



The Comet

The Newsletter of K. International School Tokyo

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➡ In this issue...

- ▶02...New Building Construction Update!
- ▶03...PYP News
- ▶08...IGCSE News
- ▶09...Ministry of Finance Visit
- ▶11...Author Holly Thompson Visits KIST
- ▶12...G11 DP Camp
- ▶14...Remi's Activities
- ▶15...Lance's Summer Internship
- ▶15...Changes to Office 365
- ▶16...KIST Heart Club
- ▶20...School Calendar 2023-24
- ▶22...KIST Community Association News

"If the plan doesn't work, change the plan but never the goal"

—Author unknown

From the Head of School



Council of International Schools re-accreditation

School accreditation

School accreditation is a process that ensures that a school has been inspected by an outside organization and meets standards of quality in school operation, teaching and learning, and student wellbeing. Accreditation organizations set industry standards that schools must meet to attain and retain accreditation.

The importance of school accreditation

School accreditation is important for several reasons. First, school accreditation can potentially impact the acceptance of our graduates into universities. Universities have greater confidence that students are academically prepared for post-secondary education when they have graduated from an accredited school. Second, accreditation provides the school with opportunities to reflect on what it is doing well and areas for improvement. The re-accreditation process is a rigorous endeavor. It involves all members of our school community in a reflective self-study with a commitment to continuous improvement.

Re-accreditation and self-study

At KIST, we were first accredited by the Council of International Schools (CIS) in 2016. A year ago, we began the re-accreditation process and hosted a week-long virtual preparatory visit this October. A big thank you to the KIST parents who attended meetings with the CIS team! In the coming weeks, we will begin the CIS self-study process in preparation for the team evaluation visit which will be held in late 2023 or early 2024.

Through the self-study process, members of the school community, including alumni, parents, students and staff members, will be invited to participate in the CIS school survey. This survey is designed to collect data from all stakeholders regarding the school's purpose and direction, governance, curriculum, well-being, staffing, facilities and home partnerships. The data collected will assist us in setting goals with the purpose of school growth and improvement.

While the self-study process is rigorous and will require the effort of many stakeholders, we look forward to utilizing this experience to further grow as a school.

With only a week remaining until the Winter vacation, I would like to wish all members of our school community a wonderful holiday. I look forward to welcoming you all back to school in 2023!

Kevin Yoshihara Ed.D.

Head of School/Elementary School Principal



DATES TO REMEMBER



December 2022

- 9 (G1-G12) Clubs program ends
- 9 (K3-G5) LEAP classes end
- 9 (K1-G3) After care not available on this day
- 12-14 (G6-G11) Semester 1 examinations
- 16 End of semester 1
- 16 (K1-G3) After care not available on this day
- 17-Jan 8 Winter vacation
- 19-20 Office open

January 2023

- 9 School resumes for all students
- 9 Semester 2 commences
- 9-16 (G12) DP mock examinations
- 9-27 (G1-G5) Reading diagnostic testing
- 12 (G5) PYP exhibition explanation session (*Evening)
- 13 2023-2024 admissions applications close
- 20 Semester 1 reports issued
- 23-27 (G1-G5) Writing diagnostic testing
- 23 (G6-G10) Mathematics diagnostic testing
- 23 (K3-G5) Semester 2 LEAP classes begin this week
- 24 (G1-G12) Semester 2 clubs program resumes
- 25 Japanese New Year Party (*Tentative)



KIST Learning for Life KIST Learning for Life KIST Learning for Life

New Building Construction Update

Construction of our new school building is progressing steadily towards a projected completion date around the end of October 2023.



At the time of the previous issue of *The Comet*, the construction site was still just a vacant lot following demolition work; however, now the piling work is finished and the foundation has been excavated to a depth of around 2 meters below ground level (a huge rectangular hole can now be seen). The construction of the important foundation that will support the new building is nearing completion.



Taken on October 31, 2022



Taken on November 31, 2022

In the area beside the ongoing construction, the PE team has been making good use of the limited playground space, and have come up with ideas for ingenious ways to conduct various types of PE lessons and to allow students to continue developing their physical and technical skills.

K3 PE class



G8 PE class

To make up for the limited space during construction, the indoor PE area has been fitted with wonderful safety mats (designed by Mr. Buck!) which allow students to spend their breaks and participate in PE classes safely.

In addition, the outdoor roof area, which was previously unsafe due to its uneven, concrete floor, now has flooring (designed by Mr. Ota!) that can be used for floor field hockey. This has reduced the risk of injuries such as scrapes and scratches from falls. The area can also be used for PE classes.

Classroom #116



Rooftop area

Over the coming weeks, construction of the ground level section of the new building is expected to progress gradually. Now that we can actually see the size of the area the building will use, we are quite amazed at how large it is going to be.

We are very excited to see how the scenery will have changed further when we come back after the winter break.

PYP News

Big changes to learning support at KIST

The 2022–23 school year has seen some big changes to learning support in the elementary school. At KIST, we have high academic expectations, so it is vital that we support our students and teachers to meet them.

The first step towards this was to redefine and increase the levels of learning support in the classroom, with the previous position of 'English Language Support (ELS) Instructor' changing to 'Learning Support Instructor (LSI).' While this may seem a small change, it led to a redefining of the job description with more emphasis being placed on supporting across the curriculum rather than focusing on language acquisition. The school also created four new positions, meaning that each class now has their own Learning Support Instructor (each K1–G1 class already had two).

The next phase was to increase the levels of training with each Learning Support Instructor taking online courses on small group guided reading and six traits of writing so that they will be better prepared to work with small groups in the classroom.

The final step, to begin in semester 2, is restructuring of the KIST LEAP support classes. So, why are we making these changes?

- To offer LEAP support to more students.
- To give instructors more flexibility in organizing their groups.
- To use staff more effectively.
- Some students do not want to do after school LEAP because they also do morning LEAP.
- To allow students more club/after school choices.
- Some students do LEAP every morning and find this demotivating.



And what are the changes?

- **Only mornings:** Math LEAP will be moving to the morning from semester 2.
- **Only one course for English:** We will now offer just one 3-day English course where both reading and writing is covered during the week.

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
English	Math	English	Math	English

- **Team teaching:** Each class will have a main instructor, who is responsible for planning, and an assistant.
- **Slightly larger class sizes:** As each class has two instructors, we will raise the class sizes to a maximum of 10, allowing more students access to LEAP.
- **Recommendations:** LEAP recommendations will be sent out before the winter holiday with a deadline of Wednesday, January 11, giving us more time to arrange the classes and staff allocations.

With these changes, KIST students have never had more academic support, and we are confident that the changes will enable our students to continue to achieve the amazing results that we have seen over recent years. This information will also be sent out via E-Communications, and more details, including fees and course descriptions, can be found in the updated LEAP section on the school website at the link below.

Web <https://www.kist.ed.jp/node/1128>

If you have any questions regarding learning support in the elementary school, you can contact me at oliver.sullivan@kist.ed.jp.

Oliver Sullivan
PYP Coordinator



Early Childhood News



Hello KIST Families. I hope this issue of *The Comet* finds you well. As we begin December, it has already been four months since we started school in August—how quick was that!! All the children in the early childhood department are looking forward to spending time with their families during the winter holiday, wherever they may be in the world.

Recently, there was some sad news reported in Japan regarding incidents involving young children who were left alone on school buses or in their family cars. As a mum of two, I understand how we as parents feel after hearing about such incidents. Even though we focus on academics and on delivering a high-quality education at KIST, the most important thing we must consider is that children are in a safe environment, and that they feel secure while they are learning at school.

Our school mission states that: "K. International School Tokyo provides academically motivated children from diverse cultural and social background with a high-quality education in a safe and supportive environment in order to develop competent, academic and compassionate individuals who make meaningful contributions to our global community." Like it said, yes, we do try hard to deliver quality learning time to our young children and at the same time, classroom teachers plan activities to develop children's skills and learning support instructors assist classroom teachers and support the children in the classroom. Having said that, all these things will not happen if we do not have a safe environment.

Every day, we count the children when we leave our classrooms to go out to the field, playground, single subject lessons and so on. Whenever we ask the children to line up, we count them to make sure no one is missing. This is a very simple way of checking but provides our staff with a reliable way of knowing whether we have everyone under our wings or not.

Furthermore, by 9:00 a.m. every day, all our homeroom teachers send their class attendance to the reception attendant, who has a list of all absentees with reasons, and follows up with families based on the homeroom teacher reports. If we happen to forget to do this on time, we receive an e-mail from our principal as a reminder. This is also a small thing to do every morning, but a very important procedure in helping us know that the children are safe.

