



NEWSLETTER

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Phone: 03 - 4252 1452

Website: www.migs.edu.my

Email: info@migs.edu.my

Notes from the Heads of School

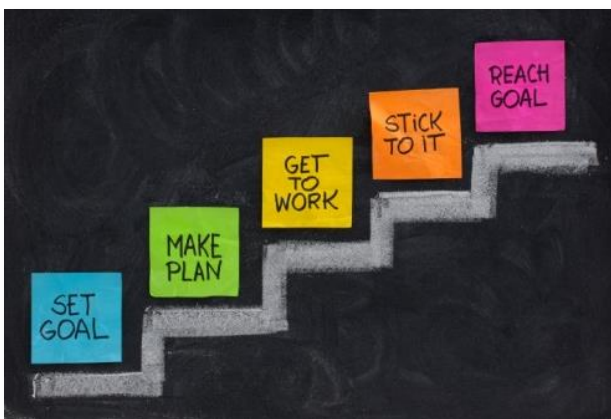
Mr Guy Cassarchis, Head of Senior School

Welcome back to all families. I hope you had a restful break. We have several new families joining us for the first time and I wish you a warm welcome and smooth transition into our school community. Term 2 is always a busy one, with a focus on assessment and evaluation, leading up to the Term 2 Report which will be issued towards the end of this term for Years 7-10, whilst Year 11 will receive their reports in the next few weeks. While testing procedures focus on the academic progress of a student, teachers are also evaluating the effort, work habits, consistency and attitude students bring to their learning. During this term both students and teachers will work on the areas needing improvement and consolidate the skills and understandings learnt during Term 1.

The New Year is always a time when we like to make resolutions, even if most of them seem to dissipate faster than an afternoon breeze in summer. For students, the calendar New Year marks the beginning of Term 2, and this is an excellent time for all students (and parents) to review and refocus. For some students, the school year so far would have been going rather well – work was submitted on time, a consistent effort was made and results have been promising. Others will have had a middling year so far, with a so-so effort and average results, often due to a lack of motivation.



For a third group, their lack of effort or focus will mean that the end of Term 1 would not have come fast enough. So, no matter which group our child might belong to, how can we as parents use this New Year (beginning of Term 2) period to help our children refocus and therefore finish the year on a high or, at the very least, achieve results commensurate with their ability? The following are some useful strategies.



The first thing we can do is to ensure that we have the correct information about our children's progress. It is surprising how many parents rely entirely on their children as the sole source of information about their children's performance. Get hold of your child's Interim School report from Term 1 and have a detailed conversation about it with your child. Rather than ask, 'How do you think you did?', ask questions that require more reflective answers. Ask them what subjects they enjoy the most, and why. Encourage him/her to tell you what they found difficult to understand or where they think they need to improve. Talk about their natural strengths and weaknesses in learning.

The next step is to help children set realistic goals for improvement. Children have a habit, either as a result of a desire to please or because they are looking for a quick fix (as they want to please) of setting unrealistic goals: for example, 'I have been a D student, but now I will be an A student by Monday', or 'I will do five hours of homework a night' or 'I will only message my friends on weekends!' This is a bit like setting goals for losing weight. Often, our goals can be so unrealistic that we simply give up after a day. In order to avoid this situation, help your child break down larger goals into smaller ones – ones that can be achieved in shorter periods of time. The achievement of these goals will boost confidence and provide encouragement. Once goals have been set, discuss what strategies your child can use in order to achieve them. If the goal is to be an A student by the end of the year, show them how to break this goal down into more achievable mini-goals. Together, work out ways to achieve these steps along the way to the major goal.



In all of this, it is vital to help our children learn to plan. Teenagers, especially, are poor at planning, with boys generally being worse than girls. There is a biological reason for this. During puberty, the frontal lobes of the brain essentially undergo reconstruction. This is the part of the brain that assists with planning and organisation. We can help our children plan by developing two types of calendars – one that is a weekly schedule and contains all their activities. The other is a termly schedule that has due dates for assignments and the dates of exams. In planning the calendars, remember to allow for some down time. We all need times where we just do nothing, and most importantly of all, plenty of sleep. An important part of planning is to develop routines. As parents, we can support our children by helping them to establish and maintain routines.

