

CIRCUIT BREAKER CONNECTOR

ISSUE 2

ACS (INTERNATIONAL) COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER

24 APRIL 2020



Greetings to all as we enter the third week of Home Based Learning (HBL). The novelty of HBL has now passed, and both teachers and students are adjusting to the new ways of full-time online learning.

The Senior Leadership Team is currently reviewing the student, parent and teacher HBL survey results, and will be discussing with the Heads of Faculty whether to tweak or adjust any of our current practices. This review has become more significant in light of the Singapore government's move to extend the circuit breaker measures including HBL to 1 June. Full-time online delivery of lessons has resulted in increased teacher workload but their commitment to providing the usual high quality learning experiences to our students is appreciated and reassuring. We are confident that students will not be disadvantaged by HBL.

As I write this message from my home office in Christchurch, New Zealand, I am reminded of the impact of the Christchurch earthquakes on students and their learning. Even though schooling in the city was disrupted for many students for several months, the students' results in the end-of-year formal examinations actually increased! Psychologists and educational researchers determined that there were two main reasons for the improved examination results – firstly, teachers focused on learning which actually mattered, and secondly students were more focused on learning due to the disruption to regular everyday lives. For more information see [UC RESEARCH REPOSITORY](#) and [Does missing a term due to COVID-19 really matter?](#)

We all look forward to resuming lessons onsite in Holland Village as soon as it is safe to do so. Like the Christchurch schools, we do find a reduction in CCAs and whole school gatherings having an impact on our school culture and identity. Humans are social beings and we all benefit from physically interacting with each other. The writer to the Hebrews also recognised this when he said "...And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another..." (Hebrews 10: 24-25).

For me, I am also looking forward to the day when flights between New Zealand and Singapore resume so that I too can physically rejoin our school community. In the meantime, my home office is a little more distant from school than most of the ACS community, but, in reality, modern technology ensures that I remain connected. I just have to adjust to different time zones!

Stay safe and healthy.

Rob Burrough
Principal

LET'S MOVE!



During this stay-home month, you don't have to miss out on the opportunity to keep improving your health, fitness and physical well being! Here's one resource that you can use at home this week. All you need is a computer/laptop or mobile device! And you can do it as many times per day, per week!



Just Dance YouTube Channel

This [channel](#) is a great place to start if you love to dance! Select songs to dance and sing along with on your own. Or why not ask your family to join in too?

Here's an extra resource for you to try out this week – a skills challenge on how to juggle three balls: <https://youtu.be/RhXiyen6fk8>



You are welcome to join the Teacher vs Student PE challenge, a weekly challenge where a PE teacher films themselves attempting a short physical or skill-based task and then challenges the PE class to "beat the teacher".

This week's challenge is Burpees.

Check out <https://youtu.be/73XLC1tR4eg>

Submit your video to any PE teacher and see how you do. We look forward to seeing you in action!

PE Department

HBL House Contact Information and HSM Availability

House	Platform used and its link	House Tutor "Open Office" Time	HSM "Open Office" Time
CKS	Google Classroom	Monday to Friday 8:00am–8:30am	Monday to Friday 3:00pm–4:00pm
GHK	Firefly Classroom https://acs.fireflycloud.asia/ghk/notices-1	Monday to Friday 8:00am–8:30am	Monday to Friday 3:00pm–4:00pm
LSG	Google Classroom https://classroom.google.com/c/NjQxMDgzMTgzNTha	Monday to Friday 8:00am–8:30am	Monday, Thursday and Friday 3:00pm–3:30pm
OLD	Google Classroom and Google Site	Monday to Friday 8:00am–8:30am	Monday, Tuesday and Thursday 3:00pm–3:30pm
SVM	Google Classroom and Google Site	Monday to Friday 8:00am–8:30am	Monday, Wednesday and Friday 3:00pm–3:30pm
TCT	Google Site for some notices and Google Classroom for immediate contact https://sites.google.com/acsinternational.edu.sg/tct-house/home	Monday to Friday 8:00am–8:30am	Monday, Wednesday and Thursday 3:00pm–3:30pm
THO	Google Classroom	Monday to Friday 8:00am–8:30am	Monday, Wednesday and Friday 3:00pm–3:30pm
TKK	Google Site and Google Classroom https://sites.google.com/acsinternational.edu.sg/tkk/home	Monday to Friday 8:00am–8:30am	Monday to Friday 3:00pm–3:30pm

Photo Challenge

The Counselling Department will be running a photo challenge for the next few weeks. Each week, there will be a specific topic and everyone is welcome to submit a photo that they have taken that best reflects or describes the directive.

