



# THE VINE

22 January 2018 Term 1 Week 4

## *From the Principal*



### Happy New Year

Chinese New Year has turned out to be a wonderful community celebration of the School. The School began its Chinese New Year celebrations last Friday with gifts and chocolate a plenty. Miss Nguyen, appearing in traditional Chinese dress, served as a reminder of the New Year for anyone for whom it may have slipped their mind. Further, members of our School community as well as of St Paul's Anglican Church, enjoyed a great celebration over a meal at the Sky Phoenix restaurant in Sydney.

Mrs Liu and Miss Su had been working with the children from all classes preparing for our formal celebration of Chinese New Year on Wednesday. Students have been practicing songs, martial arts and the bamboo dance and are eager to share their performance with parents (2:15 - 3:15pm). It truly is a privilege to be part of such a wonderful school community.

### Mandarin Immersion program

Students have made a very good start with this year's Mandarin/English 50/50 immersion program. Our new Mandarin teacher, Miss Su and Mrs Liu, along with our special visitor Miss Huang, are working well together in ensuring your children receive the best Mandarin educational experience possible.

Even I am learning a thing or two. My Taiwanese head-dress (see photo) with the title 'the Principal' in mandarin characters, was presented to me by Mrs Liu in the second week of term.

### Communicating with home

As I mentioned in the last edition of *The Vine*, as a school we are focussing on strengthening the partnership with parents, in particular enhancing communication. This week I wish to focus on email.

Email has revolutionised how we communicate with one another. Messages can be sent to anyone, anywhere in the world. It's easy to do, requires very little training, and is cost-effective both in terms of finances and time. Email has also developed to become a very effective form of communication between parents and the school their children attend.

However, often email is a poor substitute for face to face or telephone conversations. One issue with email is that it lacks many of the verbal and non-verbal cues in conversations, particularly in reading a person's mood or intention. It is therefore easy for an email message to be misinterpreted or cause offence. Further, email can prove very time consuming when messages become long, and go backwards and forwards. This can present particular challenges to teachers, who are trying to meet the needs of all the children in the class, and keep a balance in terms of their own personal family life as well.

In an attempt to maximise the benefits of email communication, as well as introduce some safeguards to ensure it remains a positive channel of communication, I have published some "*Email 'Netiquette' Guidelines*" that accompany this newsletter.



## Kindergarten Enrolments 2019

I realise that it is very early in the year to be talking about Kindergarten enrolment for 2019, but the reality is we have received a significant number of enrolment enquiries from families with children starting school next year.

As we desire to honour the relationship we have with our present parents, we want to ensure priority for siblings of presently enrolled students. If you have a child who will be in Kindergarten next year, please contact the registrar, Mr Anthony Tse ([registrar@intcs.nsw.edu.au](mailto:registrar@intcs.nsw.edu.au)) to make sure he/she is on the waiting list. With 13 external enquires already for a maximum of 20 places, it is very likely that the School will fill Kindergarten 2019 very quickly and develop a waiting list.

Let us continue to work together in seeing your children reach their God given potential in life.

**Peter Jamieson**  
**Principal (Acting)**

## Playground Safety

An order has been placed for nylon sports' netting. This netting will be used to form a 2.4m high barrier dividing the playground area in half. This will allow ballgames and more active play to occur in one half of the playground, while students enjoy more passive play without threat of injury in the other half.

## Student Absence

Some parents have commented that previous practice in the School required a doctor's certificate for student absences in excess of one day. While I could not find reference to this requirement in school policy documentation, I wish to inform parents that this no longer is the expectation.

If your child is absent from school the requirement, as noted in the ICS Student Attendance Policy, is as follows:

*"On the day students return from absence parents are required to provide satisfactory written explanation for the absence."*

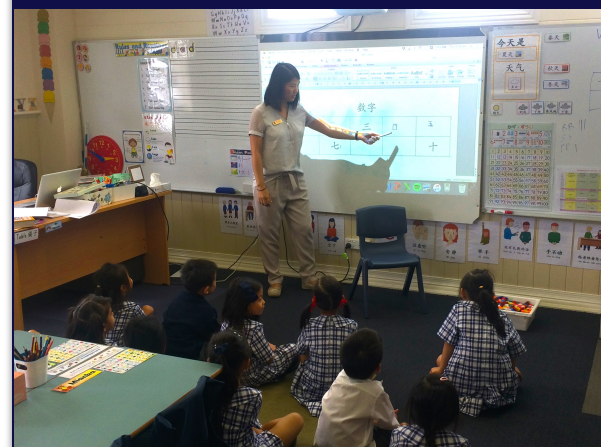
Satisfactory written explanation could take the form of a note or email from home. Most parents like to inform the school that their child will be away on the day of absence. A number of parent's have phoned the morning of the absence. This is a busy time of the day for staff and at times the call goes unanswered. We welcome communication on the day, but suggest an email to [admin@intcs.nsw.edu.au](mailto:admin@intcs.nsw.edu.au) to be the most effective means. Of course, such an email is sufficient in informing the school the reason for the absence.

## Lunchtime Excursion

Next Monday, 26th February, will be the first of our 'lunchtime excursions' to O.H. Reid Park, Chatswood West. As communicated earlier, the purpose of these excursions is to provide students with a couple of opportunities per term for extended lunchtime play with a chance to be involved in more active games.