Review the routine about when, where and how homework is completed, to make sure it is effective in achieving its purpose. Other routines to review are morning routines, that is, how children prepare themselves for school each day (do they wake in time to have breakfast, and so on) and evening routines that include actually going to bed! In this, strongly encourage your child to turn off his or her phone or computer. There is plenty of research that indicates the importance of quality sleep to learning. One of the biggest disruptors to sleep is late night messaging.

As parents and teachers it is important to continually stress to the Senior School students, the importance of becoming an independent learner, through having a growth mindset, as this is a key to success in life. The following are some of the ways in which we can support and encourage our children to be self-reliant, independent and resourceful:

- ask what tasks your child can do at home for him or herself, rather than relying on someone else;
- encourage your children to take responsibility for certain household chores each week;
- ask older children to read to their younger brothers and sisters;
- limit the pocket money you provide to encourage responsible buying or saving; and
- encourage your children to determine what they will do with their spare time rather than creating an expectation that, as the parent, you will entertain them.

Fixed Mindset	Growth Mindset
Intelligence is static.	Intelligence can be developed.
Leads to a desire to <i>look smart</i> and therefore a tendency to	Leads to a desire to <i>learn</i> and therefore a tendency to
• avoid challenges	• embrace challenges
• give up easily due to obstacles	• persist despite obstacles
• see effort as fruitless	• see effort as path to mastery
• ignore useful feedback	• learn from criticism
• be threatened by others' success	• be inspired by others' success

Lastly, remember to have high expectations for your children, and do not make excuses for them when they occasionally do not live up to these. Children have a funny habit of living up or down to the expectations that are placed on them (provided that those expectations are realistic, of course). If we lower what we expect of our children, they will drop their own standards to match, in the same way that sporting teams often struggle against lower ranked teams. If we raise our expectations for our children, they will usually rise to meet those hopes.

In all of this, let us not forget that, as parents, we are still our child's first and most important teacher. The example we set in how we act and interact with others, and what we do together as a family, will have a greater and longer lasting effect than any goal-setting or routines. Time as a family, whether that be meals or weekend activities, is crucial to the healthy wellbeing of all children. So, as we encourage our children to be the best they can be, and so have the confidence to achieve their potential, it is crucial to remember that the best way to enjoy your children is to put in the time and the effort to be the best parent you can be. In this way, we are all leading to a bright future.

Wishing all a very successful and enjoyable Term 2. And Happy Chinese New Year!



Ms Nancy Roch-Compan, Head of Junior School

Welcome back to our MIGS Newsletter in Term 2, especially to all the new members of our MIGS community. Quite a number of new students have joined us this term and we wish them all a seamless transition into our School.

Founding Day Celebrations

We began Term 2 with the Founding Day Celebrations on Friday, 6th January to commemorate the school's 20th anniversary. It is important for all to reflect on the early days and the progressive growth of the school community of which all of us are a part of.



More information on the GROW Model can be found in Issue 1, 2016/2017 on the Parent Portal.

Goal-setting using the Grow Model

In the classrooms, teachers are reviewing the learning goals and targets students have set last term in the light of what they had achieved at the end of Term 1, and are negotiating new goals and targets for this term, using the GROW Model (Goals-Reality-Options-Way Forward). Independent and self-directed learning are outcomes of such learning conversations between teachers and student.

Students do not necessarily only need to pitch their achievements with regards to other students in their cohort; they are encouraged to seek their own course and take responsibility for their learning, attitudes and behaviour at school.

The GROW Model takes students through such introspective soul-searching and leads them to ask questions such as *What do I want to achieve in my learning? What kinds of attitudes and behaviour do I want to develop? What concrete steps and actions do I need to take to help me achieve my goals? What obstacles am I facing in that quest?*

Bite-Sized Nature of Continuous Assessment

When we return after the Mid-Term Break, Junior students will begin getting their Topical and Unit Tests. A calendar of these tests has been sent to you. As you are also aware, there will be no exams at the end of this Term, but the bite-sized tests in several subjects form part of our Continuous Assessment. Topical and Unit Tests give students a constant stream of opportunities to prove their mastery of concepts learnt in the classroom. It is our belief that through Continuous Assessment, students will reduce their little anxieties and increase self-esteem as they are now more able to achieve success with lesser content to chew.

