

15 October 2020

NEWSLETTER TO PARENTS – The October Edition

Dear Parent/Guardian

What an arduous academic year this has been! With the major disruptions brought about by the COVID pandemic, one might easily conclude that this was a disastrous year for all of us. Platforms for our students to showcase their talents (e.g., sports competitions, concerts, a chance to perform at NDP) had to be cancelled. We had to modify platforms for our students to develop themselves in non-academic areas (e.g., XinminCares, Leadership Development Programmes, CCAs, learning journeys). Our students had to stay at home to engage in HBL for a good part of Term 2. We also had to shelve most of the plans for our 75th Anniversary celebrations.

While many things did not go our way, it is not all doom and gloom. 2020 is not a 'lost' year.

Silver Lining from the Crisis

The COVID-19 pandemic showed us how adaptable, resilient and caring our students are. When we transited to Full Home-based Learning (FHBL), our students were able to quickly adjust to learning through online (i.e., synchronous and asynchronous) means. Some of you also shared your observations that your children seemed more engaged and took greater ownership of their learning during the FHBL period.

We also saw that some of our students stepped up to help their peers who had some trouble with technology, e.g., logging on to the video conferencing applications. When we moved to the weekly rotation arrangement and had to enforce our Safe Management Measures (e.g., wearing of masks, online food ordering system for recess), our students, again, quickly adjusted to the new routines of school.

Our teachers, too, rose to the occasion. Many of them overcame steep learning curves in harnessing technology (especially video conferencing technology) for teaching. Sure, they have been using Chromebooks in class and getting students to learn using the Student Learning Space. But these were still somewhat inadequate in preparing them for FHBL. Our teachers had to quickly learn how to manage teaching and learning online and how to harness technology to design lessons to engage students. They also had to learn how to assign, collect, mark and return homework to their students, all via online means. Like our students, our teachers were actively supporting each other in navigating the use of technology for teaching and learning.

Creativity is borne out of constraints. While the pandemic resulted in additional restrictions being imposed on us (e.g., no large group gatherings, keeping a safe distance apart), it also spurred our teachers to unleash their imagination and look at inventive ways to do things. For instance, we deconstructed our Speech Day into an awards presentation to students during Form Teacher time and an online engagement session with alumni award winners. In doing so, we were able to get our alumni who had performed very well last year to share their advice and words of encouragement to spur their juniors on. National Day featured a modified march-past segment and All Staff Day incorporated a whole-school game show segment that was televised right from our Computer Labs. We took class photographs through Zoom – an unusual arrangement that both kept to the Safe Management Measures and captured the spirit of the times. And we organised a class-based

Graduation ceremony, and set up a photo-room for our graduating students to capture their memories as students of Xinmin.

Making a Difference

Other than taking good care of themselves, our students also showed us that they cared for others. Despite having to overcome their own challenges during FHBL, our students also remembered to care for others around them. Our Student Councilors lifted their peers' spirits up via efforts like the #XMSStayHomeChallenge on Instagram. Beyond school, our Xinmin Chorale dedicated their online performance of "When you Believe" to encourage the hearts of our XinminCares partners who have been making sacrifices in doing their bit to contribute to our national effort against COVID-19.

After the Circuit Breaker period, our students continued making a positive difference to the lives of others through e-befriending initiatives with the Thye Hua Kwan Nursing Home in Hougang (THK) and Bright Vision Community Hospital (BVH). Last year, our current Sec 2 students forged a friendship with some of the residents in THK during their XinminCares programme. That was why, when the opportunity arose for them to volunteer for an e-befriending programme with the residents in THK, our students readily seized the opportunity. In the same way, some of our Sec 3 students wanted to brighten up the lives of recovering COVID-19 patients housed at BVH. So they signed up to be on the e-befriending programme in which they taught these patients (mostly migrant workers from India or China) conversational English, how to make their own ear-savers (because these patients would need to wear masks of long periods of time when they work), and origami.

Hope for the Future

As we close the academic year, I thought that our experiences of navigating through the COVID-19 disruptions could help us prepare for an exciting next year ahead. Having been through the FHBL experience, our students and teachers are more ready than ever to harness the affordances of technology to enable both synchronous and asynchronous learning. This would stand us in good stead when we implement the Personalised Digital Learning Programme and introduce Blended Learning to our students next year.