Photos will be posted to our school's Mental Well-Being Portal <https://www.acsinternationalschoolsingapore.com/> and there will be a vote for best photo. The lucky winner will have a special prize delivered to their doorstep. Check out the website using the link above for more details!

Details for this week's challenge:

Take a photo of someone/something which you are most grateful for during this circuit breaker period – it can be your dog or your mom's home cooking!

All entries to be submitted to Ms Chantal (chantal.roux@acsinternational.edu.sg) or Ms Stacey (stacey.low@acsinternational.edu.sg) by Tuesday, 28 April, 12 noon.

Let the photo games begin!



UPDATES

- ACS (International) will be keeping its regular term dates for 2020.
- Friday 8 May, is no longer a school holiday – HBL will continue on this day.
- Please ensure that you have read the ACS Travel Advisory letter that was sent Friday 24 April.
- Students are to note that Tuesday, 28 April, will be a Friday timetable, to make up for Friday's loss this term.

Who you gonna call?



Senior Division and IB Issues	siewhoon.tan@acsinternational.edu.sg
Middle Division and IGCSE Issues	gavin.kinch@acsinternational.edu.sg
Junior Division Issues	kris.achter@acsinternational.edu.sg
School Google	robert.icban@acsinternational.edu.sg
Firefly, Managebac	choongkiat.chia@acsinternational.edu.sg
Remote Access (staff), Email	harold.manalo@acsinternational.edu.sg
Teacher, Student and Parent Portals	rosdiawati@acsinternational.edu.sg

FOCUS ON THE Family

Focus on the Family Singapore has specially curated content to help working parents thrive in this COVID situation, especially with the new stay-home measures. You can get daily resources by following them at FB: Focus on the family Singapore, IG: @thrivingfamilysg or website: www.family.org.sg

Showing Grace to our Family

Take a breath and don't lose it

So here you are, at home with your family. Your children are running around wild around your HDB flat; you have shut yourself in the master bedroom to take a work call but your kids are banging on your door and asking for snacks every 10 minutes. For the 10th time today (and it's not even noon!), you are wondering how you are going to [get your work done and care for your kids](#) at the same time.

The technology that allows us to continue with business as usual while we #stayhome forgot one small detail. Kids don't understand that when mum and dad are home on their computers, they really aren't "there." Actually, spouses may not understand that either.

Or perhaps you are a stay-at-home mum or dad who normally rely on the quiet times during the day while your kids are in school in order to be present and engaging when they come home. Now, everyone's routines have changed. You need to go get the groceries because your usual grocery delivery sites have their delivery slots all booked out but you don't want to drag both small kids to the supermarket. You are annoyed and they are excited they get to stay home so they are in "holiday mode". Soon, your annoyance spills over and there are tears, raised voices, regret and slamming of doors.

Hit that pause button

There has to be a better way. And yes, there is. It starts with finding a way to show grace to your family when living in close quarters. It's one of those things that makes sense but may be hard to put into action when stress level is high, and the "on demand" button is being pushed in your direction all day long.

What's needed is a "pause" button to reflect on the reality and simplicity of the situation. The reality is that our spouses and children are a blessing to be appreciated and treasured, and we can all learn to extend grace to one another.

Human beings have an amazing capacity to feel and express deep passion. The degree to which we love other people – and feel deep passion for them – often is the same degree to which we may grow angry with them. This explains so-called "crimes of passion." While I've never committed a crime against a loved one, I've sometimes been surprised by how strongly I've felt a negative emotion toward one of them.

What does it mean to show grace? It means to cut them some slack, to demonstrate compassion and acknowledge that they too have been handed an unexpected plate in life right now and we are in the same boat and the same team.