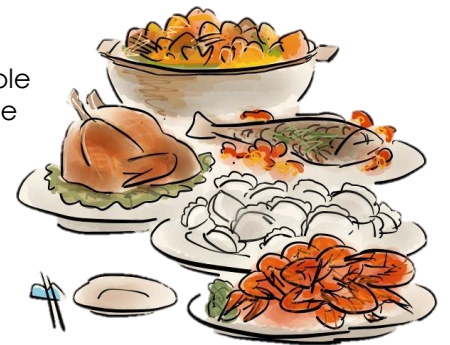
Prescribed, Co-Curricular and Elective Activities

At MIGS, we aim to provide all our students with holistic, well-rounded education that will enrich their learning experiences. We are gradually increasing our repertoire of activities to provide as wide a choice as possible to cater more directly to our students' interests and tap into their innate motivations. It is our sincere wish too that our students should get the best from the best and this had spurred us to look for professional coaches to facilitate a variety of activities.

Chinese New Year Tradition

On Friday 27th January, according to the traditions and customs of the Chinese community, all Chinese families will gather round the dinner table to share in the Reunion Dinner. In the same spirit, I will strongly encourage all MIGS families to set aside some time this long weekend to share a meal as an extended family with grandparents, uncles and aunts.

We must remember that it is just as important to maintain our bonds with our own parents and siblings, and to ensure that our children have a strong relationship with their grandparents, uncles and aunts as well. Let us be role models to our children and teach them to show love, care and respect.



Wishing all a productive Term 2 and to all our Chinese families, a Happy and Prosperous Year of the Rooster.

Gong Xi Fa Cai, Xin Nian Kuai Le, Wan Shi Ru Yi!



Chinese New Year Activities

Chinese New Year is fast approaching and we are all looking forward to a wonderful celebration. During our Mandarin classes, Ms Blanche taught us how to make dried cuttlefish and seaweed in preparation for the festivities. The aim was to learn the ways of making them, to observe the significance of these food items and most importantly, to have fun!

We were divided into six groups, each with three students. We began by taking slices of seaweed and cutting them into four equal sections. We then dipped the edges of the seaweed in water for the surface to stick well.

In the next step, we included the main ingredient that truly spiced it up - the dried cuttlefish. We took three strips of cuttlefish and folded them in half. Then we wrapped the seaweed around the cuttlefish. Once done, we preheated the oven to 160 degrees for approximately 10 minutes to bake the cuttlefish until they appear golden yellow.

The outcome was absolutely great. We then packaged our finished product into small bags and distributed them to our teachers to wish them an amazing new year.

This task has taught us useful teamwork skills, and this is only the beginning. Every single one of us are now looking forward to what the New Year has in store for us. Have a lovely celebration!

Myra Lim, Year 9T



We had a presentation on the significance of Chinese New Year. All of us spoke in Mandarin and prepared the slides in Chinese characters. We discussed the traditions, history and unique culture associated with the celebration. We also spoke about special dishes that are eaten for luck and fortune.

Natasha & Myra (Year 9)

We were taught how to make lanterns out of old *angpao* (red packets). We had to separate the two sides of the *angpao*, then fold and cut the folded ends. Next, we had to staple them together so that they are secure. And there you have it, our Chinese New Year lanterns.

Sing Ler, Pearl & Alisya (Year 7)

Community Arts Project

It was the 29th of November on a wonderful Wednesday afternoon. The Year 11 Community Arts group was concluding their final preparations to welcome the children from the *Rumah Kasih Nurul Hasanah* orphanage.

A total of 21 children, aged between four and 14, were about to have an unforgettable experience at our school. The idea behind this event was to bring some cheer into their lives and showing them that their community cares.

We started off with a welcome speech from Mr Guy, the Head of Senior School. Then we separated the children into groups of three for some games.

We had three stations in place – Dodgeball, Station Games and Amazing Race. Each group spent 25 minutes at each station before moving on to the next activity.

It was utterly rewarding to see the smiles on the faces of the children as they participated in the activities.



Next, we had a small dinner spread for the children. It was a humbling experience for us as we sat with them while they ate and listened to stories about their favourite sports and the highlights of the day.

We also had a wishlist for each child in which the children had written down what they wanted and the school had granted them their 'wish'. The children were excited and were seen to be smiling broadly with each passing activity.

