



ACS (International)

PRINCIPAL'S NEWSLETTER – 9th March 2011

Dear Parents,

A great deal has happened in a very busy few weeks, not least the celebration of the ACS 125th Anniversary at the Singapore Indoor Stadium. It was a remarkable morning with something approaching 10,000 staff and students from the seven ACS schools (including ACS Jakarta) joining together to give thanks and enjoy the occasion. I felt that the significant presence of ACS (International) marked a coming-of-age for us and I was very proud to see us so well represented (even if there was little direct acknowledgement of this and our achievements).

ACADEMIC MATTERS

There has also been much activity on the academic front and you should soon have access to the end-of-term grades via iSAMS (although please note that we have not yet been able to produce such for CCAs). On the matter of ICT we were pleased to welcome our incoming Head of ICT, Mr. David Lee, for a short familiarisation visit – although he will not join until May he has already identified the key issues and produced a preliminary plan which should start the process of co-ordinating and upgrading our information technology. For the moment I can provide you with information about laptops (which we expect all students to have).

The recommended requirements for the laptop computers are:

Hardware

CPU: Intel® Core™2 Duo Processor 2.53 GHz

Memory: 4 GB 1066 MHz DDR3 SDRAM

Hard drive: 500 GB SATA drive.

Other features: Minimum 3 USB ports, built in Ethernet and wireless

Software

Operating System-Microsoft Windows is required.

If you prefer a Mac, please ensure that it has dual boot-up as Mac OS and Linux does not work well with our wireless access.

Anti-Virus

You must install anti-virus software before we can configure your laptop for internet access.

The school will not provide any software. Students are recommended to purchase Microsoft Office.



We have also had a number of enrichment trips – our Year 6 IB historians visited the Changi War Memorial Museum although the trip was compromised by the absence of several students who decided that the preparation of individual work took priority and they took the day off. I will refer to this issue later in this letter.

Our geographers continue to explore the local area and will finish the term with a visit to the climate-change exhibition at the Singapore Science Centre. Others have been conducting urban fieldwork in the Raffles Square area. Our German linguists also benefited from a day at the MoE's language centre.

The Faculties of Performing & Expressive Arts and Science are producing a series of workshops on animation to show how arts and science can be integrated, which is an innovative way of helping our students to learn.

Homework, too, is one of these ways and I append some notes for parents which might be helpful to you.

ADVICE TO PARENTS ABOUT HOMEWORK

This was stimulated by advice which appeared in the magazine *Women's Weekly* in January 2011 (and which my wife pointed out to me!): it offers sensible ideas for parents to help with the homework of their sons and daughters without being overly stressed.

1. ESTABLISH AN OVERVIEW OF THE WORK OF THE WEEK

Use colour-coding to set up a weekly diary of the work done by your sons and daughters e.g. show the subjects studied each day and show the homework that is usually set each night. Use different colours for each subject to avoid creating seemingly vast and impossible chunks of time. This helps set the framework for the periods of work and leisure.

2. SET TIME FOR DAILY REVIEW OF WORK

So many study guides advise that the work of the day should be reviewed at the end of the day. This need take only a few minutes for each subject to ensure that there are no doubts or confusion about the material covered – if there are, this might need more practice or revision later, or it might need help from the teacher. Use different colours for each subject to avoid creating seemingly vast and impossible chunks of time. This will mean that revision for exams or tests will be much easier.

3. ESTABLISH A HOMEWORK TIMETABLE

Set aside time each day for homework – looking at the pattern of the previous few weeks will help in judging the schedule. This timetable for homework should be added to the overview in 1 above. Boarding schools often set aside 30 minutes per subject each night, with up to three per night for students in Years 1 to 4. Use different colours for each subject to avoid creating seemingly vast and impossible chunks of time



4. SET THE TIME FOR HOMEWORK

People work effectively at different times so it would make sense to plan the schedule for homework and review to suit the most effective time for your son or daughter. Whenever this is – before breakfast, on returning home or in the evening, I would, however, urge that your sons and daughters get adequate sleep – something around eight hours per night as a minimum for most.

5. LOCATION

Try to have a place for your son or daughter which is exclusively for work, even if it is only a table or part of a desk. It is better to have areas for leisure separated from work areas.