This system works best with your support—whenever your child comes in late or is absent, please make sure that you notify the office by e-mail at info@kist.ed.jp.

It would not be possible for us to enjoy learning and having fun with the children every day without the cooperation of their families.

I hope you all have a wonderful winter holiday.

Eri Ozawa

Early Childhood Coordinator (K1–K3)/
K2A Teacher



K1A

K1B



K2A



K2B



K3A



K3B



Elementary Student Care

Student Care, Social-Emotional Learning, and Community Circle



Social-emotional learning has a varied response among teachers who are asked about its efficacy in schools. In the United States and across Europe, teachers overwhelmingly say that it has

a positive impact on students' academic outcomes. In a recent survey of 824 US educators conducted by EdWeek Research Center, results showed that just over half (51%) found SEL to be "somewhat" helpful, while 32% said it was "very" helpful in students' mastery of academic skills. A low 3% said the influence was negative and 14% said it was neutral in its effect.

For those of you who might not be aware of what social-emotional learning is exactly, it involves teaching non-academic skills, such as resilience, empathy, goal setting, responsible decision making, and emotional management to help students be successful in their schoolwork, later in their work life, and beyond. As a Student Care Coordinator with a background in Special Education, the benefits of such lessons are immediately recognizable to me. However, throughout the world, not all educators, administrators or families share that sentiment. In the past, SEL has been seen as a fuzzy type area of emotional messages and memes with no real substance or academic relevance.

The encouraging message that is transmitted from the results of the survey suggests that most educators don't buy the argument that SEL and academics are an either/or proposition.

At KIST, we have recognized the importance of SEL and have responded by implementing practices that have as their main function, students' well-being at the center. One of those practices in the elementary is our Community Circle. These lessons are determined by each grade level with a specific issue or outcome in mind. These lessons are flexible and timely in the

sense that they can be dropped in quickly as a response to a topic or problem that has suddenly arisen. Topics can range from creating a safe homework space around the house to how to deal with one's emotional response to a negative interaction with a friend. Community Circle allows students to learn how we build relationships with peers as well as responsibilities we have as members of the school community. Learning how we each as individuals fit into the machinery of life and community serves us well as we grow in both academic as well as emotional realms.

Learning how to control one's emotional response to situations that the world throws at us gives one the tools to face a day of high stakes academics. Whether you learn how to solve interpersonal conflicts or control test anxiety through breathing exercises, these skills will have an immediate and lasting effect on your overall success as a member of our academic community. Building a resilient and healthy mind through lessons aimed at emotional well-being should be placed high on the list of priorities of any learning institution.

For more information about Community Circle and well-being at KIST, feel free to ask your elementary aged child about their Community Circle lesson.



Clay M. Bradley
Elementary School
Vice Principal/
Student Care
Coordinator
(Elementary)



Elementary ELS

Language learning and growth mindset

Many of us have experienced the thought that we will *never* be good at something that we really want to be good at. Many of us have also witnessed our own children having that thought. About their language learning, we might have heard our children say something like "I will never be able to explain my ideas properly in English", "I'll never know what all these words mean" or "I'll never be able to understand a book like the one my classmate is reading", and so on. This word "never" is connected to what education psychologists, led by Carol Dweck, call a "fixed mindset"—the belief that a person is born with a certain amount or kind of intelligence that will never change. Some children may think that they don't have a "natural talent" for language, end of story!



But brain science tells us that the opposite is true: a person's brain is changeable throughout their whole lives. "Growth mindset" is the belief stemming from this neurological research. With a growth mindset, a child's thinking about language learning sounds like "I couldn't explain that very well just now—I need to work out how to explain that more clearly for next time", "I don't know these words yet—let me start to learn them" and "I can't understand that book yet—what steps can I take to get me to that level of reading?" A growth mindset is a foundation for a lifetime full of deep and rich learning.

If our children have a fixed mindset, it can stop them from learning and achieving. How can we help them to develop a growth mindset? At KIST, growth mindset is explicitly taught throughout the year during Community Circle and encouraged daily through the interactions and teaching strategies we use. There are several strategies parents can also do to help, including by *modeling* a growth mindset: enjoying mistakes as a chance to learn; showing willingness to try challenges and have failures; expressing "I can't do it yet" when failures and mistakes happen—and continue to try by persevering and exploring different strategies.

For further information about the central importance of developing a growth mindset, I recommend this TED Talk by lead researcher Carol Dweck, with subtitles in many languages:

Web https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_X0mgOOSpLU&t=201s

There is also a list of 5 strategies for parents here:

Web https://imaginationsoup.net/help-child-unmotivated-growth-fixed-mindset/?utm_campaign=shareaholic&utm_medium=email_this&utm_source=email

Rachel Parkinson
Elementary ELS Coordinator/ELS Instructor (G3A)
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Notification of Attendance

We would like to remind all families of the procedures for notifying the school of general student attendance.

Student absences, late arrivals and early departures are coordinated through the main school office. All absences, late arrivals and early departures must be reported **directly to the school office by e-mail** to info@kist.ed.jp. Please provide your child's officially registered name, grade and class, and a reason.

For safety reasons, if a student is absent and the school has not received notification, parents/guardians will be contacted to verify the student's whereabouts.

Notification must be provided by parents/guardians only, not by students themselves. Notification should be from the KIST parent e-mail account. Messages sent from a child's e-mail account are not accepted.

Thank you for your cooperation.



KIPS News

Time goes by so quickly; it has already been about three months since the start of the school year.

The P1 students have become accustomed to life at KIPS and are gradually learning daily routines such as washing their hands and taking off their socks. They are also enjoying their lessons while fighting the urge to play with their toys and friends.

In my PE lessons, we practiced how not to hit our heads when we fall and how to throw a ball at the scary Jack o' lantern while saying "Go away!" We learned how to throw straight and when to let go of the ball as well as how to move our bodies in line with the Halloween theme.

During free play time, the children are learning how to communicate with each other by saying "Please" when they want a toy, instead of pushing others or simply taking toys from their friends. And children who were not able to say "I'm sorry" at first are gradually learning to say it.

In October, before the autumn break, we had our first event of the school year, a Halloween Party. It was the first sunny day we have had for this event in three years, and we all went to KIST to enjoy the party.



Sohta Ohashi
P2 Teacher



Hello everyone! This is Anna, and I am a new teacher at KIPS this year. I have been teaching the kids in KIPS for some time now, and I can say that I love every moment I spend with them. Let me share with you some of the things that are keeping us busy these days.

The autumn season has been literally very colorful for everybody in KIPS: from the autumn trees and autumn leaves that we see on our way to the park down to the colorful activities that we did in school. The autumn colors that we see everywhere helped the kids become remarkably familiar with the colors orange, yellow, red and brown.

In Science, they learned about pumpkins and pumpkin seeds. They all had the chance to dig into a pumpkin and take out all the seeds inside. Then we used these same seeds in our Art classes after they colored them with autumn colors.

They also learned that mixing two colors together will produce another color through an experiment called "milk magic". The surprise and awe shown on the kids' faces while doing the experiment were so priceless! They had so much fun doing the experiment that they wanted to mix colors repeatedly.

It is during moments like these, when we know that our little ones are learning and having fun at the same time, that teachers like me feel so motivated and so inspired to spend another teaching day with their students. I am looking forward to more teachable moments with our kids in KIPS!

Anna Sophia Valencia
P2 Teacher



Milk magic experiment



P1 autumn trees



P2 autumn trees

IGCSE News

KIST students achieve excellence in IGCSE examinations

Let's go back in time...

Fall 2019: KIST decided to expand our Pearson Edexcel IGCSE curriculum across all subjects for the incoming G9 students. Those students are now in their second year of DP and about to graduate in Spring 2023.

Spring 2021: The IGCSE exams are cancelled.

Spring 2022: The first full set of examinations are written for the full cohort of G10 students. From Art to Physics, each of our G10s sat for seven to eight examinations.

I am proud to say that as a cohort, the G10 students of 2021–22 surpassed all expectations. At KIST, we hold our students to quite a high academic rigour inherently, and year after year our students continue to impress to that standard. Keep in mind that our school has been offering a limited Mathematics qualification as the singular IGCSE qualification. So, when I got the news that the exams were to be sat in Spring 2022, for lack of a better term, "for real"; I was more than excited. I, like all the IGCSE subject teachers, knew how well our students would do on these exams if they were offered. And good thing that they were. Our students worked diligently and produced outstanding results.

Without a bit of context, it may be difficult for some to comprehend how well our students actually performed in this first full year of the IGCSE examinations for the entire cohort. We know that in IGCSE, students are graded from 9–1, with 9 being the absolute cream of the crop. The rule of thumb is that the top 10% of the world will gain that grade. In order to set baseline attainment levels, schools across the world use a standard of 7 being a good score, with the 7–9 grades representing an A or A* grade. That is to say, if you look at just the students achieving 7–9 grades, that informs how many students are performing at a high level.

