



ACS (INTERNATIONAL) NEWSLETTER



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Dear Parents, Students and Friends

Welcome back to school for 2014! We trust that everyone had an enjoyable and relaxing break and that you are all looking forward to the year ahead. A special welcome to new students, new parents and new staff. We wish you all a successful and enjoyable time with us. The new staff are introduced in a later section.

At the beginning of last week we received last year's IB Diploma results for 2013. We are pleased with the overall results and a summary commentary is provided below. IGCSE results are released at the end of next week. We were pleased with the school coverage in the Sunday Times IB 'value-added' article in this week.

At the first assembly the students were told the story of two newcomers to a town. The first arrived and was met by an old man at the town gate. The young man asks him, 'What are the people like here?' The old man asks what the people were like in his last town. 'They were nasty and fought'. Here too, the old man said, they are nasty and fight.

The second young man arrived and asked the same question. When asked what the people were like in his former town he replied that they were loving, friendly and helpful. Here too, the old man said, they are loving, friendly and helpful.

When a man sitting close by asked the old man why he had given two different answers to the same question the old man replied: 'You find what you bring.'

ACS (International) is no different – we are the product of the combined student and staff attitudes to school. Thankfully we have a strong school culture relating to family where people are loving, friendly and helpful. Newcomers quickly appreciate and reciprocate the positive attitudes found at school. As a Christian institution we try to model an inclusive and supportive environment, where all students can reach their individual potential. We look forward to working in partnership with students and parents to realise hopes, dreams and potential so that 2014 is a most successful year. The Best Is Yet To Be.

Best wishes
Rob Burrough

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DID YOU KNOW ?

An Ostrich's eye
is bigger than its brain

NOTICES

High Value-Added IB Results at ACS (International)

November 2013 IB results ACS (International) students gained higher than predicted results in the recently released International Baccalaureate Diploma results. The results show an improvement on 2012 with the overall cohort average improving slightly on last year's average of 34 points (out of 45). The world average is 29.9 points with 24 points and above being a pass mark. Our top mark was 44 by Mrinalini with 14% gaining 40 points or above (15% last year). We had a 92% pass rate.

The top 10 Singaporean students in the 151 student cohort scored an average of 40 yet their PSLE average score was only 226. The highest value-added result was by Elwin Lim Yi Chong who scored 202 in his PSLE but gained an impressive 42 in the IB Diploma. Urvashi Sikka is also to be congratulated for moving from a PSLE score of 201 to an IB score of 40. Without value-added improvement we would expect a student with a PSLE score of 200 – 220 to score in the 20s in the IB Diploma.

It is important to compare apples with apples when comparing results between schools. Our 92% pass rate plus the higher than world average pass rate was especially pleasing when considering that for nearly 50% of our students English is a second language. It is not easy to firstly learn English, then think in English then write in academic English.

As an inclusive Methodist school we strongly believe that every student who is accepted at our school should be given the opportunity to sit the IB examination. We have high expectations and our students respond exceptionally well. For example, we accept Year 1 students with PSLE scores as low as 200 and O Level scores up to 20. The students and teachers are to be congratulated on the added value scores that the students subsequently gain in the IB Diploma.

The high value-added results at the school are believed to be due to a number of factors. The small class sizes (ranging between 5 and 20 in the IB classes), the supportive and inclusive learning environment, the opportunity for whole brain development through an extensive and holistic CCA programme, the IB curriculum itself, the strong parental support, and the impact by highly dedicated and skilful teachers.

These results are not unique to this year. In the 2012 IB examinations one of our students moved from a PSLE score of 207 to an IB score of 44; and over the past four years the school has produced nine 'Top of the World' IGCSE students in English Literature, English Language, E Mathematics, A Mathematics, Geography and Chinese.

We are very proud of our students and our steadily improving performance.

IGCSE Results

The IGCSE results for the November 2013 session will be available to students on the CIE Results website from 5:00 pm on Friday, 24 January 2014. Students should access their own results using the access codes already provided by the Head of Examinations, Mr Gregory Goh. They are also advised to check their emails on 24 January for any additional information regarding the examination results.

