

11 September 2020

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

Dear Parent/Guardian

This year, Term 3 was an extraordinarily long one. Just as our students have to work hard at overcoming the discomfort of the Safe Management Measures (SMM), our staff also had to work doubly hard to keep all our students safe while continuing with teaching and learning. It was not easy for both our teaching and non-teaching staff. They had to learn new skills, sometimes at very short notice. They also had to take on additional responsibilities (e.g., morning duty to visually screen our students as they make their way in to school, de-conflicting errors in the recess and lunch orders). This is why our theme of gratitude for this year's All Staff Day (also known as Teachers' Day) was an especially significant one.

### 饮水思源 (When drinking water, think of its source)

The bronze sculpture of a well beside our parade square symbolises this Chinese idiom. It was erected to remind all our students (and staff) about the need to be grateful and subsequently, to pay it forward to future generations.

Gratitude is one of our Desired Xinmin Outcomes that we aim to develop in our students in their time with us. It is an important value to inculcate in our students if we want them to give back to society and make a positive difference to the lives of others. Only then would we collectively build a kinder and more gracious Singapore.

But what exactly is gratitude? I came across this comprehensive definition of gratitude from a Harvard Medical School publication that I found to be quite helpful for me to understand the concept of gratitude:

*“Gratitude is a thankful appreciation for what an individual receives, whether tangible or intangible. With gratitude, people acknowledge the goodness in their lives. In the process, people usually recognise that the source of that goodness lies at least partially outside themselves. As a result, gratitude also helps people connect to something larger than themselves as individuals — whether to other people, nature, or a higher power.”*

### No Man is an Island

According to research findings, gratitude helps people improve their health, build stronger relationships and also short up more positive emotions and memories that would serve as a protective factor when managing adversity. In short, it enables us to live more fulfilling lives. So it would seem that practicing gratitude would be a good idea.

However, over the course of my time as an educator, I have come across a number of examples of students and even adults demonstrating a lack of gratitude. One example happened this year when this student demanded to be allowed to stay home to revise on his own. It was hurtful to hear that the reason for this student's request was that school was useless to him. This is particularly so because I saw for myself how his teachers and peers had made so much effort to reach out to him, to support him and to accommodate his needs. I also knew that the student's parents had been trying all ways and means of supporting him but I similarly saw that this boy showed no sign of gratitude towards his parents.

I felt sad that this had come to be. In today's society, we are very tightly inter-connected with each other. Not realising the support and opportunities we received from others might set in motion a vicious cycle of driving people away from us. This would leave us feeling distanced from others and more vulnerable when we encounter adversities because we would be facing them alone (or at least feel like we have to face our challenges alone).

### Gratitude as a Daily Habit

Coming back to this year's All Staff Day, in circumventing the limitations due to SMM, we decided to stretch out the All Staff Day celebrations to kick-start little gratitude exercises for our staff and students since July. The idea was to have staff and students write little notes of appreciation to each other to recognise the support they received during the Full HBL period (and after the school resumed in June).

Over the past few months leading up to All Staff Day, the little notes of appreciation our staff received warmed their hearts and spurred them to work a little harder and give a little more of themselves to support their students' learning and growth. The effort created such a positive vibe in the school that I hope it would continue even beyond All Staff Day.

As we embark on the fourth and last term of our extraordinary school year, I hope you could work alongside the school in role modeling and cultivating this habit of gratitude in your children. It does not need to be very elaborate – just cultivating the habit of saying thank you when you received something from another person would be a good start. With your strong support, I am confident that we would be able to develop grateful children who recognises how others have supported them and are committed to give back to society!

## **RECOGNISING OUR STUDENTS**

### Singapore Foochow Association's Chinese Mini Fiction Creative Writing Competition

Seven of our Secondary 3 students (Chua Jingyi Charmaine, An Xiao, Sun Shaohan, Yuan Mengfei, Mu Junrong, Damien Lin Kai Wei and Guo Yuhao) represented the school in the Chinese Fiction Creative Writing Competition organised by the Singapore Foochow Association. This national competition aims to promote the use of the Chinese Language and interest in creative writing among secondary school students. Guo Yuhao (302) was awarded the Merit Award for this competition. We also thank the rest of the students for their active participation.

### Singapore Hokkien Huay Kuan's 18<sup>th</sup> National Secondary School Chinese Creative Writing Competition (*Xin Lei Jiang*)

We had six students represent the school in the 18th National Secondary School Chinese Creative Writing Competition organised by the Singapore Hokkien Huay Kuan. They are Mu Junrong (302), Sun Shaohan (302), Guo Yuhao (302), Claire Goh Xuan Hui (202), Wong Yu Xin (203) and Ryan Goh Chan Khee (204). This national competition aims to promote the use of the Chinese Language and interest in creative writing among secondary school students. Ryan Goh Chan Khee (204) was also awarded the Silver Award for the Lower Secondary Category.

### Students' Work Selected to published in Singapore Chinese Literature Vol. 93

Mr. Zhou Decheng, a famous local poet was invited to coach our students during the Author-in-Residence Programme in late June 2019. The students had an opportunity to submit their literary works at the end of the programme. Their works were published alongside with our renowned writers in the latest Singapore Chinese Literature Vol. 93. This is an annual Singapore Chinese Literature publication done by Singapore Association of Writers. Our budding student poets are Yan An Dong (401), Dai Shiyu (402), Koh Wei Shan, Kelly (402) and Lin Yunyi (403).

## Achievements in Mathematics

Our students received Honourable Mention at Singapore Mathematics Project Festival 2019. They are Ashley Chew En Qi (401), Eunice Salinas Siapno (401), Clarence Lau Cun Guang (401), and Yan Andong (401).