Here are some ways we can show G-R-A-C-E:

G – Begin with gratitude. When I'm about to react in anger, I stop and recognise that I'm grateful and blessed to have a husband, children and other loved ones who love and support me.

R – Resist the emotions. I make a choice to resist expressing negative emotions.

A – Adjust my thinking. I realise that whatever my loved one is doing that is annoying me is likely unintentional. Rather, it's his or her way of communicating a need.

C – Communicate kindly. Sometimes it helps to start with a question. "What can I do for you?" "How can I help?" Or, offer an honest response. "I know this is hard on all of us."

E – Express genuine appreciation. You might be able to make a good argument for dishing out some criticism but when you turn that urge around and offer an encouraging word instead, most often that response calms the other person down.

When real life hits

Some of you may be thinking, "Have you been to my house lately? Do you know I have a cranky spouse and two (or three, or four) kids running around like a herd of wild animals, or a group of brooding, sulky teens?" How am I supposed to be gracious to them when I don't even have a moment to think? I witnessed this yesterday when I heard my neighbours' youngest daughter screaming out at the common corridor. I went outside to investigate, figuring she was just having a temper tantrum, normal for kids her age. However, I wanted to make sure that her mum was ok, as little Maddie sounded like her mum might be sprawled out unconscious in the house. As I approached the house, her mum opened the door and said, "Thanks for checking. I'm fine. We're just learning to adjust to having Mummy work from home."

Find a "me" space

One of the greatest parenting lessons I've ever learned – go to your "me" space. It could be the bathroom, or a nice armchair you have in your bedroom. It could even be the service balcony where you hang out the clothes for drying, I'm not kidding! When tensions got high, I would go to my space, vent frustration, release my anger and put myself in a more gracious frame of mind.

My kids are in their 30s now, and they often remark that I was such a calm mother who never lost her cool. I have been brutally honest with them and explained that I got just as frustrated as any mum or dad gets when raising kids in a confusing, high energy, fast paced culture. But what I did do was I didn't try to steamroll my way through parenting. I gave myself small breaks when I needed them and when I returned from these little breathers, I was a better parent, I was a better me.

From frustration to authentic communication

It's very easy to lose your cool, particularly when you are with your family in a small space. As you feel the tension rising, quietly excuse yourself or tell your kids you need a few minutes away first but you will come back. That release will usually lead you to a calmer state of mind, and you'll be able to think of a kind and reasonable response to your loved ones. Once you return to talk to your spouse or children, you can voice real frustrations and concerns.

Our communication with our loved ones needs to be at the most basic level - Authentic. It needs to be kind, honest and sincere. Being kind is not about saying only nice things that people want to hear. Constructive criticism and appropriate limit setting are important parts of marriage and parenting. Truth spoken without raw emotions tend to lead to an environment in which healthy conflict can occur.

Rearrange your expectations

Instagram may make it look like every other mum is baking yummy cookies and churning out impressive home cooked food or that so-and-so's kid is learning coding online or reading books quietly on their own. Stop, don't compare. Instead, rearrange your expectations. Don't have insta-worthy expectations.

Look at everything you have on your plate and let go of what you can let go of – If you need to be calling food delivery, do so. If the house is not going to be as clean as you want it to be, take a deep breath and let that go. As much as possible, teach your kids to clean up after themselves and be consistent in the implementation. In areas you can delegate, delegate! But not everything has to be a battle. Choose what you want to upkeep and what's most important and let go of some stuff that can be done another day. Celebrate the small wins so you feel a sense of progress every day.

Focus on the opportunity

Finally, recognise that time living with your family in close quarters has [the potential for opening up wonderful opportunities](#) – to get to know one another better, create new ways to enjoy one another's company and learn how to communicate better.

How will your family – and yourself – look back upon this time? Will you remember the stress and frustrations? Or would they remember it as a fun time when they get to spend time with Mum and Dad, time they always wanted to get?

Adapted from Showing Grace to Your Family in Close Quarters by Joannie Debrito © 2020 All rights reserved. Used with permission from Focus on the Family.