Should your child / ward have lost the information sheet with the access codes, please contact Mr Goh for assistance at gregory.goh@acsinternational.com.sg.

The School will be open on Saturday, 25 January 2014 from 8:30 am to 1:00 pm for students to confirm their registration or to seek advice concerning their future academic programmes.

Students are required to come in on the Saturday if they fall into the following categories:

- They do not meet the criteria for entry onto the IB Diploma Programme at ACS (International)
- They do not meet the criteria for a Higher Level subject
- They meet the requirements and must confirm their subject options.

Year 6 Extended Essay (EE) Timeline

Year 6 students will have no doubt spent a great deal of time on their Extended Essay over the holidays. It would have been time well spent and will stand them in good stead for their draft submission in February. Parents, please encourage your child to submit parts of their working document to their supervisor in the meantime and to arrange a meeting for feedback and clarification of the assessment criteria.

After-School Support Sessions

In a change from last year the school will be running two after-school Support sessions on Wednesdays and Fridays for students needing extra help. Teachers will be offering specific remedial support throughout the year, both in groups and to individuals depending on need. Families are asked to not schedule any external tuition during these times as the school reserves the right to keep all students at school until the end of Period 5 on these two days. In general, students may leave school after assembly on Wednesdays and after Period 4 on Fridays unless they have Support, a scheduled lesson or a CCA.

2014 School Calendar and Weekly Timetable

These two articles are again attached for your information.

School Uniform

A reminder that we expect all students to wear the full school uniform correctly and with pride. Details are found in the Student Diary. This year students must wear shoes that are either all white or all black, in line with our more formal and corporate look.

The Inquiry, Innovation and Entrepreneurship Programme (IIE)

This is a new programme introduced for the Year 1 students which will develop their thinking and problem solving skills which then can be applied across the curriculum. The course will include knowledge and understanding about the brain, its key elements and their functions and factors which can cause the brain to operate more or less effectively. We will also explore memory and how it works and look more specifically at strategies which can be used to improve memory. This will also involve the methods used to keep notes and to study for tests and exams.

Included in the course will be a focus on creative and critical thinking skills which students will be able to apply in a range of settings. Students will be given the opportunity to work together in teams to solve problems and create solutions. Metacognition will be an important aspect of the course where students will be asked to reflect on their own thinking in an attempt to develop a greater awareness of how they might improve their performance. The course will involve assessment which will be based around the knowledge component of the course and the various problem solving activities the students will undertake. The foundation concepts for the course are based on past and recent neuro-science research.

Applications for Transcripts and Testimonials

Students needing to apply for transcripts, testimonials or who need documents for applications to other schools should complete the application form which can be downloaded from the school website (Applications – Transcript Application). The School will provide such documents within a period of 15 days only. Students applying for such documents must demonstrate they are in the process of seriously applying elsewhere. Year 6 students all receive a full academic transcript and testimonial upon Graduation. Should a student in Year 6 require these documents earlier, they should complete the Transcript Application Form. Please return the Transcript Application form to the Academic Secretary, Ms. Manwant Kaur, (manwant.kaur@acsinternational.com.sg) in the School Office.

Subject References

Schools in the USA may require subject references. Students in Years 1 - 5 requiring a subject reference should fill in the Transcript Application Form and return it to Ms. Manwant Kaur in the School Office. Students in YEAR 6 applying to universities should liaise with Mrs. Rita Kaur on all matters pertaining to subject references and other requirements for university applications.

STAFF NEWS

New Staff

This year we welcome the following new staff. Four are in replacement positions and the other positions are as a result of roll growth.