Given the nature of the future ahead, we see the need to continue strengthening our efforts to develop our students' character and instill strong values in them. For this, we will be implementing a new CCE Syllabus from next year. This new syllabus would feature Cyber Wellness and Mental Health more explicitly as content areas. Students would also have opportunities to engage in discussions of contemporary issues more frequently, and more coherent CCE learning experiences.

More details will be shared with you about these exciting changes that are awaiting us next year. Till then, I hope you would keep well and we look forward to continuing our close partnership to bring out the best in our children in the next academic year.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Xinmin's 75th Anniversary Virtual Run

Although the pandemic has disrupted many school activities, we would still like to celebrate Xinmin's milestone year with the 75th Anniversary Virtual Run. The run hopes to encourage students to remain active throughout the school holidays and to promote class spirit via a class challenge. In essence, each student is encouraged to run and/or walk a total of 75 km or more during the holidays. Students have 11 weeks, from Friday, 16 October 2020 to Thursday, 31 December 2020, to complete this challenge. On average, that works out to be about 6.82 km per week. We would also like to encourage parents to join in as well to make this a meaningful family activity. When students complete the challenge, they will be entitled to buy the Finisher T-shirt at a subsidised cost (50% to 75% subsidy). When the student's entire class completes the challenge, they will receive a free Finisher T-shirt. Details of how their runs and/or walks are to be tracked will be briefed to them and

consolidated by the Class Committee. Students can expect to receive their T-shirts in March 2021. We would like to remind parents to advise your children to adhere to the advisory for resumption of sport and physical exercise and activity (<https://www.sportsingapore.gov.sg/newsroom/media-releases/2020/advisory-for-resumption-of-sport-and-physical-exercise-and-activity-for-phase-two-safe-transition>). We hope that through this run, your child/ward will continue to remain active during the holidays, and more importantly, exhibit the values of respect, responsibility and resilience.

Xinmin's e-Open House

We will be having our e-Open House from Friday, 23 October 2020 to Saturday, 7 November 2020. A one-stop website will be launched on 23 October to showcase various aspects of the Xinmin Experience. These include images and narrations by current students, bringing the audience on a virtual tour around the school, information about our programmes, CCAs and more. The event will feature a Xinmin Human Library Experience where visitors will be able to interact 'live' with the students, teachers, parents and alumni of Xinmin on 7 November. Publicity efforts will be hosted on our school's official Facebook and Instagram accounts, on <https://www.facebook.com/xinminsec/> and <https://www.instagram.com/xinminss/?hl=en>. Please pass on the information about the e-Open House by sharing or reposting our outreach efforts if you know of anyone who may be interested in the Xinmin Experience.

ACADEMIC AND CO-CURRICULAR MATTERS

Resumption of CCA and School Activities

To re-introduce aspects of student life and activities important to students' well-being and holistic education, CCA and school activities have resumes on Friday, 9 October 2020 after the End-of-Year examinations. Guidelines from the Ministry has allowed CCA frequency and duration to return to the usual practices and the limit for inter-mingling has been increased from 20 to 50 students. Most CCAs, except Choir, will resume face-to-face sessions with Safe Management Measures in place. CCAs and school activities conducted at external venues can also resume, with Safe Management Measures put in place. Parents may direct CCA-related questions to their child's CCA teachers, Mr Gabriel Tay (HOD/PE&CCA) at tay_lye_hock_gabriel@schools.gov.sg, or Mrs Ho Yen Peng (SH/PE&CCA) at lim_yen_peng@schools.gov.sg. MOE's press release on *Further Resumption of Co-Curricular Activities and School Activities* is found here: <https://www.moe.gov.sg/news/press-releases/further-resumption-of-co-curricular-activities-and-school-activities>.