At the International Mathematical Modelling Competition (Singapore) 2020, the following students were awarded the Certificate of Merit: Neo Shao Qin (301), Tan Wei Ting Jolin (301), Easton Sim Jia Rui (301) and Low Shi Jie (301).

In addition, Liao Yong Kai, Winston (301) achieved third prize in the National University of Singapore's Statistics Competition 2020.

## **RECOGNISING OUR STAFF**

### All Staff Day Celebrations (3 September)

In conjunction with Teachers' Day on 4 September (Friday), which was a school holiday, the school celebrated All Staff Day on 3 September (Thursday). The Student Council planned a class-based programme to celebrate and appreciate our Xinmin staff for their care, hard work and dedication in keeping students safe, healthy and happy. Please follow our Facebook and Instagram to see how we celebrated our staff on this special day.

### National Day Awards 2020

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 Lee Foo Yong (HOD/Business & IT) received 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 Ho Siang Teng, Peter (Science Teacher) received the Long Service Medal for his dedication towards students' learning in the Ministry of Education.

We congratulate these officers for attaining the National Day Awards for 2020!

### Caring Teacher Awards (CTA) 2020

Since 2008, the National Institute Education Caring Teacher Awards has recognised well-deserved full-time teachers in primary and secondary schools, as well as junior colleges/centralised institutes in Singapore who demonstrate exemplary character, initiative, integrity, altruism and a proven record of service to their schools and students. We are heartened to announce that the following colleagues have been awarded as school-level nominees for this year's CTA:

- Ms Ng Lee Hua
- Ms Lee Lu May (Mrs May Ng)
- Mr Loo Wen Bin
- Ms Pang Hui Chin
- Miss Ulrica Liang

Congratulations, teachers!

### MOE Outstanding Innovator Awards (OIA) 2020

In 2013, the MOE OIA for Schools was introduced to recognise individuals who are key activists in

MOE schools, who influence and actively contribute to continual improvement and innovation efforts in their schools.

We congratulate Mr Terry Tan, our ICT Associate, for being recognised as a MOE Outstanding Innovator!

## **UPCOMING EVENTS**

### Graduation Ceremony

On the afternoon of 30 September (Wednesday), there will a Graduation Ceremony for all Secondary Four and Five graduating students at 2.30 pm in their respective classrooms to mark the completion of their secondary school education at Xinmin. The classroom-based celebrations are in line with the current national posture and safe management measures to curb the spread of COVID-19. There will be no lessons in the morning. 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 p.m.

### Study Break

The graduating students will begin their study break from 1 October (Thursday). Students who wish to seek their subject teachers' help may do so through online consultations till the end of the national examinations. During this study break period, please advise your child to reduce mingling with others outside their household so as to keep them safe and healthy. Reduced intermingling beyond the household also helps reduce your child's risk of being placed on Home Quarantine Order (HQO) or Leave of Absence (LOA) because they have been exposed to a confirmed COVID-19 case. Please be advised that should your child be placed on HQO or LOA, s/he might not be allowed to sit for the national examinations. That said, if your child needs to come back to school to study in a more conducive environment, the school will support him/her but with strict safe management measures in place. Please ask your child to keep their Form Teachers and the Sec 4&5 Year Head informed.

### Important Dates in Term 4/2020

For your prior information and planning, the last day of school will be on Friday, 23 October 2020. The year-end school holidays will start on Saturday, 21 November 2020 to Thursday, 31 December 2020.

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

### Issuance of Term 3 Progress Report

Students will be receiving their Term 3 Progress Report on 15 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)
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Sec 4E5N	24 August to 18 September	19 October to 12 November
Sec 4N	Completed on 17 August.  *Sec 4NA students offering Express syllabus papers from 24 August to 18 September will sit for these papers before or after their regular lessons.	Part 1: 14 to 23 September  Normal lessons for 4NA resume from 22 September. Normal lessons for 4NT resume from 24 September.  Part 2: 5 to 15 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, 12 September to allow students adequate time to prepare for their examinations, and will resume on 9 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>.

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

As mentioned in the August newsletter, the N-level Examinations will take place from 14 September to 23 September and from 5 to 15 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 22 September (Tuesday) and NT students will resume lessons on 24 September (Thursday). Their last day of lessons is 30 September (Wednesday). There will be no lesson on that day and the students will come to school in the afternoon for the graduation ceremony which starts at 2:30 pm.

The O-level Practical Examinations for Secondary 4E5N Pure Science students will take place on 5 October (Monday), 8 October (Thursday) and 13 October (Tuesday). The O-level Practical Examinations for Secondary 4E5N Combined Science students will take place on 1 October (Thursday). All Secondary 4E5N students will be sitting for their written papers from 19 October (Monday) till 12 November (Thursday). 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 30 September (Wednesday). There will be no lesson on that day and the students will come to school in the afternoon for the for the graduation ceremony which starts at 2:30 pm.

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**

### Closure of School Back Gate

To manage human traffic flow into the school in the mornings, the school had opened up the back gate near Block 675 at the start of Term 3. This gate was opened in addition to the walk-in gate near the security post and the turnstile next to the Creative Arts Complex as the school was concerned about potential overcrowding during arrival time. Over the course of Term 3, we observed that the number of staff and students using the back gate was low. We also observed that the flow human traffic at the other two entrances was smooth and the entrances were not congested. Hence, the school has decided that the back gate would not be opened in the mornings from Term 4 onwards. The school have informed our staff and students of this arrangement via the morning announcements and email.

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

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tan Kuo Cheang', written over a horizontal line.

Mr Tan Kuo Cheang  
Principal