And I did just that, for all of our subjects; I compared the scores of our students against the tens of thousands of students writing the examinations worldwide. You can see the full set of results on our website, and on our social media as well. I wanted to highlight just three of the courses below, just know that our results in almost all of our subjects reflect this greater achievement at KIST than the world.

In Geography, about 66% of students worldwide achieved 7–9, whereas at KIST, 100% of students achieved that. Another example would be in History, where 67% scored 7–9 worldwide, but 100% of our students achieved 7–9. The most telling example I can share is that of our Mathematics B qualifications. Our G9s write this set of examinations; overwhelmingly these exams are usually written in G10. The numbers are even more impressive. While 61% of worldwide students achieve a 7–9; 96% of our students achieved a level 9! Congratulations to these students in

particular and the entire cohort in general for outstanding results.

In late November, we held a small ceremony to celebrate some of our Outstanding Pearson Learner Awards. I would like to highlight the following students, who achieved some of the highest grades among Japan and even the world in the June 2022 exams.



Kaito (G11B)

Achieved the **highest mark in Japan** for English Literature and Biology!



Arnav (G11B)

Achieved the **highest mark in Japan** for English Language!



Shakti (G11B)

Achieved the **highest mark in Japan** for History!



Fumie (G10A)

Achieved the **highest mark in Japan** for Mathematics!



Lance (G11B)

Achieved the **highest mark in Japan** for Biology and the **highest mark in the world** for Economics!

Congratulations to all of our students and teachers for their efforts in our first year of the full IGCSE examinations. I am proud of each and every student who worked diligently during their IGCSE preparations. A high bar is set now, one that I know our current IGCSE students will be sure to aim for.



Mahipaul (Ron) Dayaram
IGCSE Coordinator



Students received their IGCSE results earlier this year.

Ministry of Finance Visit

On September 16, the Grade 9 Business and Economics classes were fortunate enough to attend an information session with the Japanese Ministry of Finance. The focus of the visit was to educate us students about the economic management systems that Japan uses.

Since we all live in Japan, I believe that it is incredibly significant for us to have a basic idea about how our own country manages its economy. The most interesting thing I learnt during the day was that the total amount of Japan's state ownership is 100 trillion yen. Since I take Business as my IGCSE course, it provided great insight into what we may study in the future. This is because students who select Business or Economics as their subject choices are usually interested in the mechanisms of a certain country's economic system. It also gave me a better understanding in advance of possible future job opportunities/working for a company.

Overall, this experience was brilliant and I hope to have opportunities like this again. We would like to thank the main lecturer, Mr. Yoshida, and Ms. Yasuda from the Ministry of Finance, as well as Ms. Wakasa, Mr. Gombya & Mr. D'Rozario for their support in organising the event.

Jessica (G9A)



Secondary ELS

Winter holiday skills boosters—English texts in Japanese in the LMC

Reading texts in multiple languages is a great way to expand and consolidate vocabulary in both first and second languages. With the winter holiday coming up, the LMC has worked closely with the English department to source Japanese versions of texts currently studied in the English Language and Literature at DP, IGCSE and the LSP. Whether you are looking to expand either your English or Japanese, re-reading your ELL texts in a studied language is both educational and fun. To make choosing your selections even easier, Ms. Goan has created a display so these texts are closely at hand. Why not take up the challenge?



Jade Bonus
Secondary ELS Coordinator



Secondary ELS staff update—Welcome Mr. Charlie

Hello, my name is Charlie Owen, and I've taken over the Secondary ELS instructor role from Ms. Furnival for the remainder of 2022–23. I will be working with Grades 6, 7 and 8 in any of their classes that might require English support, teaching the G6 Academic Writing classes in the mornings before school, and helping students who might need a bit of extra help with their writing assignments.

Growing up in North Carolina, USA, I lived in a few interesting spots before coming to Japan, including the UK; Washington, DC; and Texas. Most of my teaching experience comes from here in Japan, working as an Assistant Language Teacher for the past seven years in Shimane, Hiroshima and Tokyo before joining the KIST staff.

While not teaching, I enjoy reading, cycling and building computers and other electronics. I'm also easy to spot around campus, as there's a chance I'll be wearing a bow tie, and so far, I believe I'm the only one here who makes that particular style choice. There's also a good chance that if you find me in the Secondary English office, I'll likely be preparing a pot of tea or coffee.

Charles (Charlie) Owen
Secondary ELS Instructor
charles.owen@kist.ed.jp



Beating the Winter Blues

As Autumn draws to a close and Winter approaches, it can be harder to get out of bed in the morning, harder to find the motivation to go the extra mile with studies, and harder to take that first step out of the house to do some exercise.



The 'Winter Blues' is something that affects a number of people. During the Autumn and Winter seasons, sunlight decreases and, in turn, so does our access to the precious vitamin D we draw from it.

It is important to remember that, as human beings, we are hard-wired to need to feel like we have power and control in our relationship dynamics. When we feel like we don't have opportunities to do this in positive ways, it can lead to negative attempts to exert it. Especially during the Winter, when we are already feeling physically drained, this can be an emotionally draining experience. In order to try and avoid consistently challenging conversations during this period, we would like to offer some strategies to support KIST families.

Checking for understanding

Sometimes, in our heads, we can believe that what we have asked for has been expressed in the clearest and simplest of terms. However, when we have a number of trains of thoughts flying around our minds, it may simply not be the case that the specifics of the request have been retained. According to research, the following four steps can dramatically improve retention of requests (for adults too!)

1. Make eye contact.
2. Reduce the number of words being used—keep it as short as possible.
3. Explain the specifics of what you would like to be done, trying to keep the number of steps to a minimum.
4. Calmly ask the person to repeat back what it is they have been asked to do.

Psychologists call this the 'teach back' method and hopefully it can help to avoid misunderstandings around the expectations of any number of requests!

Reducing 'don't'

We hear the words 'don't' and 'no' so many times a day without considering the possible implications of our mindsets and motivations. For children's brains, the processing of a statement that contains 'no' or 'don't' require them to do a double process.

1. What must I NOT do?
2. What is the acceptable alternative?

If we can rephrase our requests to focus on what is required, we can help make the retention and processing more straightforward.

For example:

'Don't spend hours wasting time on social media or video games' could be rephrased as 'Plan your time effectively today so you can take some downtime from studying.'

Saying 'thank you' in advance

By taking a leap of faith that young people will make the right choices, we can encourage them to consistently weigh up their decisions prior to them being made. Research suggests that most of the time, people will live up to expectations that we set if they feel encouraged to do so. By letting them know that you trust them in advance, it supports the effectiveness of the completion process.

For example:

'Thank you for doing your chores before you watch TV' is more preemptively positive than 'You had better not watch TV before your chores today!'

Reprimands > Observations

It can be easy to be frustrated when things we want young people to do seem to have been ignored or forgotten. However, by trying to focus on making observations rather than leading with a reprimand, it can help a young person's agency in making a good choice.

For example:

'It is clear you haven't done your homework from the look of all those unopened books' could be rephrased as 'What's your plan for completing your homework this evening?'

By appearing to have assumed they have a plan, it helps to foster feelings of empowerment and trust. If your child does not have a plan, it also allows them to avoid conflict and allows them to address the issue independently!

We hope that these ideas can help families address potential conflicts moving forward. As ever, if you would like to discuss ways we can support you and your family at school, please don't hesitate to contact either Ms. Cowie or Mr. Archer.

Hannah Cowie and Matthew Archer
Student Care Coordinators (Secondary)



Author Holly Thompson Visits KIST

In October, we were lucky enough to be visited by Holly Thompson, whose book 'Orchards' is studied in Grade 7. Holly is always a fantastic speaker, and we loved hearing about her writing process for the novel. She explained how she was able to get in contact with a community of *mikan* farmers in the countryside in order to learn in detail about the farming process. The farming of *mikans* is a key theme in the novel, as it symbolizes reflection, dedication and regrowth after a difficult experience. She also spoke very openly about the challenges of being a writer, the highs and lows of the process of writing, and the importance of being flexible when drafting a piece of work.

The students were then able to ask Holly some questions—both serious and silly! Thank you to all students who volunteered to ask questions in front of the cohort. Holly also asked for students' interpretations of the novel, and many students were willing to give answers. It was amazing to hear how much they had taken from their studies of a novel that explores complex and mature themes. It was also fun to consider some more abstract questions, and we ended the Q&A session on a heated debate about whether we would rather fly or be invisible.

