Summer Newsletter

JUNE 2020

ICHK KINDERGARTEN PRIMARY AND SECONDARY

HEAD OF SCHOOL'S MESSAGE

We are pleased to share with you our summer newsletter, at the end of the strangest and most challenging year our school community has ever faced.

The extended campus closure, coupled with the stresses and uncertainties that everyone has experienced during the Covid-19 crisis, has taken us into new and uncharted waters.

I would like to thank every single member of our community for their strength of character, which has helped sustain us as a community throughout this period.

Our students have continually amazed us with their resilience, enthusiasm and commitment, strengthening as learners over recent months.

Our staff have embraced the situation with creativity and commitment, and played a critical role in ensuring that our children have continued to receive the best educational experience possible.

Our parents have shown us invaluable support. It is during challenging periods that a community is tested, and we have really felt your strength and resolve to get through this and maintain the strong relationships that unite us.

As we approach the summer break, we will all be looking back and reflecting on the prolonged period of campus closure and online learning, which none of us could have predicted a year ago.

So as the school year draws to a close, we use this newsletter to look ahead to what will hopefully be a brighter year. We await guidance from the EdB on restrictions and measures and hope that circumstances in Hong Kong will allow us to return to more normal routines next term.

We say goodbye to our Year 6 students and wish them every success as they advance to secondary school. They leave us as confident, resilient and creative young people and we are proud of the part that we have played in their educational journeys.

For those families who are leaving us, everyone at ICHK wishes you the very best of luck with your next steps.

We approach a summer holiday, where because of travel restrictions, most of our families will be remaining in Hong Kong. I wish you all a restful break, in which everyone remains safe and healthy.

CURRICULUM

In recent months, our entire curriculum has been refreshed, and from next term wellbeing, creativity and nature will be embedded as central pillars of all learning and teaching.

Whilst there has always been a strong focus on these areas, they will now be explicitly built into all areas of our programme.

The ecology and science behind our Forest School programme will be explored more deeply in classrooms, and stronger links forged between classroom learning and outdoor activities.

The changes link our educational programme more closely with our vision, which is to be a leader in outdoor education, innovation and wellbeing.

There will also be a greater emphasis on creativity from Kindergarten to Year 6, ensuring that our core values are at the heart of everything we do.

In the early years and lower school, there will be more focus on play based learning with Lynda Sze's role extended to Kindergarten and Lower School Leader to support this development.

Technology will be built into the curriculum in new ways, instead of existing as a stand-alone subject, with students learning to use different tools to develop their skills.

Steve West will take over from Jennie Martin as Creative English coach, leading a focus on creative writing across the school.

Our whole curriculum is aimed at empowering every child to be creative, confident, caring, resilient and respectful. Whilst it has been enhanced, it will continue to be a careful balance of child-initiated and adult-guided learning experiences, with Mandarin, specialist music, visual

arts, PE and outdoor learning, all promoting creative thinking, and stimulating students to express their thoughts in new ways.

We look forward to bringing you more information next term, and details of information sessions in which different areas of the curriculum will be explored in greater depth.

OUTDOOR LEARNING

Our innovative Outdoor Learning programme will be developed further as we work to cement our reputation as a world leader in Forest School education.

This year we were officially named a Forest School Leadership Centre, which is the highest level of recognition for Forest Schools, and another 20 members of staff completing Forest Schools training.

The staff members will be using their learning to help further shape and develop our outdoor learning programme. From next term our team will be strengthened with Ho Mei Chau returning to the post of Outdoor Learning Leader. He will be supported by Outdoor Learning Facilitator Tiffany Au and PE and Outdoor Learning Teacher Melissa Sweeney.

Over the coming year our leadership team will be presenting at education conferences and summits, to share our practices and innovations with educators from around the world.

SUSTAINABILITY

After circumstances this year required a number of projects to be put on hold, we will be returning to our sustainability campaign next term.