After everything had taken place we ended our project by presenting the orphanage with a donation of RM500 as a small contribution towards their home. It was a joyful event for us, the teachers and the children from *Rumah Kasih Nurul Hasanah*.

Meor Muhammad Adden Jauha Mohd Jaya, Minhaj-UI Abedin and Dhakshayani Yoganandha
Year 11



Career's Day

Through the Career Guidance Programme held at MIGS, students of Years 10 and 11 are provided thorough support in identifying a career path suited to their needs and aspirations. This is to prepare them for their life after secondary education.

This year, as part of the annual Career's Day, the Year 11s went on an excursion to Nottingham University and Heriot Watt University. On campus, we were given a briefing of what was to come in our tours as well as further information on the several courses offered at each university.

In the main hall of Nottingham University, we listened attentively to a lecture on the subject of Psychology with special focus on its practical uses in daily life. With the help of playful optical illusions, we learned how the human brain works.



The Mechanical Engineering Department was where a first-hand view of the various refining processes of raw metals in factory machines were demonstrated to us. All of us also obtained hands-on experience building our own hammers. We were taught the importance of structural integrity when constructing buildings and even saw actual 3D printed sculptures.



At Heriot Watt University Hall we were given a lecture on STEM: Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics. We learned how important STEM is in our daily life. We also had the opportunity to play an interactive game, which was quite interesting and informative. After the lecture we went to the rooftop of the university to enjoy the beautiful scenery.

We truly enjoyed the opportunity to experience university life.

Tamilla Rashidova & Suleman Chaudhary
Year 11E



20th Anniversary Celebration

Mutiara International Grammar School was established on 8th January 1997, and we celebrated our 20th anniversary last week.

Our school started with only 16 staff and 69 students. Now the school has over 100 staff and 400 students. MIGS has been in the same location since it started but it has expanded a lot since.

Celebrations started with a photo session. Staff who were with the school since 1997 received the honour of standing at the front row.

We had a special cake to celebrate the occasion. There were two cakes, in fact, one in the shape of a '2' and the other, a '0'.

We then sang a special birthday song. The song was led by our senior students. One played the drum, another the guitar, and two girls sang with the school. We ended the special assembly by having a slice of cake. It was delicious!

I feel that this is a great school and indeed a closely-knit community.

Ryan Wong
Year 5S

On Friday 6th January, 2017 the school celebrated Founder's Day.

MIGS was opened on 8th January 1997 and this year is its 20th anniversary.

To celebrate, the senior school students sang a happy birthday song – rock version. There was a big cake and it was separated into two numbers, 2 and 0, equivalent to 20!

I could not eat the cake because of my allergies but my friends who ate it said the cake was delicious.

Today was a really fun day but Founder's Day made it even more special. I hope we will celebrate this again next year.

Aiesha Eva Ezwan Hazli
Year 4R



New Junior School CCA

Every week, we have professional trainers to lead us in our CCA activities. This time around, it was class-based and not house-based.

There is an activity carried out in the different classrooms for children in Years 1, 2 and 3.

Our first activity was called *Little Chefs*. We were taught to prepare a table for a meal. The first thing we did was to get all the materials to arrange on the table.

Next, we made origami with tissues to decorate the table. We made a leaf and a case for the fork and spoon to be placed in. They looked nice at the end of the lesson. It was an interesting activity. I really enjoyed it.

During the second week we had trainers showing us Bollywood Dancing. We had a good time dancing. The trainers taught us the moves step by step.

We also learnt the Salsa. There were a few steps to learn but they were not difficult steps. Salsa was fun!

I am really looking forward to the next activity which we will be doing the following week. It has been an amazing experience and I really love these new activities for Junior School.

Yukino Takei
Year 3S

It has been an amazing start to Term 2 because our teachers informed us that we are going to have something new in our CCA.

The three new activities that will be following every week are Creative Crafts, Modern Dance and Young Journalism.

In the first week of CCA we started with *Little Chefs*. In this activity we learnt how to set a table. I liked it because while setting up the table we made some decorations out of tissue paper and it was fun. The first thing I did when I got home was to surprise my parents by setting the table. They were so proud.

