardian,

Shortly after my last newsletter to you in February, we had our DORSCON level upgraded to Orange. We have correspondingly stepped up our precautionary measures to include the wipe down routine in our canteen and the study tables around the first level of the school. Launched as part of our Total Defence Day commemoration, the wipe down routine encourages students to exercise social responsibility and show consideration to others by leaving a clean table for the next user. This would also help to keep the school environment clean and hygienic for everyone.

Being Gracious Citizens

Some years back, I attended a dialogue with our former Permanent Secretary, Mr Lim Siong Guan, on the future of the Singapore Spirit. In the dialogue, Mr Lim shared an anecdote of his mountain climbing experience in Japan. After the climb, the guide handed out towels to all the participants comprising both Japanese and non-Japanese climbers. Mr Lim observed that while all of the non-Japanese climbers used the towel to clean themselves, the Japanese climbers did something quite different. They used the towels to clean the equipment first (which were dirtied from their perspiration) instead!

The graciousness of the Japanese is apparent in other contexts as well. After the 2018 World Cup match between Japan and Colombia, the Japanese fans impressed the world by picking up rubbish around their seats in the stadium and leaving the stadium in as clean a state as they had found it. In contrast, there were many times when I had to return food trays and crockery, and clean tables after the previous patrons before I could use them in our local hawker centres. In some instances, to my dismay, the seat was immediately taken up while I was returning the previous patron's tray. It is in times like this that I wished we could be a little more gracious like the Japanese and did our part to clean up after ourselves!

Forming Habits take Time and Persistence

As with all habits, the habit of cleaning up after ourselves (or, at a more basic level, not littering!) take time and persistence to form. While the wipe down routine aims to help students acquire the good habit of cleaning up after themselves, it would not come naturally to all. Some weeks after introducing the routine, we see that some students were still not wiping down their tables after using. Some were not even returning their crockery after meals!

As such, we have to persist and continue encouraging them to do the right thing. We have been working with our student leaders (not just the Student Councillors, but also CCA and Class leaders) to Model the Way and nudge their peers to also do their part to keep our school clean.

It is the same with other habits, such as paying attention in class, exercising, eating healthily and revising regularly. Initially, students would resist and it would take a lot of effort to get them to comply with our instructions. However, given repetition and the insistence of our teachers, we aim to inculcate some of these habits in our students. This is important as we would like all our students to develop into lifelong learners.

A Habit should be Consistently Practised

While we could remind and encourage our students to carry out some of these practices in school, it will not be as effective if they are not consistently carried out at home. For instance, allowing your children to leave the dinner table without helping to clear up after themselves might run counter to the wipe down habit we are trying to get our students to acquire. Similarly, without your support and insistence at home to get our students to eat healthily and exercise regularly, our efforts to get them to lead a healthy and active lifestyle will be futile. Without your help in ensuring that your child disconnects with his mobile device and heads to bed early, our reminders to them to get sufficient rest would be useless.

As such, I would like to enlist your help to partner us to instill some of these good (life) habits in our students. With the school and the home working together, I am confident that we would be able to nurture our students to be healthy and socially responsible citizens and lifelong learners.

UPCOMING EVENTS IN MARCH

Level 3 Student Leadership Workshop (18 to 19 March)

The Level 3 workshop is organised by the Student Leadership Committee. About 90 Secondary Three students will be nominated by their CCA teachers-in-charge to attend this two-day workshop and skills such as facilitation 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 facilitate the learning experiences of their peers and juniors in CCA effectively. You may contact the teachers-in-charge, Mr Loo Wen Bin at wen_bin_loo@schools.gov.sg or Mr Nabil at ahmad_nabil_ahmad_al-kastalani@schools.gov.sg for more information. To safeguard our students against COVID-19, the school will conduct temperature-taking and visual screening for all students and instructors prior to the workshop. The workshop will be conducted at two separate venues throughout the two-day duration to ensure that there is no mass gathering of participants at any point of time. If your child has been nominated for the workshop, please look out for the notification and consent form on Parents Gateway which will be sent out to you soon.

Mother Tongue Languages (MTL) Festival (23 March to 2 April)

The MTL Festival is a two-week event from 23 March (Monday) to 2 April (Thursday). The theme for this year's MTL Festival, 心之所向，智之所系 / *Hati Dan Minda Bersatu*, 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.