Across the school there has been an ongoing drive to reduce the use of plastics generally and raise awareness of sustainable living.

From next term we will continue with our review of all school supplies and purchases to ensure they are in line with our commitment to the environment.

We will be working with our PE kit suppliers Tsunami on their Plant the Planet programme, which involves trees being planted to offset carbon emissions caused during the manufacturing process.

We are planning a partnership with Hong Kong Recycling which will see regular recycling drives held at school, and we will continue to educate students about how actions impact on the planet.

A series of awareness raising and educational sessions will also be held for parents and students over the coming year.

NEW ONLINE PLATFORM

A new online platform will be rolled out next term, to provide more opportunities for academic feedback.

The Toddle platform has been specially designed by IB educators for the PYP, and will feature regular, live snapshots of learning. Portfolios and reports will be accessed via the platform. It will also include an app, enabling rapid communication to be delivered to parents when the need arises.

Parents will only be able to see data relevant to their own child or children. More information will follow next term.

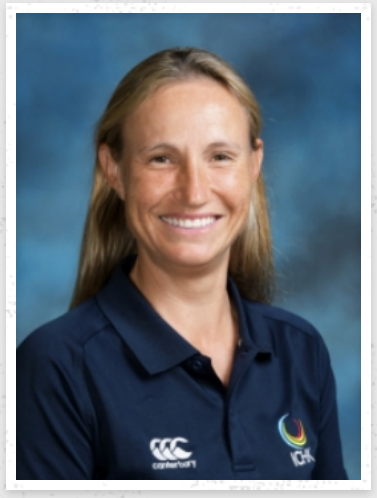
STAFF

This term we say goodbye to Jennie Martin who has been with the school for 18 years and is retiring from teaching, Melinda Hand who is relocating to the UK with her family, Jenny Overman who is returning to the UK with her family, Neil O'Hagan who is moving to the UK to study music production at Abbey Road Studios, Pauline Sun who is exploring new options in Hong Kong, Jamie Stark who is moving to Germany to take up the position of ICT Coordinator for the Elementary section of Frankfurt International School, and Lawrence Thompson who will be exploring how the PYP is offered in different schools.

Krista Matich will be returning to her native New Zealand at the end of December, and will be teaching Year 3 during Term 1.

All have brought a great deal of experience to our school. We thank them for their contributions and wish them every success for the future.

From next term we welcome Derek Pinchbeck as Head of School, Melissa Sweeney and PE & Outdoor Learning Teacher, Jacinda McLeod as a Kindergarten teacher, Kerry Xu as a Chinese Teacher, Victor Chan as a learning assistant.



LOOKING AHEAD

As we look ahead to the new term, we await guidance from the EdB about the continuation of additional health and safety measures.

We are hopeful that the recent positive developments in Hong Kong will continue and at some point in the not too distant future we will be able to return to our regular programme of events, trips, camps, ECAs and partnership activities with our secondary school.

We look forward to welcoming new families to our community and them sharing in the strong community spirit that we are renowned for.

A new PTA has been set up to lead community events next year, and is already looking ahead to Party in the Park, which will be held at school on Saturday 5 September. This will be smaller in scale than previous years and a larger scale Christmas market will be held in December, by which time we hope it will be easier to stage school events.

We look ahead to other developments on the horizon, which include incorporating service learning into the school. We already take pride in educating our students how to care for others, to understand the importance of serving the community and how, through their actions, they can make a difference. This plan is aimed at educating them further about how they can help to create a better future for others in Hong Kong and around the world.

We will be reviewing our approaches to learning and introducing our new reporting system, specifically reporting on the character strengths that are among our guiding values. We also look forward to working with our secondary school on the Mastery Transcript, which will see a number of their senior students visiting us to work on specific projects. We will also be working toward the IB five year evaluation in November.

We look forward to a successful term with your continued support.

PICTURES

*Please note that all pictures in this newsletter were taken in Term 1.