6. BE SENSIBLE ABOUT LENGTH OF STUDY

Numerous studies, and the experience of many of us, suggest that 45 minutes (perhaps only 30 minutes for younger students) is about the limit for a period of effective study; this should then be followed by a break – in a completely different place – perhaps with something to eat or drink; a short walk, a bit of TV (not games as you get involved in them!) may also help. 15 minutes would be about right for such a break.

You should also be aware that, as part of the School Plan (and as a follow-up to the CIS report) we are now in the process of introducing a number of initiatives to enhance the core aspects of teaching and learning. We are, for example, looking at such aspects as homework (style, timing, purpose), study skills, enhanced teaching skills, innovative and effective use of ICT, and assessment for learning.

SPORT

The inter-House sporting competitions have seen tremendous spirit and commitment. In basketball the placings were as follows: 1st – GHK; 2nd – Thoburn; 3rd equal – LSG & TCT. Football saw fierce competition but in the right spirit; ultimately LSG triumphed overall followed by SVM in second, and GHK and Oldham in joint third place. In a warm-up school match our boys came back from 0-1 at half time to secure a 3-2 win against Dunman High School; they then went on to another win (2-1).

The tennis teams have faced some tough opposition but victories against UWC and NUS have thrilled us all. Our netball girls played their first game of the under-19 league and had a landslide victory against OFS this afternoon: the result was 30 – 10 in, from our point of view, an excellent match!

I am also pleased to report that Andika Triputra Sasabone is participating later this month in the WSK Master Series for karting in Italy – we wish him well.



THE CO-CURRICULUM

Mention of foreign parts prompts me to let you know of the huge variety of trips that are going out from the School during the forthcoming longer vacations. The simplest way to do so is in a table which I append below: if your son or daughter is interested the contact details are noted, although there have, of course, been several presentations in School.

OVERSEAS TRIPS 2011

Month	Location	Date	Teacher IC	Target Group	Objectives	Quota
May	Maldives	March Holidays	Audrey Moh Chin Chee Kin Chia Choong Kiat	Yr 5 and above	CAS Related	Full
	Sydney	March Holidays	Carol Ling Josephine Teo	String CCA	CCA	Full
June	Davao Philippines	June 1 st Week	Available	Yr 5	CAS Related	
	Chiang Mai	June 1 st Week	Available	Yr 5	CAS Related	
	Africa	June 1 st Week	Adrian P Paul H	Yr 5 and above	CAS Related	
	Kota Kinabalu	June Week 3	Sivarajan	Yr 5 and above	CAS Related	
	Sri Lanka	June 1 st Week	Marissa J	Yr 5 and above	Cultural	
	USA	June 1 st Week	Eniko Kiss Audrey Moh	Yr 3, Yr 4 and Pre IB	Cultural	
	UK	May last week	Pamela Ng/Rita Kaur	Yr 4, 5,6	Business /Economics & Universities Visits	Full
	Australia	June 1 st Week	Hilda Mui Kiam	Yr 1 to 4	Science, Educational	
Sept	Siew Reap	Sept Holidays	Available	Yr 5	CAS Related	

As you can imagine, I am pleased that, as an international school we are committing so fully to promoting international-mindedness in this way.

This is also being fostered through our participation in the Model UN Programme in Singapore and Rome: fifteen here and five in Italy.



The debating skills honed in the Singapore Secondary School Competition will be helpful in this respect. Our team secured a victory in their round against Montfort, allowing restitution following a defeat earlier in the month; happily, however, Shasta Kaul was named the best speaker in both events.

I was also pleased that the School was mentioned in the commemorative booklet celebrating the Singapore Youth Olympics as a consequence of our students being involved in translating work with visiting teams.

Teamwork was a feature of the student-led production of *Animal Farm*, directed by Reggie Kent and produced by Faith Tan. The play was very well presented and the cast, crew and front-of-house team all worked together in a very effective manner allowing for real enjoyment and fulfillment. It was a real privilege for Mr Toyne, Mr Payne and myself to be involved with such a bunch of dedicated and talented students. Although the week preceding the play proved to be something of a marathon for those involved this did not quite compare with the time involved in the all-night movie marathon which – despite foolish behaviour by a few silly students who brought-in alcohol – was an enjoyable and successful event (the miscreants have been dealt with by a suspension from School and a clear warning).