Holly then led students in a few spontaneous creative writing activities. It is always fun to see what students come up with when they are given a very simple prompt and no time to prepare! The focus in the LMC was incredible, and Grade 7 threw themselves into the process of exploring their creativity. You can see some brilliant examples on this page. I hope it might have inspired students to complete some further creative writing tasks in their free time.

Well done Grade 7!

Isobel Duncan

Subject Area Coordinator—English



Ratio of light to dark
Clear as day until
I watch stars scatter the sky
In the middle of darkness
A habit to push people away
Until I'm safe in my lover's arms.

Hanna (G7B)



Writing was your passion, doing
It all day long.
As the breeze of ideas
Hits your mind, you spy
On an event.
You sometimes shape yourself
To fit into a community,
So you don't twist things
Up.
The door in front opens up
With the word
HELP.

Amy (G7A)



The door opens
Just not the way I want it to.
A storm of people come and charge at this boy,
The loneliest, devilish boy.
Holding fork and knives,
The crowd of people come by,
Getting revenge on his fake face of joy,
They do exactly what I had told them,
What he had done to their child.
Trying to run away from his mistake,
His past,
His betrayal,
The betrayal of these people who trusted him.

Akanksha (G7B)



G11 DP Camp

This year in September, the G11s had the chance to go to Miura for their G11 DP camp. During the camp, we were able to practice our collaborative skills and experience new activities.

Day 1

After checking in (to start off the DP preparation camp and build teamwork between the students—which will also be a crucial skill necessary in the DP) we gathered for a team building activity. It was evident that the students had a blast through the sounds of laughter, as some of our peers (and teachers) participated in a game of human knot and duck, duck, goose. Following this, the students separated into three groups to take turns doing three activities: lesson on Extended Essay, university session, and cooking orientation. The last



activity planned was cooking. With the ingredients and utensils that the thoughtful teachers had brought, and the fruits that the students had each brought, we collaborated to cook

curry rice and make a fruit punch. During the cooking orientation, students each took on separate roles that they were the best in, showing teamwork once again to overcome challenges, including the clean-up after dinner where we all worked together to clean and wash all the dishes and tables.



We could, without a doubt, say that the most memorable moment of the first day was the campfire that took place after dinner. The students circled around the campfire, and spontaneously began to sing the school

song (which was not planned). Our grins were everlasting as we made s'mores and Mr. Gombya told horror stories. We were able to see students bonding and getting closer with their fellow classmates as we got into big groups playing different card games and listening to songs, hoping that the night would last longer.

Day 2

We all woke up around 7:00 and assembled in the breakfast room for a fulfilling start to the day; we got the chance to fuel ourselves for the tiring but enjoyable day ahead. We were then allowed to go back to our rooms and change into comfortable sports gear for the preceding activities. We were all divided into groups as our teachers had thoughtfully planned out exercise and care sessions which gave us all a chance to build our strengths and to relax, occasionally accompanied by a laugh or two. Next, we all partook in some teambuilding activities and prepared skits for the night. After all these



indoor sessions it was finally time for the highlight of the day: seaside hiking!

The concept of seaside hiking was new to a lot of us, as hiking is typically done on the mountains and hills. We were divided into groups of three based on pace and we all set off in our own groups comfortably. It was interesting and new to hike along the seashore, climbing through irregular rocks and terrains amidst all sorts of terrifying insects (for which we were drenched in insect repellent). We travelled along with the rising sea tide and finally deliberated playing in the sea with our hiking clothes; when we found out that we were allowed, all of us hurriedly raced into the waters and playfully splashed each other for about half an hour. When we were told to return, most of us were completely drenched and had to hike along the seaside using a riskier route (as our path had been eaten up by the rising ocean).

When we returned, we were welcomed by an outdoor shower where we washed all the tiredness and sand from the hike and had a traditional Japanese bento box dinner. We talked, listened to music, and clicked pictures. Amongst all the madness and chaos, we all presented our skits which earned many laughs and gave us a chance to make some everlasting memories as we wished some moments could last forever.

Day 3

The final day started with a chaotic morning as we got ready to head home. It was heartbreaking saying goodbye to our rooms, our heaps of unfolded clothes, and out crumpled sheets. We'll miss the chorus of laughter and the memories of late-night conversations we had created in our messy, but cozy rooms.

But don't forget, we had one more day ahead of us and the best part hadn't even started yet! Each class took turns canoeing in the sea and having some beach fun on the shore. During our canoe adventures, our chuckles filled the ocean breeze, as we splashed water at each other and challenged one another to canoe races. At the beach shore, the fun didn't stop, as we splashed about in the chilly water, scavenged for seashell treasures, or nestled on the sand to converse about our camp memories.

Looking back, the camp was such an enriching experience. We were able to gain knowledge from the Extended Essay and university sessions, new skills through canoeing, cooking, teamwork activities, and our restless nights. Most of all, it brought each of us closer together.

Arshiya (G11A),
Remi (G11A) and
Selin (G11A)



2022 Seisen MUN Conference

On October 8, the KIST Mode United Nations (MUN) team was invited to Seisen International School's MUN conference along with St. Mary's International School, Aoba-Japan International School and International School of the Sacred Heart. Unlike traditional MUN conferences consisting of debates and speeches, this conference was a simulation based on global politics and game theory hosted by a professor from Osaka University—a new and nerve-racking experience for many delegates!

In this conference, the delegates were assigned to a country or an intelligence service such as the CIA, GRU or MOUSSAD. To mirror how international relations works in real life, powerful countries were assigned more delegates and each country had its own classroom where the country's delegates could meet to make decisions and discuss strategies in private. Each country was given at least one 'scenario' to participate in throughout the day; for example, I was the delegate of Pakistan, and my scenario was to decide whether Pakistan should cooperate or start a nuclear war with India. Based on game theory, delegates were asked to choose between cooperating or escalating their situation with other countries that had the same scenario as them. Then, based on the choices each country made at the end of the conference, the country received a number of points which were revealed in the closing ceremony of the conference. What made it challenging for all of us is that we weren't given instructions on how this conference would work until the morning of the conference! The hosting professor believed that this challenge teaches delegates that working in the real world is not easy—I am glad that we

were given this opportunity to do something outside of our comfort zone.

Throughout the day, all delegates walked around the school to meet with other countries' delegates and make agreements about forming alliances, gaining power over certain countries, and decisions about war. Many delegates perhaps struggled to choose between cooperating ethically or making unethical decisions just to win a maximum number of points for their country. For most delegates, this was only their first or second time attending an MUN conference since the COVID-19 pandemic began, but many of us were still able to socialize and make new friends! In our afternoon session, I saw all delegates representing European countries gathered in one room to have more fruitful discussions. Eventually, I socialized with many delegates in a room where we got to know each other, took pictures and talked about our school life as most of us are IB students!

Finally, we all gathered for the closing ceremony, in which the outcomes for each country were revealed. Although there were some surprising outcomes such as the EU leaving NATO, which gave all delegates a laugh, I am glad that some countries were able to choose peace and cooperation over violence. Most importantly, I am grateful for being able to enhance my knowledge and meet people outside of school through Seisen's MUN conference.

Sadhika (G11A)



L>R: Shakti (G11B), Neha (G11A), Saanvi (G12B), Sara (G12A), Devaj (G12A), Sadhika (G11A)

Remi's Activities

Unilever internship

It's difficult to find internship opportunities, especially when you are a high-school student, because most internship opportunities are for college students and people who are older. So, when Ms. Wakasa told me about a 2-day internship with Unilever Japan, I decided to take the chance. In this 2-day experience, I learned about the different projects Unilever does and had the chance to share some project suggestions. I tried to make the most out of my experience and participated as much as I could. I'm glad I did this because two months later, I was informed of a 6-month long internship program with them!

The program would consist of university and high school students collaborating to create marketing ideas targeting youths for Unilever Japan. I was at first concerned about whether I would be able to commit to such a long-term project. But that wasn't my only concern. I was worried my Japanese wouldn't be good enough, especially since the internship was to be done completely in Japanese. A long-term project in Japanese, where I would have to speak to Japanese interns and professionals? Impossible! However, realizing that opportunities like this rarely come knocking at your door, I decided to submit my application. A month later, I was accepted into their 6 month-long official internship program as the youngest intern they ever hired.