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

ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

Dental Screening

In view of the current COVID-19 situation, the dental screening scheduled for Secondary 1 and Secondary 3 students has been postponed until further notice. Any student that requires emergency treatment may call Xinmin Primary School Dental Clinic at 6285 7582. Parents may also call the HPB School Dental Centre at 6435 3782.

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 for parents on the school website and Parents Gateway. To access the declaration form, please scan the QR code, or go to go.gov.sg/xms-etavelde. A printed copy of the form is also available at our General Office.



Singapore Quick Response Code (SGQR)

With effect from Feb 2020, all cash paying MOE and School Bills will have an additional payment option to pay via QR code link with NETS and PayNow payment schemes. Parents can simply scan and pay without the need to provide their bills references for payment at their convenience. There is no extra cost for using SGQR for payment. We encourage all parents to scan the latest SGQR on each bill received to access the correct balance for payment.

Enhanced Version of Parents Gateway (PG) App

An enhanced version of the app has been released on Tuesday, 25 February. Please update the current version of your app to version 4.0.0 so that you are able to receive the latest information on school-related matters. The enhanced version includes the following features:

1. **MOE HQ Pop-up Comms** – Based on feedback from schools and parents, enhancements have been made to the MOE HQ Pop-up Comms which will be pinned at the top of the “Home” page. By tapping on the pinned message, parents would be able to access the Pop-up Comms message. The HQ Pop-up comms message will remain pinned at the top until the message is removed by MOE HQ.

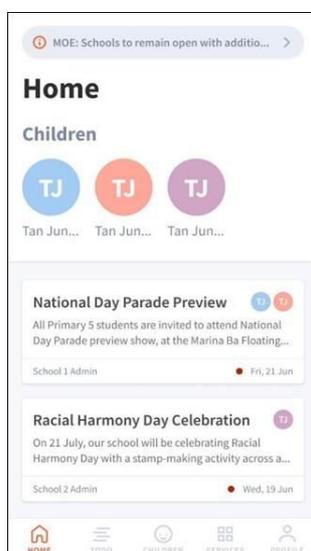


Figure 1 – Updated Pop-up Comms from HQ

2. **Capitalisation of Names, Classes and Schools** – All names of students, parents and schools are now reflected in upper case in order to represent special punctuation requirements accurately.

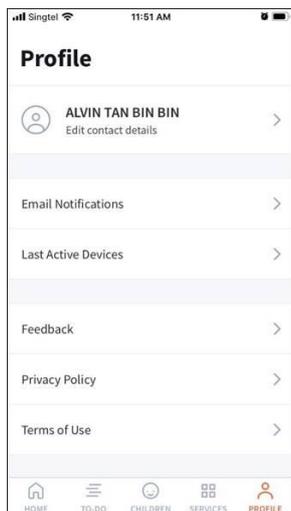


Figure 2 - Parent name will be shown in capital letters

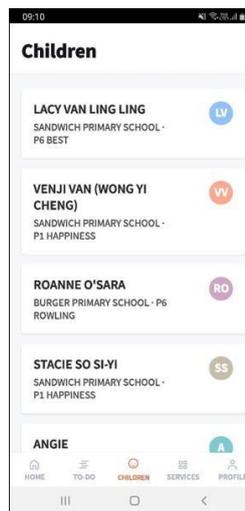


Figure 3 - Student, school and class names will be shown in capital letters

If you have yet to come onboard on the Parents Gateway App, please download and use the App. This will be especially helpful in situations such as the current COVID-19 situation, for schools and MOE to quickly reach out to parents, and provide them with important updates.

Continued Adherence to MOE's Safety Measures

We thank all parents for your continued support of the school and our programmes. As updated in our February Newsletter, the school is closely adhering to MOE's measures in view of the COVID-19 situation. All excursions, overseas school trips and activities which are large-scale and/or inter-school in nature have been cancelled or postponed till further notice. If you require further clarification, please do not hesitate to email us at xinminss_email@schools.gov.sg, or you may call us at 6288 9382.

Yours faithfully

Mr Tan Kuo Cheang
Principal