Last Day of School for Sec 1-3

The last day of school for Sec 1 to 3 cohorts will be on Friday, 23 October 2020. Students will receive their report books on that day. Please refer to the programme below:

Time	Sec 1	Sec 2	Sec 3
0730	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Flag Raising Ceremony Collection of Meal Payments DM's Talk 		
0800	• Principal's Talk	• Form Teacher Time	• Form Teacher Time
0840	• Recess	• Principal's Talk	• Year Head's Talk
0920	• Classroom-Cleaning	• Recess	• Principal's Talk
1000	• Form Teacher Time	• Clean Classroom	• Recess
1040	• Year Head's Talk	• Year Head's Talk	• Classroom-Cleaning
1120	• Form Teacher Time	• Form Teacher Time	• Form Teacher Time
1200 -1210	• Dismissal @ 1200h	• Dismissal @ 1205h	• Dismissal @ 1210h
1200	• Students who did not complete the school's online surveys will go to computer labs		

Release of GCE N-Level Results and Application for PFP and DPP

The N-Level results will be released tentatively between 14 and 18 December 2020. The actual release date will be confirmed via mainstream media and the school website. Students are reminded to settle any outstanding payment matters with the school before collecting the results. Below is some information on the additional pathways for Secondary 4NA graduates.

The Polytechnic Foundation Programme (PFP) is a one-year programme that offers a practice-oriented curriculum taught by polytechnic lecturers to better prepare polytechnic-bound NA students for entry into relevant Polytechnic Diploma courses. This is an alternative academic pathway to the Secondary Five year. Students interested in applying for the PFP should first progress to Secondary Five on 4 January 2021 (Monday). Upon the release of the 2020 GCE O-Level results in January 2021, eligible NA students will be invited to apply for the Polytechnic Diploma courses of their choice under the PFP, at the same time as the annual Joint Admissions Exercise (JAE). Application results will be released by end-January 2021. Students should only withdraw from Secondary Five after they have accepted a PFP offer.

The Direct-Entry-Scheme to Polytechnic Programme (DPP) is a through-train pathway for NA students who do well in their GCE N-Levels, and who will benefit from hands-on and experiential learning at the ITE by enrolling in a Higher NITEC programme immediately after Secondary Four. If they obtain the minimum qualifying Grade Point Average (GPA) when they complete their ITE course, they will be given a place in a polytechnic diploma course mapped to their Higher NITEC programme. Upon the release of the 2020 GCE N-Level results in December 2020, eligible Secondary 4NA students will be invited to apply for the DPP. Application results will be released by end-December 2020, and successful applicants will commence with their Higher NITEC DPP in January 2021. There will be a second round of DPP applications after the release of the GCE O-Level results in January 2021.

For more information on post-secondary options for your child/ward, we encourage you to refer to the following link: <https://beta.moe.gov.sg/post-secondary/>. We also encourage you and your child/ward to e-mail your queries about post-secondary options to Ms Catherine Ng, our Education & Career Guidance Counsellor at Ng_Hui_Fong_Catherine@schools.gov.sg. You may also arrange for an appointment with Ms Ng if you and your child/ward wish to arrange for a meeting.

ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

Students' Year-End Declarations for Travel

In view of the coming year-end school holiday, we would like to remind our parents to continue to defer their overseas travel unless it is permissible under the prevailing MOH travel advisory. To ensure a healthy and safe school environment, please declare your child/ward's travel plans for the year-end holidays by Friday, 30 October 2020 via Parents Gateway (PG). If you do not have access to PG, you may wish to obtain a hardcopy travel declaration form at our General Office. Those who are not travelling need **not** submit a travel declaration.

Purchase of School Books and Uniforms (For Students who will be in Sec 2, 3 and 4 in 2021)

As part of the school's safe management measures, we strongly encourage all parents to go online to purchase their child/ward's school books and school uniforms to order directly from our appointed vendors from Monday, 2 November 2020 onwards. There is an option for home delivery as well. Please note that there will be **no** sale of school uniforms in school during the November-December holidays. All uniform purchases need to be done directly from the vendor. Please refer to the school website for more information on online orders for school books and uniforms (available on Saturday, 24 October 2020 onwards).

For purchase from the school bookshop (only for school books), please refer to the scheduled dates and book a slot via the school website (available on Friday, 30 October 2020 onwards). This is to avoid congestion and long wait-times for the parents/guardians in the school. We seek your understanding that parents who did not book a slot might be turned away.