In the beginning, I was very nervous and terrified, but I have become friends with all my fellow interns at Unilever—every single one of them has been extremely supportive and understanding. Initially, we conducted meetings to work on our

One of the projects I worked on: a collaboration campaign with Unilever and NCT 127



projects. Now, we conduct "meetings" to just talk casually about how our lives have been. It's been a great cultural exchange experience learning about their lives as Japanese students, and I have enjoyed sharing my experiences of being an international student. Through this, I have also improved on my Japanese communication and vocabulary. Up to now, I have participated in, and even led, several projects. Projects where we conducted field work on local drug stores, compiled ideas for campaigns/events and Unilever's products' Instagram posts, provided suggestions on how to improve their newest hair and skin products from a youth's perspective, and so on. I have had several opportunities to present my ideas and proposals to the Unilever staff members. It turned out that some of our ideas have even been used for some of their projects! For example, my proposed outline for a collaboration between a K-Pop boyband and Unilever to increase the younger generation's engagement with Unilever's products, was used as a foundation to establish Unilever's collaboration campaign with NCT 127. My contract with them was supposed to end this August, but I have been offered an extension for my contract, ultimately making the internship a 15 month-long program.

Opportunities are limited. So, when you come across even the smallest opportunity, don't take it for granted. It might unravel into something even more amazing.

IYRC conference

I always wanted to have the opportunity to connect with my interest in journalism and writing. After some time searching for potential experiences, I came across the 'International Young Researchers' Conference'. That was the beginning of my research journey...

This conference was also the perfect chance to delve deeper into the specific topic I had kindled a fascination for: menstrual stigma and discrimination. Finding out that there was very little research previously done on menstruation, I knew exactly what I had to do. My research paper, which I titled 'The role and significance of Instagram on the lives of Menstruators', took me about 8 months to complete. In my research, through the analysis of Instagram posts and comments, I explored the different perspectives Instagram users have on menstruation, as well as how Instagram influences people's perceptions of periods, and how this connects to menstrual activism and the elimination of menstrual stigma.

By the time my paper was completed, I had explored a variety of new avenues associated with topics of menstruation and feminism. A month after my submission, my paper was accepted into the conference and confirmed to be published. I now had to prepare a presentation for my paper. In my presentation, I made sure to address my topic as a topic that is relevant to not only some people, but to everyone. I took this as an opportunity to bring light to the topic of menstrual discrimination and the harm it causes.

The conference consisted of a lecture from a special keynote speaker, Dr. Lucille Torres-Deas, who talked about her experiences with the healthcare system as a Latino woman. She shared the challenges she overcame as she persevered through her dream of becoming a doctor and providing quality medical care to underserved populations. It was very inspiring

listening to her story and experiences, as she radiated the message that anything is possible if you take the chance. Besides the speakers, it was an amazing opportunity being able to engage with the other writers. Looking at their enthusiastic nods, eager eyes, and vivid expressions, one thing was clear. Just like me, they were proud of their work and grateful for having such an invaluable occasion.

The conference ended with an award ceremony. Having read many past papers and watched several presentations that were awarded, I knew my paper and presentation wouldn't match up to the past recipients' level of work. However, to my surprise, I was awarded the 'Best Social Sciences and Humanities Presentation' award. I couldn't believe I had won the best presentation award, let alone even be published in the conference. All of this was possible because I simply gave it a try and did what I most cared about, so for those of you reading and unsure about applying for a certain extracurricular program or trying out something new, I hope reading this gave you even the tiniest spark to just go for it! You never know. The finish line might be more glorious than you think!

Remi (G11A)



Lance's Summer Internship

Prior to August of 2020, before beginning the IGCSE, I lacked any understanding of the basics of economics. Through my two years of taking IGCSE Economics, I developed a greater understanding of economic theory and cultivated an interest in the financial sector. However, applying this knowledge and understanding in the real world poses a challenge for a high school student like me.

In order to develop a greater appreciation of economics, I sought out experiences that would allow me to deepen my understanding in a real-world context. Over the summer, I had the good fortune of securing a three-day internship at a well-known financial institution here in Tokyo.

This internship was divided into two phases. The first consisted of receiving direct instruction from those working in the various areas of the business, where I gained understanding of the input functions such as human resources, marketing and finance. In particular, it was interesting to learn about how HR trains its workers to have greater efficiency. In the second phase, I had the opportunity to interview employees to clarify questions base on my own personal interests. Through this process I was able to discuss topics such as the stock market and cryptocurrencies, and apply them to the world's current economic situation. One of the main highlights was meeting with the staff, and having meaningful conversations with them where I could apply my understanding in economics.

The purpose of the internship was to learn and experience a day-to-day life in an institution such as this. After the internship, I had the task of completing a report, where I



The team Lance (3rd from left) worked with during his internship.

summarized what I learnt over the course of the internship.

This internship was not only a valuable experience, but also allowed me to expand my horizons and interact with professionals who have dedicated their careers to the financial sector.

While my original motivation was to gain experience and learn more about this industry, I see now that I can also apply it to my university applications. For those students who have an area of interest that they may want to pursue further, I highly recommend seeking out opportunities such as this to learn from those with the unique knowledge and skills you are passionate about gaining.

Lance (G11B)



Changes to Office 365

If you have recently logged into Office online, you may have noticed a banner at the top of the page to say that **Office 365** will shortly be renamed **Microsoft 365**. The renaming will not affect your account, or the services and apps we use, but there will be a new logo and over time the official URL will change from office.com to microsoft365.com.



You do not need to do anything to prepare for this change, but you may notice the new logo!

If you would like to read more about the changes, please see the links below.

Web <https://www.microsoft.com/en-us/microsoft-365/microsoft-365-faq> (English)
<https://www.microsoft.com/ja-jp/microsoft-365/microsoft-365-faq> (Japanese)

IT Support Team



KIST HEART CLUB

Stationery Drive



Who are we?

We are the KIST HEART Club. "HEART" stands for "Help Empower and Assist Refugees Today". We are an organization of secondary students from K. International School in Tokyo, whose goal is to Help refugees in Syria and around the world. We hope to Empower and Assist Refugees by providing them with their needs.

We collaborate with other schools and organizations to ensure the maximum efficiency of our events. We also produce manga that illustrates personal anecdotes about the struggles of the Syrian refugees. We hope to spread awareness about the current refugee crisis to the school community.

Stationery Drive



What did we do?

Stationery Drive is an event of the HEART club where students, parents, and teachers can donate used or unused stationery which will then be sent to Syrian Elementary students to use for education. The event was held on September 26th to 30th in the mornings.

How was it?

We were amazed by the cooperation from the KIST community! Most of the members kindly donated stationery including pens, pencils, erasers, geometry sets, colored pencils, markers and more.



THANK YOU SO MUCH!

Thanks to the KIST community, we were able to collect approximately 3,042 items of stationery in total. We were also able to collect a variety of stationery, ranging from pens to paints to origami.

We deeply thank the KIST Community for all the support and donations. Through these generous donations, we were able to provide stationery to the students in need in Syria.

Library News



Elementary Library

We hope you enjoyed reading wonderful books over your Autumn vacation!

We started off the new school year with our Sakura Medal Books, and we are excited to share the nominees for this year. All we need is **you** to read and vote on your favorites. Please feel free to check them out in the library.



Reading for fun

Sandra Martin-Chang, a professor of education at Concordia University, studied how reading storybooks and novels influences cognitive development. According to her studies, there is a significant difference between students who read for pleasure outside of class immersing themselves in fantasy novels or spy thrillers, for example, and those who primarily read books to finish their school assignments. Not only is there a powerful link between reading for fun and stronger language skills, but students who disliked reading frequently attributed their negative outlook to experiences they had in classrooms.

Even light reading provides a host of benefits, increasing verbal and creative skills, nourishing our capacity for empathy, and even reducing prejudice against stigmatized groups—all skills that are developed as readers become accustomed to inhabiting unfamiliar worlds, seeing things from new perspectives, and contemplating how a chain of events can lead to unforeseen outcomes.

It's important to teach children how to read, and once we do that, we need to make it worthwhile. We've got to give them a reason. We've got to give them a view once they climb that mountain.



Priyanka B P
Elementary Library Supervisor



Are you struggling to choose books for independent reading?

Are you looking for ways to spark your love of reading?

Then check out our **RECOMMENDATION WALL** in the Elementary Library.

Library Media Center

Sakura Medal 2023

The 2023 Sakura medal is in full swing, and I'm happy to see that this year's collection has been well used so far. The Sakura medal books are chosen by a committee of international school librarians in Japan, and represent diverse authors, stories and themes, with a focus on Japanese and Asian authors, so it is an excellent list to choose recent, high-quality, middle grade fiction that is relevant to international school students in Japan.



Online resources and periodicals

I'd like to introduce some LMC resources you may not know about! KIST subscribes to a number of online resources and periodicals to support student inquiry and research. These can be accessed online at any time via Schoology, and we encourage students to make use of these resources for assignments and research tasks. JSTOR is for academic research, and best suited for DP and IGSC students, especially for research for the Extended Essay. For the lower years, Britannica offers information written for a wide range of reading abilities and research levels from Lower Elementary to Middle Secondary. We also have magazine subscriptions to *The Economist*, *Wired*, *National Geographic*, *Art in America* and *The Japan Times*, and these can all be read in the LMC. With the exception of *The Japan Times*, magazines can be borrowed for three days. Previous issues are kept for a year and available for borrowing.