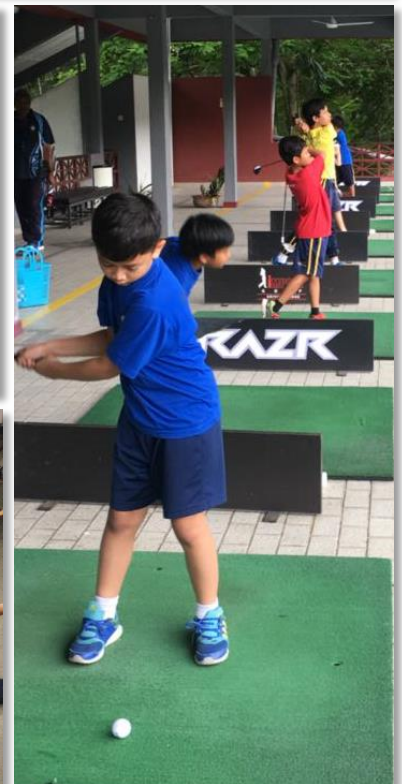
In the second week of CCA we did Modern Dance. One of the types of dance we learnt was the Salsa. We had lots of fun doing it. Salsa is also a good exercise. My Salsa partner was Marissa. We were one of the best performing pairs that day.

My friends and I always look forward to Thursdays because we get to learn a new activity and share it with our families.

Maryam Mudasir
Year 3S



Snapshots of New Junior School CCA



Junior Vocal Training Sessions

When you feel down and out, Sing a song, it'll make your day. Here's a time to shout, Sing a song, it'll make a way. Sing a Song, 1975 by Earth, Wind and Fire

Mutiara International Grammar School opened its doors to vocal training sessions in August last year to form the Junior School Choir.

I had always wanted to form a children's choir and when the opportunity arose, I grabbed it. The response from Mutiaran children eager for vocal training was indeed overwhelming. During the first session I auditioned the children to gauge their vocal range. We began practice and they performed two songs during International Day in November.

It is truly a joy to watch the children having an amazing time through one of life's greatest gifts – singing! Excitedly soaking up a diverse repertoire of songs which includes *The Zulu Warrior* (a traditional South African folk song), *El Cumbanchero* (by Puerto Rican composer Rafael Hernandez), *He Lives in You* (from *The Lion King*), *Happy* (by Pharrell Williams) and *How Far I'll Go* (from Disney's *Moana*), each vocal training session with the Junior School Choir is filled with energy and enthusiasm.



Amidst vocal warm-ups, singing and diction exercises, solfège training, simple harmonising and the learning of repertoire, it is also common to see spontaneous dance moves interspersed with excited chatter and laughter during training sessions.

I am proud to say that the MIGS Junior School Choir is steadily growing in confidence and ability. Look out for this endearing bunch of students as they perform at school events throughout the term!

Debra Abraham

Vocal trainer/coach and founder of music school, Rockstarz Performing Arts Studios

Haikus

A haiku is a kind of descriptive poem consisting of three lines. It has five syllables in the first and third line and seven syllables in the second line. Each and every English First Language student had to construct thirteen different haikus during one of our lessons.

Before we started designing the posters, all of us presented our own haikus to the class and clapped to the rhythm of the haiku. We gathered all the haikus that belonged to the same topic, and designed eye-catching posters. We put all our heart and soul into the posters to make sure it was at its finest.

All of our creations were hung up on the boards of the English class, so that everyone can appreciate and learn from them.

Izmi, Nik Aisyah & Zara
Year 10



Library Day



Library Day 2017 will be held on March 8. The theme for this year is **Escape to Everywhere**.

As with every year, we ask that the students enter into the spirit of the day by dressing up as a favourite book character. Students are asked to also bring the book that their character is in.

Dressing up does not necessarily require spending a lot of money, but using your imagination. Lots of good ideas can be found on Pinterest and similar websites.

Do discuss ideas with your child/ren for some great and original fun ideas.

Also, if your child is a beginning reader and brings home a book that is beyond his or her ability, please read the book aloud with them to encourage their skills and share the experience with them.

There will be a **workshop for parents on March 9 from 3-4pm** on the importance of reading and how to encourage your child to be a great reader. Please mark this date amongst your events.

Deborah Clohesy - currently reading *The Dove Keepers* by Alice Hoffman
Teacher/Librarian

- End -