Level in 2021	Scheduled Dates
Sec 4	2 to 13 Nov 2020
Sec 2	16 to 30 Nov 2020
Sec 3*	1 to 11 Dec 2020

**Note: For the Sec 3 cohort, the sale of school books will only commence after your child/ward has received his/her Sec 3 Subject Combination.*

Please contact the General Office if you require further assistance.

Advisory for the Year-End School Holiday

As the academic year draws to a close, we would like to highlight a few things that you may want to keep a lookout for. Generally, the holidays allow students to have more free time than they usually do during the school term. While it is good for them to de-stress and pursue other interests, unfortunately, it is also a time when some students may engage in pursuits that are not beneficial to them. We would like to share a few observations that may help you in ensuring your child/ward's well-being during the school holidays.

Going out in Groups

If your child is going out in groups, do remind them that it would be best not to socialise with people that they do not know well even if they are 'a friend of a friend'. Furthermore, if they are out with friends and they encounter other groups of youth who they feel are behaving badly, it is best to leave the area so as to avoid confrontations. Please also remind your child/ward to adhere to COVID-19 safe distancing measures which are still enforced in public areas.

Part-Time Work Scams

Part-time work does carry some element of risk as students may interact with other youth or even older work colleagues and pick up bad habits like smoking and vaping. There are many advertisements available online on various social media platforms advertising money-making schemes that promise lucrative earnings and/or easy loans. Some students have fallen victim to these so please get your child to discuss with you before they make any decisions to work part-time.

Online Sales

Buying online is also very common these days and students have sometimes fallen victim to scams as they tend to want to buy trendy items at low prices. Please do not let your child make online purchases without discussing with you first.

First Day of School in 2021

School will reopen on Monday, 4 January for the new academic year 2021. Throughout the year-end school holidays, if your child/ward has fever and/or flu-like symptoms, please consult a doctor. Your child/ward should refrain from coming back to school until he/she has fully recovered. Please call or e-mail the school if your child/ward is unwell and unable to attend the first day of school.

Daily Temperature-Taking and Wearing of Face Masks in 2021

The practice of daily temperature taking and wearing of face masks may continue in 2021, depending on the national posture on the COVID-19 situation. Hence, please ensure that your child/ward has a working thermometer and wears a face mask when he/she reports for the first day of school on 4 January 2021 (Monday) unless instructed otherwise.



President's Award for Teachers (PAT) and Outstanding Youth Award in Education (OYEA) 2021

Every year, two national awards are given out to teachers in Singapore to recognise their professional excellence. They are the President's Award for Teachers (PAT) and the Outstanding Youth in Education Award (OYEA).

The **President's Award for Teachers (PAT)** gives national recognition to experienced teachers for their dedication and hard work in developing our young. These teachers prepare students for life, as well as model commitment to continuous learning and enterprise. They inspire both their students and peers through their words and deeds. Nomination for PAT 2021 is **now open** and will **close on Tuesday, 26 January 2021**.

The **Outstanding Youth in Education Award (OYEA)** seeks to recognise excellent young teachers for their youthful idealism, energy, enthusiasm and active involvement in the development of youths. Educators who are 35 years and younger are eligible for the award. For OYEA 2021, it is open to educators who are born on or after 30 June 1986. Nomination for OYEA 2021 is **now open** and will **close on Tuesday, 12 January 2021**.

We would like to invite you and your child/ward to submit your nomination(s) for any deserving teacher(s) whom you know by accessing the URLs or scanning the QR codes below.

PAT 2021	OYEA 2021
go.gov.sg/pat2021 	go.gov.sg/oyea2021 

For queries and/or feedback about the awards, please send them to MOE_AST_PAT@moe.gov.sg (PAT 2021) or MOE_AST_OYEA@moe.gov.sg (OYEA 2021). Thank you for your support in recognising the good work of our teachers!

As this is the last newsletter for the year, we would like to wish all parents and students a safe, healthy and enjoyable year-end holiday. We would also like to extend our gratitude to the entire community for the support given to our teachers and students. To receive timely updates on the new school year, please check our school website regularly. Please have the latest version of the Parent Gateway (PG) app installed on your mobile device, with the notification function enabled. If you need further clarifications, please reach us at xinminss_email@schools.gov.sg or at 6288 9382.

Yours faithfully



Mr Tan Kuo Cheang
Principal