Shannon Goan
LMC Librarian

KIST'S ONLINE RESOURCE SUBSCRIPTIONS



Athletics Update

KIST Fall season and Winter 2022–23

Fall season conclusion

As mentioned in the Fall issue of *The Comet*, KIST participated fully in athletics since pre-covid. Student participation in all sports was extremely high. KIST athletes had a successful Fall season overall with a few trophies won and a number of semifinalists and finalists—fantastic!!

Girls' tennis

The girls' team had 19 members this year—many more than we had in the past. KIST girls have a strong future ahead. A big thank you to Ms. Alba and Mr. Buck (assistant coach) for their time and effort!



*The JV girls' tennis team had an excellent season this year. The players had weekly practices every Tuesday night with Ms. Alba and Mr. Buck, which provided a good opportunity to work on both physical skills, such as footwork and endurance, as well as more technical skills, including serve placement and shot selection. In the first few games of the season, KIST lost close ones against YIS and Seisen, winning two out of five games on both occasions. However, KIST easily defeated CAJ and ISSH with a score of 4–1 both days. In the tournament at the end of the season, **Shreya** (G11B) and **Jessica** (G9A) played each other in a very exciting semifinal. Jessica went on to the final and defeated the ASIJ top seed in her fourth and final game of the day, making her the **JV Girls Tennis Champion**. **Prithika** (G10A) also made it to the semifinal after winning two very close games (one in the QF), both of which went into tiebreakers exceeding 10 points. Additionally, despite losing their first game, **Mariko** (G12B) and **Yixuan** (G9B) defeated both the CAJ and ASIJ doubles, which made them the champions of the consolation bracket. Great work everybody!*

Ms. Alba (HS JV Tennis Coach)



Jessica (G9A)

JV boys' tennis (Autumn 2022–23 season review)

The boys' team had 14 members this year with many students continuing from last year. It was a strong team that looks to be even stronger next season. Thanks to Mr. Cowe for his time as coach!



The JV boys tennis team continued to build on last year's shortened season, with some purposeful practices and many competitive matches with other schools. After a month of weekly practices at the start

*of the academic year, matches against other schools started in mid-September. KIST defeated CAJ and Kinnick HS relatively easily and lost against the Varsity team from YIS. In the most competitive match of the season, KIST lost a very close match to ASIJ 3–2, with **Tomoyoshi** (G10A) winning his singles 8–7, and **Arnav** (G11B) and **Genta** (G10B) winning their doubles match 8–7. At the end of the season tournament, KIST players competed well, with Tomo and Genta losing competitive QF matches, whilst **Shreyas** (G11B) and **Mark** (G9B) reached the doubles SFs. Well done to all team and squad players on a very competitive season!*

Mr. Cowe (HS JV Tennis Coach)

Cross country

This year, we had the most participants since we started in Kanto Plains five years ago—over 50 members! A big thank you to our coaches: Ms. Cobbs, Ms. Alba, Mr. Archer and Mr. Di Bella for their efforts!

*This year we had the opportunity to participate in a full season of races for the first time in years! Because of this many of our runners were racing for the first time, and most runners were concerned about how they would perform. I'll admit that I was also a little concerned when I saw your exhausted, sweaty, frowning faces after the first practice in September. But our concerns were unfounded. I saw all of you work and sweat and run and improve week after week. At the end of the season our team didn't win many ribbons (except for **Arista** [G8A], congratulations!) but I saw confident strides, cheering for teammates, and shorter race times. I was especially impressed with how many of you are continuing to train in the off-season in our informal running club. With your commitment and hard work, I am looking forward to our best season yet in 2023!*

Ms. Cobbs (X-Country Head Coach)



MS girls' volleyball

The volleyball teams participated in Kanto Plains fully for the first time this season having played a couple of exhibition games last season. As we had high numbers again this year, KIST had both an A pool (G7–8) and B pool (G6–7) team. Both teams had success in the season and a couple of the B pool players were called up to play in the A pool tournament at the end of the season in which KIST did really well, losing to Seisen in the final. Wonderful job by the team and Coach Jay for the high placing!

Continued on next page



Continued from previous page

Congratulations to the MS girls' volleyball A team for placing 2nd at the Kanto League volleyball tournament!

Mr. Jay (MS Volleyball Coach)



JV/U-18 boys' & girls' volleyball

KIST participated at the JV level in the Kanto League and U-18 level in ISTAA, so there were many games and two tournaments for both teams. Both teams used new systems this year and the members worked hard in practice and were really committed to improving. We had some success in the league building confidence each game. In the **Kanto League tournament**, the JV girls were a little unlucky, losing a close QF to St. Maur, 2 sets to 1,

but then beat BST 2–0 in a placement game. The **JV boys** were impressive defeating St. Maur and YIS on the way to a nail-biting loss to ASIJ in the final—**2nd place!**



In the ISTAA tournament two weeks later, the **U-18 girls** played great attacking volleyball and did not lose a set on route to becoming **ISTAA Champions** for the first time since 2014! They defeated a very strong Columbia team (title holders from 2020) 2–0 to win bring the trophy home. The **U-18 boys** also had a great tournament with 4 of 5 schools being very strong. Unfortunately, DSTY (Deutsche Schule) proved too strong, and the boys lost in the final—**2nd place.**



A special thanks goes out to **Coach Harlan** who volunteered his time to come support practices and lend his expertise on multiple occasions. As the coach of both the boys' and girls' volleyball teams, I was very happy to see them be successful as their effort and dedication were fantastic. All the traveling to games and tournaments was both tiring

and time-consuming but you all hung in there—awesome season!!

Mr. Ota (HS Volleyball Coach)

MS boys' football (soccer)

MS boys' football continues to be a popular choice as again KIST had well over 20 players on the team. We had 3 wins, 4 losses, and a draw, hence falling a win short of making the A pool tournament. Thank you to Mr. Smith and Mr. Archer for their efforts in helping the students develop into a team.

This year, our MS boys' football team were able to participate in their first full season since the start of the pandemic. A majority of the team only had playground football as their main experience of playing the game and this was fairly evident at the start of the season. With a considerable amount of hard work and effort from everyone, they managed to pull together and had a strong finish to the season, winning the B pool tournament. Our team was led well by our older members in Grade 8, but they had some good company in some promising younger team members who will only become stronger. A special mention to our top goal scorer for the season, **Linya** (G8A), who scored 9 goals in the final tournament! Thank you for a great season and here's to more success in the future.

Mr. Smith (MS Football Head Coach)



Winter season update

Our winter season sports teams started up in the first and second weeks of November. Below are teams getting ready to participate:

- JV/U-18 boys' basketball (Kanto and ISTAA)
- JV/U-18 girls' basketball (Kanto and ISTAA)
- MS/U-14 boys' basketball (Kanto A & B pool and ISTAA)
- MS girls' (9-aside) soccer (Kanto A & B)
- JV soccer (Kanto)

Our MS/JV baseball teams have started up with every other week practices for games in March and April.

Please be reminded that schedules and other information including results can be viewed on the KIST Sports Schoology page. It is important that both participating students and their parents are aware and plan with the practice and game schedule in mind. Thank you!

Dennis Ota
Athletics Coordinator



Staff 10!

In this month's Staff 10!, we are pleased to present **Naoki Fukushima** who joined us in March 2020. This year, he is teaching Japanese to various grades across the Secondary School, and is also the Advisory Assistant for Grade 8.

1) Tell us something interesting about your hometown.

Although my city has a population of over 1 million, wild pheasants and raccoon dogs can still be seen behind my parents' house. It's a pleasant city to live in. Also, although I'm not a big fan of the J-League's Urawa Reds, I used to see the players practicing on the training grounds near my parents' house on my way to school and work.

2) What is your favorite place in the world?

I am interested in ancient ruins and art, so it was like living a dream when I visited Pompeii and Rome in Italy on my graduation trip. (I enjoyed the food and wine so much that I'd gained about 7 kilos by the time I returned home.)



I also have a strong connection with Vancouver as it was the first place I stayed overseas for an extended period. During my stay, I was able to make friends from different countries.

3) Who would you like to meet if you had the chance and why?

I would like to meet Itzhak Perlman, my mother's favorite violinist, because he has indirectly made me realize how wonderful the violin is. My mother is a fan of his music and I have heard him since I was a little child. His powerful yet delicate melodies are the ideal form of violin in my mind.