The session will begin with a picnic lunch, followed by play. We will depart from school at 1:00pm and return at 2:30pm. Parents are most welcome to join us for this school community event.

All parents must make sure they have returned their local area excursion permission slips. Transport will be by bus initially, however later in the year we may explore the possibility of walking to the site.





## Welcome Hannah Yu

While our school community received the wonderful news of the birth of Mrs Yu's new daughter Hannah, apparently the attached photo did not transmit to many families. So, for those who missed out I include this lovely photo of Hannah in the arms of her big sister Lillian. Mrs Yu and Hannah have returned home from hospital and both are well. As a community, we pray for God's continued blessings to be upon Hannah, and the Yu family.



## Parent Prayer Group

*Prayer* is simply talking with God. Why bother to talk with God? Simply because He loves us and desires a relationship. That is why He created humankind in the first place.

God is very interested in the success of the School and the growth of all children enrolled. Therefore, we can be sure that when we come to Him in prayer, He hears us and is busy accomplishing His will through this place. It has been very encouraging to see six families represented in the first couple of parent prayer meetings for the year. This represents around 20% of our families praying for the school, your children and staff on a regular basis. For anyone interested in joining with the parent prayer team, they meet every Wednesday morning at 9:20am in the staff room. We would love to see you there.



## Community Member of the Fortnight

This week our community member of the fortnight is Tristan Lin of Year 3. Mrs Llewelyn has been impressed with Tristan's conscientious attitude in class. He finishes his work without a fuss, and always does so to the best of his ability. He is always pleasant and polite and a fine example to other students.

## Chinese Teaching Resources

The school recently invested in a Mandarin reading scheme, similar in principle to the readers used by students in English classes. We have just taken our first delivery and Miss Su (who located these online and placed the order) is very excited about the additional support this will provide for our Mandarin literacy program.



## Chess

The Sydney Chess Academy will once again be offering ICS students the chance to learn and/or refine their skills. Coaching for students will be available on Monday lunchtimes from 1:20pm to 2:00pm starting on 26th February 2018.

Learning and playing chess helps children develop their logical thinking and problem-solving skills, improves their concentration and focus, while also being a great source of enjoyment. Activities include group lessons on a demonstration chess board or interactive whiteboard, puzzle solving and fun practice games.

Students earn merit awards by making checkmates, or by displaying skills and positive qualities, which all good chess players strive to develop. If your child is interested in taking part please email the school on [admin@intcs.nsw.edu.au](mailto:admin@intcs.nsw.edu.au).



## Email 'Netiquette' guidelines for parents

In supporting the learning partnership between home and school, ICS recognizes that email can prove an efficient and effective form of communication. The following guidelines on email 'netiquette' are designed to provide a positive platform for electronic communications between teachers and parents.

### Guidelines on Email 'Netiquette'

#### 1. *Content*

Communication via email between staff and parents should be limited to professional matters. Examples of appropriate communications include feedback/comment on student progress or application. Examples of inappropriate email communication include "chat" about personal matters such as holiday activities, or forwarding of "humorous" emails.

#### 2. *Keep it concise*

Keep messages short and intentional. Do not be overly personal and avoid 'chat' and introductory pleasantries. If the message is longer than two or three short paragraphs, speak to the teacher in person, or via phone.

#### 3. *Subject line summarising the message*

The subject line should summarise the body of the email. Ask yourself, 'will the teacher know what this email is about'.

#### 4. *Layout message for readability*

Use spaces and breaks between paragraphs and long sentences to make it easier on the reader.

#### 5. *Maintain a positive tone of respect in interactions*

Don't use all capital letters, oversized fonts, exclamation marks etc. The reader will likely feel they are being shouted at, or even threatened. Avoid sarcasm.

#### 6. *Avoid angry outbursts*

Don't send or reply to email when you are annoyed. Wait until you have calmed down, and then compose the email. Once written and sent, it can't be recalled. Preferably try to meet with the relevant teacher to work through an issue.

#### 7. *Remember attachments*

If the reason for sending an email is to send a file, remember to include it.

#### 8. *Read/proof the email before you send it.*

#### 9. *Don't assume a response*

- If a response or action is required then in the heading put *Response Required* or *Action Required* - then the subject.
- If it's only for information put *FYI* in heading before subject.
- A response can be as simple as 'yep', or "'I got your message and will action by the end of the week'

10. ***Reply promptly***  
Try to reply within 48 hours, less if possible. Do not expect a reply unless feedback is really required.
11. ***Avoid email 'tennis'***  
Avoid email 'conversations' that go back and forward. If the communication requires more than a single email each way, then a personal phone call or interview is appropriate.
12. ***Email is not confidential***  
Emails to teachers may be read by executive staff at the School. Further, email exists for 'eternity' out there in net space.
13. ***Don't use email as an excuse to avoid personal contact***  
Email is a very poor cousin to a face to face or telephone conversation.
14. ***Disclaimer***  
All communications received from teachers is subject to the following disclaimer:

*"The information contained in this e-mail message and any attached files maybe of confidential nature. If you are not the intended recipient any use, disclosure or copying of this e-mail is unauthorised. If you have received this e-mail in error, please notify the sender immediately by reply e-mail and delete all copies of this transmission together with any attachments."*

I ask parents to keep in mind that the amount of time processing daily emails can become onerous, and to therefore limit email communication with teachers to significant matters.

***Peter Jamieson***  
***Principal (Acting)***  
***February 2018***