From Australia we welcome Mr Nicholas Hanrahan to the Humanities Department and Ms Rachel McCallum to Drama/Theatre; from Canada we welcome Ms Meighen D'Angelo in English and Mr Alex Ouellette in ESOL / PE; from France via Australia Mrs Stef Hanrahan as Admissions Officer; from New Zealand Mr Grant Aitken to Humanities, Miss Kim Biggs to Biology / Science and Ms Linda Lauv to English; and from Singapore Mr Julian Azfar to Humanities and Mr Ho Wee Kwang to Physics / Science. Mr Tony Ryan from New Zealand via an IB school in Africa joins the Music Department after Chinese New Year.

New Masters Qualifications

Congratulations to Mrs Frances Jones and Mr Nehemiah Onyango on gaining their Masters qualifications through the Open University, UK.

Marriage

Congratulations to Mrs Alice Wong who was married during the holidays.

Singapore Netball

Congratulations to Miss Olivia Flanagan and the Singapore Netball team on their second placing in the recent Nations Cup, losing to Uganda in the final. Miss Olivia was named MVP for the Singapore team (pictured reaching for the ball below). Incidentally the team is coached by Mrs Ruth Aitken, former NZ netball coach and wife of new Humanities teacher, Mr Grant Aitken. The squad is now training hard in preparation for this year's Asian Championships in September.



Strategic Planning

The staff spent one day last week on strategic planning activities aimed at enhancing the quality of education for our students over the next three years. More details as they are finalised. Students and parents will have input later this term.



STUDENT SUCCESSES

MUN Geneva

Our ACS (International) team of eight students accompanied by two staff has just returned from participating in the highly regarded Model United Nations event in Geneva. The team represented South Africa in the MUN with seven students being main submitters of resolutions, resulting in six resolutions being passed and Naveen Venkat (Y3), Alicia Harris (Y6) and Priyanka Mishra (Y6) winning Best Delegates in their respective committees. Congratulations to all.

Children's Holiday Camp – Year 5 CAS project



Ten Year 5 students with support from teachers and the Holland Village Methodist Church initiated and planned a children's camp for a group of children from low income families during the November holidays.

The overnight camps are always a highlight for these children as it is a time of great bonding between them and our students. The 2 days 1 night camp involved games, activities, workshops and an excursion to the Night Safari. The student leaders also took the initiative to interact with the children and the children enjoyed the camp greatly especially because they look up to our students as their role models. The children are looking forward to the next children's camp in June 2014!



UPCOMING EVENTS

JANUARY	EVENT
16	• CCA Fair 2014
17	• PSP Coffee Morning
20	• CCAs start
24	• IGCSE 2013 Results • Year 5 School Camp Student Orientation
25	• Year 5 School Camp Student Orientation
28	• Girls Inter House Netball • Boys Inter House Football
30	• Chinese New Year Celebration • 11.00am - School closes for Chinese New Year
FEBRUARY	EVENT
6	• School Resumes after Chinese New Year

Careers / Higher Education

In addition to the usual presentations and talks held in school throughout the year, a series of talks on specific university fields will be introduced every term. We are starting with:

Title: 'Medicine in the UK and the application process'

Speakers: Prof. David Thompson and Mrs. Linda Harding of the University of Manchester School of Medicine (Interviewers for Singapore students applying to study medicine)

Date/Time: *Wednesday, February 12 @ 6.30 pm in the Oldham Chapel*

All Year 4, 5, 6 students and parents are invited to join us. We are confident that it will be of interest to a number of our students interested in pursuing a career in medicine.

If you are interested in attending this event, please email Ms Rita Kaur at rita.kaur@acsinternational.com.sg



Happy New Year, everyone!

To the parents and guardians of returning students, welcome back.
And to those of you who are new to the school,
welcome to the ACS (International) family.

We anticipate an exciting year ahead and to start the ball rolling, we'd love for all of you to join us at the PSP Coffee Morning.

Date: Friday, 17th January 2014

Time: 8am - 10am

Venue: Wesley Hall, 6th Floor, Sports Block, ACS (International)

**COFFEE
MORNING**

An RSVP, to acspsp.net@gmail.com
by *Wednesday, 15th January 2014 evening*,
would be appreciated but more than that,
we're looking forward to seeing you all this Friday.

PSP Exco