4) Do you have any special skills or talents?

I am a *kendo* rank holder. I may look like an indoor person, but actually I like outdoor activities.

5) Please share a little-known fact about yourself.

I am afraid of heights, but I also like thrills, so I have actually tried bungee jumping. My next goal is to try skydiving.

6) What is your most prized possession?

I have a beautiful watch to commemorate my engagement with my wife.

7) Which IB learner profile attribute do you most closely identify with and why?

Inquirer. Because all of my life choices have been made in accordance with my curiosity. This is both an advantage and a disadvantage, because sometimes I value curiosity so much that I don't pay enough attention to my immediate interests. I must try to find a balance.

8) If you could live your life again, would you do anything differently?

I would have liked to have focused more on science and math subjects when I was at school.

9) Is there anything you are trying to learn/improve about yourself at the moment?

Whenever I find a book on a subject that interests me, I try to buy it on the spot. I love being able to update my knowledge and perceptions by constantly coming into contact with new books.

10) Do you have any special message for your fans?

Carpe diem. Let's try different things in the spirit of 'seizing the day' and living our lives to the fullest. I would love to hear about your challenges!

Carpe Diem
SEIZE THE DAY

School Calendar 2023–24



To assist families planning overseas trips, the dates of school vacation periods for students and other important dates for the 2023–24 school year are listed below.

Families are asked to make arrangements accordingly to ensure that students are back in Tokyo ready to start school after each vacation period on the correct date. **The complete calendar will be distributed in June.**

- **First day of school for students:**

August 21, 2023

- **Autumn vacation:**

October 28 – November 6, 2023

- **Winter vacation:**

December 16, 2023 – January 7, 2024
(Classes resume from Monday, January 8)

- **Spring vacation:**

March 23 – 31, 2024

- **Golden Week vacation**

April 27 – May 5, 2024

- **Last day of school for students:**

June 12, 2024

Nurse's Notes

Common winter skin conditions and prevention

Damaged skin is one of the problems of winter because the Japanese cold season can cause low humidity levels, and it is easy to get dry skin. We also tend to wash our hands frequently to stop germs from spreading and this can result in the eradication of our skin's protective barrier. When the skin barrier is weakened, our skin loses its essential oils and natural moisture. Children's skin is thinner and more delicate than that of adults, so children need to take particular care during this season to protect their skin and prevent problems.

Types of skin problems in winter

Dry and itchy skin

Moisture can be lost from the top layers of your skin when it is exposed to cold, dry, outside air or dry air blowing from air conditioners, causing skin to dry out and itch more easily.

Chapped lips

Chapped lips are common with low air humidity, so applying lip balm or glycerin throughout the day can help to seal in moisture.

Cracked heels

Cracked heels are caused by lack of moisture in the skin which can be worsened when wearing open-heeled shoes.

Repair cracked heels using these steps before bedtime. This way, the skin will get enough time to heal and replenish itself while you sleep.

1. Soak your feet in warm water for 3–5 minutes.
2. Gently scrub with a loofah, a pumice stone or a heel sharpener to remove the thick, dead skin on your heels.
3. Dry your feet thoroughly.
4. Rub a rich moisturizer, such as heel balm, or cream containing urea on your dry heels.
5. Put on a pair of thick socks to keep the moisturizer in place.

UV damage

Many people might think that the sun's rays are not powerful enough to cause damage in winter; however, even though you may not feel it, the sun is still powerful enough to damage your skin. It is advisable to use a moisturizer with SPF even during the winter.

General ways to prevent skin problems in winter

- Drink plenty of water and keep yourself hydrated.
- Use a humidifier at home to prevent low indoor humidity. The ideal relative humidity for good

health and comfort is around 50% humidity.

- Keep your skin moisturized: use a moisturizer on your entire body after having a bath or shower, and thick hand cream for thicker hand skin after washing your hands.
- Wear gloves outside.
- For sensitive skin, avoid wearing synthetic fibers like nylon and polyester as these chemical fibers cannot "breathe" as well as natural fibers such as cotton, and this can cause irritation and discomfort.
- Avoid using hot water when washing your hands and taking a shower as this can remove essential oils from the skin, so try lukewarm water (38–40°) instead.
- Wash your body gently with plenty of lather instead of scrubbing in order to help your skin retain moisture naturally.
- Ingest antioxidant-rich foods: tomatoes, blueberries, green tea, extra virgin olive oil, almonds, salmon, cocoa and spinach.



Newsflash!

In September, KIST received an award from the Tokyo Fire Department in recognition of our ongoing efforts in actively promoting emergency first aid procedures. Staff members new to the school this year are scheduled to undergo CPR and first aid training in due course.



Yukiko Yamazaki
School Nurse



Reference:

Prutha B. (2022, April 8). *Nine Winter Skin Problems and Their Best Solutions + Preventive Tips*. SkinKraft. Retrieved from <https://skinkraft.com/blogs/articles/winter-skin-care-tips>

KIST Community Association (CA) News



Thank you so much for your support in 2022!!



Book sale and uniform sale, November 23



Holiday wreath exhibition, November 23



Coffee morning, October 10



Book covering



Bell Marks



Please see the guidelines!



Have a nice winter break

Information about TetraPak

Thank you for your continued support!



CHECK! If the spout is protruding, cut it off and make it flat.



TetraPak marks



Sample of not TetraPak marks (TOHEI-PAK • IPI-PAK • NP-PAK • Royal Pak • TOPPAN.)



University Guidance News

It's time to get out there!

Now that COVID restrictions are being relaxed, it's the peak time to start investigating opportunities that can help not only show off your talents, but even help learn something about yourself that you may not have known. The biggest challenge people find in their lives can often be that of "purpose". Students can often feel this very heavy feeling on their chest even as early as Grade 9 when I first pose the question of "How well do you think you know yourself?" during University Advisory. This becomes increasingly difficult during Grade 10 when we start asking, "What might you want to study in the future?" These are not easy questions to answer, sometimes even for adults well into their careers. However, students that have come to me excited to say, "I know exactly what I want to do!" often find this out because of the experiences they have had outside of the classroom and even outside of school. So, get out there and explore!



G9 self-introductions

Mr. Waterfall's suggestions for winter break

- **Volunteer in your community:** Being a volunteer isn't something that should only be considered as part of CAS. Doing weekend river cleanup, participating in a food kitchen, or volunteering your time in a nursing home, library, or museum may be a good way to meet new people and find an interest in something you may not have realized.
- **Visit a university:** Whether you stay in Japan or go abroad, universities are almost always willing to provide a tour, let you talk to a professor, or maybe even audit a class. There is a lot to learn about what you may want to do in the future when you can see the type of facilities that professionals are using in further-education environments. Contacting a university nearby the place you intend to visit in advance to make a reservation also helps.
- **Doing a short internship:** Internships are difficult to come across as most are posting online for university students. However, there is no harm in going to local businesses or asking in your community if there is anyone that is willing to help or find help when trying for an internship. This will let you learn a lot, but more importantly, a good first impression may give you contacts you can call on to help with future career opportunities, study options, and much more.
- **Making a fun educational trip:** Going to a museum, historical site, the Diet building, movie set, science exhibition can be just as inspiring for future careers as it can be interesting. Going after things that are enjoyable are often the best options for spending time during the holidays.
- **Studying for an exam:** While many students will be preparing for SAT/TOEFL/etc., it could be fun to challenge yourself by trying to see how well you can do on a past [Waterloo math competition](#) paper (and ask your Math teacher about taking the real test in the future), trying your best to see if you can manage to solve questions for Oxford and Cambridge admissions tests, or even finding online competitions that you can join with people across the world.

Interviews and advice from current students

To get some examples of what has been done outside of the classroom and their respective inspirations, I met with current Grade 11 students Andy, Remi and Lance, as well as Grade 12 student Bubble.

Mr. Waterfall: Thanks for taking the time to meet everyone, could you please tell me an example of what you did outside of the school and why?

Andy: I participated in the Sino-Japan Youth Conference. At first it was very hard for me to find something that really interests me as I find myself

gaining and losing interest in things quickly. For example, I like business, but don't see myself as a businessperson. But, after searching online and reviewing things sent from the school, I came across the Sino-Japan conference. My first thought was 'Oh, China!', I lived there before, liked history, was currently in Japan. I decided to try and was able to attend as a participant. When I was attending, I became more fascinated by the idea. It reminded me of my passions between linking both countries and how important and relevant it is that future people and generations connect.