Finally, I should also let you know that all Year 2 students have been registered for the NYAA bronze award; Year 3 students have also been registered at the appropriate level. Interestingly there will be 42 Bronze and seven Silver awardees in April.

CHRISTIAN WITNESS

I am so pleased that our students' work with local children through the Preaching Point is proving to be such a success; so too have been the visits programme to local people.

The CMS team has been innovative in introducing Christian artists, musicians and dancers to the School over the last couple of weeks: they have presented their skills throughout the day and chatted with our students. I was very pleased to hear good things from the visitors: '...the students were so friendly and open to us.' and 'it is great fun and I really feel at home with the students.'



The CMS initiatives continue with a Christian Fellowship leadership camp in the Cameron Highlands during the forthcoming holiday.

HIGHER EDUCATION FAIR 2011

The Annual Higher Education Fair 2011 is around the corner again! This is a good opportunity for parents/guardians and students to meet personally the representatives from the local and foreign universities/organisations all under the same roof.

The ACS (International) Higher Education Fair 2011 is confirmed on:

When : Friday, April 1st 2011
Where: Booths/Presentation in the Sports Hall, Library, Oldham Hall
Time : 12.30 pm – 5.00 pm

All Year 4, 5 and 6 students will be attending. Parents are strongly encouraged to attend. For more information, please email Ms Rita Kaur at rita.kaur@acsinternational.com.sg; **Presentation by participating institutions are appended below:-**

Participating Institutions

Institution	Talk	Location
National University of Singapore (NUS)	12.45 pm – 1.15 pm	Oldham Hall
Nanyang Technological University (NTU)	1.15 pm – 1.45 pm	Oldham Hall
Singapore Management University (SMU)	1.45 pm – 2.15 pm	Oldham Hall
Singapore University of Technology & Design (SUTD)	2.15 pm – 2.45 pm	Oldham Hall
British Council – Studying in the UK	1.15 pm – 1.45 pm	Library
USEIC – Studying in the USA	2.00 pm – 2.30 pm	Library
Singapore Institute of Management (SIM)	2.45 pm – 3.15 pm	Library
IDP Singapore – Studying in Australia	3.30 pm – 4.00 pm	Library
DAAD – German Academic Exchange Service	4.30 pm – 5.00 pm	Library
LaSalle College of the Arts	1.15 pm – 1.45 pm	Room NB1-02
Temasek Polytechnic	1.45 pm – 2.15 pm	Room NB1-02
DigiPen Singapore	2.45 pm – 3.15 pm	Room NB1-02
SP Jain Center of Management	3.15 pm – 3.45 pm	Room NB1-02
The Morrisby Guidance Service : Psychometric Test	4.30 pm – 5.00 pm	Room NB1-02
<i>Motivational Talk by Mr Tim Wade</i>	3.00 pm – 3.45 pm 4.15 pm – 5.00 pm (Repeat session)	Oldham Hall



ABSENCES

I made reference earlier to the unfortunate habit that appears almost endemic in this School, namely the taking of unauthorised time off from school to catch-up on work. This is noticeable before coursework deadlines and exams and is not at all helpful however attractive it might be in the very short term.

As I have commented before there is a clear relationship between unauthorised absence and underachievement in exams. I intend to do all that I can to stop this trend for the benefit of your sons and daughters. As part of this we have strengthened our policy on absence – although this is on the website I note below the key addition. I very much hope that I will not have to invoke such steps so would ask for your support and co-operation.

IBDP and IGCSE students

Any student accumulating an absence of 5 days which is not supported by a valid medical reason and certificate will be called to a meeting with the Principal at which the student's future at the school will be discussed.

This also applies in cases where the School is doubtful of the authenticity of the medical reasons offered and / or the certification submitted.

Additional absence from school will result in the student being withdrawn from the IB / IGCSE examinations and possibly ACS (International).

AND FINALLY...

I continue to enjoy working with the PSP in their work supporting our various programmes and am pleased that this will continue next month through International Day on 29th April. The PSP is also working on the committee organising the Gala Dinner scheduled for October. Please do respond positively if you are approached to help for you can really make a tremendous difference in so doing.

For the moment, however, I wish you a pleasant break over the forthcoming vacation.

Yours sincerely,
P Kerr Fulton-Peebles
Principal