Bubble: For me, I was a new student in Japan (a couple years ago) and experienced my first earthquake. I was interested in seismic isolation after reviewing data that was being reported about these earthquakes and was able to observe some seismic isolation devices. After returning to China during the holiday, I helped my dad disassemble a car as we both share the interest in engineering. While disassembling the car, I saw this thing in the engine called a thrust bearing and noticed some parallels between the seismic isolation devices in my mind, but also some possible advantages that could be had by bridging these two concepts. I tested the math using MATLAB and found that the friction compared to existing models could be reduced by a lot. I then wrote out five designs and worked at home in a lab that me and my father built in my bedroom to build the prototype. I sent the concept off to many universities and while I didn't get a reply from them, I was able to receive a patent from the Chinese National Intellectual Property Administration.

Remi: I was always interested in writing something, honestly anything. So, I was browsing online through this conference and saw the work of some really passionate students and the work they were interested in. It sparked an idea in my mind that I could just give this a try. I was at the time and am interested in the topic of menstruation and more importantly the social stigma behind it that persists. I found a specific practice being done in some parts of Nepal called *Chhaupadi*, where menstruating women are sent away from their homes in order not to pollute the environment they are in. I thought, that was pretty rude as that's potentially half of the population that could affect. This stigmatized topic also exists online and while some positive sources exist with supportive empowering information, there are also the opposite as well.



Continued on next page

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So, I set to work on my research to find what comments, feedback and posts were being displayed on Instagram, developed my paper, which then also needed a presentation, and submitted it towards the conference.

Lance: I have always been interested in finance, business administration, and economics. I run a service group at KIST where we promote fair trade coffee that is sold in the K-Shop. I found that by the end of Grade 10 that my understanding of economic theory was becoming strong, but I lacked any real-world application, so, I wanted to find an internship to help with this. I found that most financial institutions were not looking for interns and if they were, it was normally just for university students. I kept asking around and found one of my family friends was working at a large trade company and was willing to talk to me. I met with her and mentioned my interest for doing an internship and everything. Soon after, I was contacted by the CEO of the Japanese headquarters. They had agreed to let me intern.



Mr. W: These are great stories and introductions. From my perspective as University Guidance Counselor, this would be a big benefit to university applications. But I am curious besides that, did this open up any other doors, or inspire anything else further down the line?

Andy: Actually, after attending the Sino-Japan conference, it not only inspired the passion for me to help know more about what I wanted to study in university in the future, but also because of my efforts, I was asked if I wanted to try to be the future organizer and for the entire Japanese team (of 20 students). I was kind of scared and thought 'I don't know if I'm a really organizer type of person' but figured this was the time to try. I like this stuff anyway and so I'm currently working on that!

Bubble: There's this cool thing this invention has opened for me. I found this one bridge between things and then started looking at other ways I could link things around me. I am currently working on bridging the sport I like, climbing, with Artificial Intelligence (AI). I am trying to create a motion feedback system that can help beginners or climbing athletes refine their skills. I feel I can use the things I am good at the leverage the innovations technology can bring to this sport.

Remi: Actually, building from this I was able to receive a

couple of internships after (which you will find on another page of this issue of *The Comet*). This has also expanded my interests into thinking about other subjects. Lastly, my findings on social media will help me contribute to my internships and come up with better business ideas.

Lance: While I don't think I will do another internship at the same place, the great thing I received was the fact that I now have contacts with key people in this company: the CEO, sales people, marketing. As a student that takes Business Management and is doing the Extended Essay in Business Management, I am able to contact these people as a source of primary research and get direct questions from experts that I would have not had otherwise. The experience has also allowed me to see that there is no harm trying for something like this even if the opportunity doesn't exist now. I was the first person to be an intern there and maybe others will be able to after me now.

Mr. W: Lastly, could you provide some advice or ideas you would promote to others who may be inspired by your experiences?

Andy: Try to find something fun, something that is what you wanted to do, not just because you think you need it for CAS or to add an extra-curricular activity. I think these kinds of activities can help you find out who you are and if you are still struggling with that, this can help build that drive.

Bubble: Now in the 21st Century, any large change to make in the world seems really hard, especially as high school students. I think a lot of things we can make are based on interdisciplinary projects, merging things that we see as separate entities in our lives and building a bridge between them. Open your eyes and bridge the things that you think are different and see what you can make out of it.

Remi: Before starting the things I was doing now, I was scared and had so much self-doubt. There were so many opportunities that I have missed because I thought 'Ah, it's probably not going to work out'. The biggest step is from where you doubt yourself to where you can actually accept yourself for who you are and actually go out and do something. It's a big step, but once you get there, it's so refreshing and can lead to such great opportunities, so just go for it!

Lance: The worst thing someone can tell you when you ask for an internship or other opportunity is 'No'. So, that's it. If you can get past that feeling, you can try many things!

KIST graduate forums— Winter 2022–23

Yet again we have a wonderful selection of graduates to speak with us about their current university lives. Although a few of these have finished, please check the schedule on the right for upcoming events and check the university guidance page on Schoology to view recordings for any you have missed this year or last year!

As always, for any questions or further clarification about any of the above or anything else, please contact me or stop by the office!



Thomas Waterfall
University Guidance
Counselor

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Office hours: Monday–Friday, 8:30 a.m.–5:30 p.m.
University Guidance Office (3F Secondary Building)

Date/Time (Monday JST)	Name	KIST Class of...	Forum language	Undergraduate university	Other countries applied to
Nov. 21 5:30 p.m.	Anna Rose (Ye Won)	2022	English	Keio University (PEARL), Japan	USA
Nov. 28 7:30 a.m.	Rei	2022	Japanese	University of Michigan, USA	UK
Dec. 5 7:30 a.m.	Minn Thant	2022	English	Leeds Arts University, UK	-
Dec. 12 7:30 a.m.	Stephen	2022	English	Carnegie Mellon University, USA	UK/Japan/ Taiwan
Jan. 9 5:30 p.m.	Junyong	2022	English	University of California, San Diego, USA	Korea
Jan. 23 7:30 a.m.	Faisal	2022	English	University of Hong Kong, HK, China	Canada/ Japan/UK/ Singapore
Jan. 23 5:30 p.m.	Hanano	2022	Japanese	University of Hong Kong, HK, China	UK/Japan/ Singapore
Feb. 6 5:30 p.m.	Manaka	2022	Pending	University of British Columbia, Canada	USA/UK

Alum Report

Yiling is an alumnus of KIST's "Class of 2022." He is currently in his first year at the National University of Singapore and is majoring in mathematics.



As a current university undergraduate studying Mathematics at the National University of Singapore, I have always been fascinated by the rigorousness and elegance of mathematical reasoning. This is the main reason why I chose to write a Mathematics Extended Essay (EE) during my time at KIST.

Unlike EEs from other subjects that require you to make an intuitive judgement and evaluate the effectiveness and validity of your claim, a Mathematics EE requires you to explore and explain the mathematical reasoning behind the answer to your research question. As a result, I had to solve my research question on paper first and then explain my reasoning with the help of diagrams. Hence, for future Mathematics EE students, I recommend you spend a couple of days first answering the research question on paper and checking if there are any flaws in the reasoning. Then, you should examine how to generalize your research findings to a broader scope of study and possibly indicate some further investigations.

For me, the EE was more about how I can understand the logic behind the equations and explain them clearly in my report, rather than the amount of research I did. Therefore, even though my research question was initially unfamiliar to me, the background knowledge required to approach this research question came mostly from what I learned in IB Mathematics such as mathematical induction, single variable integrals, and some trigonometric identities.

After I completed my Extended Essay, I made some further improvements, and my findings were published via the International Young Researchers'

Conference (IYRC). IYRC is an independent public benefit incorporation which provides a platform for high school students to share their research project. For the submission of my work to IYRC, similar to writing an Extended Essay, I needed to explain my approach and findings clearly, and I found it helpful to include a few tables and diagrams to aid my explanations further.

I believe the report was not assessed on the difficulty of mathematics used, but rather on my creative approach to answering the research question. For example, I generalized my findings on three-dimensional geometry using mathematical induction. Since we had only learned the basic knowledge of three-dimensional geometry and mathematical induction in high school, it was quite rare to establish a link between them, which made my approach to the question creative. Through demonstrating my creative approach, my work was recognized as the Best Overall Project by IYRC. The link to my paper can be found at:

Web <https://2022.the-iyrc.org/>

While understanding the theory may appear to be relatively simple, accurately applying the correct theory is rather difficult and requires some intuition that comes with practice. Nonetheless, it has been an enjoyable journey to explore and play around with equations while writing my EE. Admittedly, writing an academic essay is not easy and many challenges have to be undertaken. However, this has been a meaningful and unique part of my academic journey (thanks to my EE supervisor, Mr. Jones for his support) and I hope we all can appreciate what we have accomplished during our time at KIST when we look back in the future!

Yiling
KIST Alumnus "Class of 2022"

