



The Comet

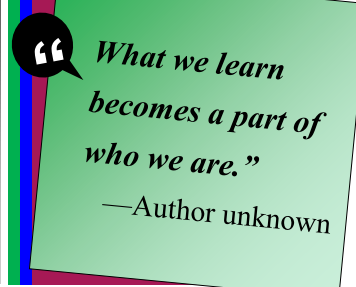
The Newsletter of K. International School Tokyo

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From the Head of School

Student behavior out in public

In recent months, we have received various concerns from those outside our school community regarding KIST students. These concerns have come from train passengers, public bus passengers, and customers in local shops. In some of these cases, it has been reported to us that the students involved were accompanied by a parent. Many of the concerns involve the following behaviors:



DATES TO REMEMBER



March 2023

- 11 SAT@KIST
- 17 (S) Quarter 3 reports issued
- 21 School day
- 21 (S) Q3 Parent/Teacher/Student interviews (*Afternoon)
- 21 Student-led conferences
- 21 (G8) IGCSE options session
- 25-Apr 2 Spring vacation

April 2023

- 3 School resumes for all students
- 3-21 (G1-G5) English/Mathematics diagnostic testing
- 3-11 (G10) IGCSE mock examinations
- 11 School photographs (for new and absent students)
- 12 (G9) PSAT
- 14 (K1/K2/K3) Cross country (*Morning)
- 14-28 (G1-G5) Writing diagnostic testing
- 17-21 (G5) G6 Extended foundation math 1st test
- 18-19 School musical
- 20 (K1/K2/K3) Kindergarten concert rehearsals
- 21 (K1/K2/K3) Kindergarten concert (@Fukagawa) (*Morning)
- 21 (G12) Last day of classes
- 24-28 (G12) DP study week
- 28-May 19 (G12) DP examinations
- 29-May 7 Golden Week vacation

On public transportation:

- Running in the train station
- Speaking loudly
- Eating
- Sitting in the priority seating



In local shops:

- Congregating in front of stores
- Crowding aisles
- Monopolizing the seating area



KIST students are highly recognizable due to our school uniform. When students demonstrate inappropriate behaviors, it reflects poorly on our school community, and can be damaging to the school reputation. Our goal is to ensure all students know and understand the KIST behavior expectations while travelling to and from school. These expectations are based on cultural norms of our host country, Japan.

According to the [KIST Progression Criteria](#), to be considered for program progression, students must demonstrate that they are able to make decisions that are consistently respectful, responsible, and safe for themselves and others. This includes while travelling to and from school. There is also the expectation that parents demonstrate a commitment to the school's mission, vision, guiding beliefs, and policies.

It is not possible for us to monitor every student as they travel to and from school; however, it is possible for each family to ensure that their children understand and are able to follow the expected cultural norms here in Japan. All students not under the direct supervision of their own parent/guardian are expected to return home directly after leaving the school campus. We would like to ask for both student and parent support in ensuring our students demonstrate appropriate behavior while out in the community. Further clarification can be found in the [KIST Student Code of Conduct](#).

Kevin Yoshihara Ed.D.

Head of School/Elementary School Principal



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



New Building Construction Update



Since the beginning of this school year, we have been able to hold most of our events in person, such as parent/teacher/student conferences, coffee mornings, and various other parent sessions. As a result, we have been pleased to see an increase in the number of parents visiting the campus again. We are sure that many of you have been able to view the construction work firsthand at least once on one of these occasions.

Construction of the new school building is progressing steadily, and safety continues to be our top priority. Currently, construction is about a week behind schedule, but it does not appear that this will affect the projected completion date at the end of October. Concrete work on the walls of the first floor and the floor area of the second floor will begin in mid-March, and construction of the upper floors will follow in turn approximately each month thereafter. There is nothing but anticipation as the building continues to rise higher and higher. If you have any questions about the construction, please feel free to contact the school office.



View of construction at the end of January 2023



View of construction at the end of February 2023

As announced in E-Communications No. 162 that was sent to all families on January 23, we are currently accepting monetary donations that will be put towards the cost of construction of the new school building. We would like to take this opportunity to express our deepest gratitude to all those who have contributed so far. Donations will continue to be accepted, so families considering making a donation are welcome to do so at any time.

In addition to monetary donations, you may also wish to support us by contributing to the purchase of equipment that will be necessary for the new school building and will be used for many years to come (e.g. basketball goals for the gym, fume hoods for the science labs, and book shelves for the library). Please contact the school office if you are interested in making these kinds of donations.

Mask Guidelines at KIST



As you may have read in various Japanese news outlets recently, the government relaxed its COVID-19 mask guidelines from March 13. This means that on the way to and from school, students and their families now need to make their own judgements about wearing masks.

MEXT is preparing to issue guidelines for masks at school on April 1, and it still recommends that students wear masks in schools when it is difficult to keep a safe distance from others indoors. As such, we have made the decision to follow the Ministry of Education's guidelines, and will continue to have staff, students, and visitors wear masks while on campus.

During PE, outdoor activities and sport team activities, we continue to ask individuals to make their own judgements about wearing masks.

We expect to receive updated guidance from the Ministry of Education after April 1, and will review our school (indoor) mask policy once received.

Early Childhood News

Hello KIST Families! I hope this issue of *The Comet* finds you all well. We are in March and spring is just around the corner. This spring is a bit special, as we are starting to slowly but steadily lift COVID regulations.

In January, for the first time in three years, we had a coffee morning in the LMC about guided reading, and I was able to see so many parents in person. I felt like it was almost like having a class reunion.

Last week, I was very happy to see some parents around our school in the G1 classrooms who were invited to be at their child's summative assessment task Author's Publishing Party event. Our current G1 students had half on-campus lessons combined with long online distance learning classes when they were in K1, and I still remember that time well.

Next month, we are going to have our Kindergarten Spring Concert! As our last concert on the stage with a live audience was three years ago, this will be the first concert ever where all our current kindergarten children will stand on the stage in front of a big audience. The children have been practicing hard with Ms. Niña, though we are quite nervous about taking them up on the stage. I hope all goes well on the day of the concert.

In this issue, I wanted to address a question that I could not answer during the coffee morning event. The question was: 'I do not know what book to read to my child, so how can I choose a book?'

I wanted to give you a list of my favorite books for you to think about when you purchase or read any books to your child/ren.

As you can easily imagine, there are many wonderful authors around the world, from the world-famous children's book author Eric Carl, who has Japanese editions for many of his books, to the famous Japanese author Taro Gomi, who has English editions for many of his books.

From America and Canada, there is Robert Munsch, whose books are funny, and children love listening to them. From Canada, many of you may have heard of Raffi, who has written lots of songbooks such as Baby Beluga, Five Little Ducks and many more! From New Zealand, there is Joy Cowley who wrote the cute Mrs. Wishy-Washy series. From Australia, we have Mem Fox and Pamela Allen, whose books from Australia have lots of their unique animals in them!

From England, we have Julia Donaldson, known for her rhyming stories. We also have Nick Sharratt, who does both writing and illustrating. I love his stories and illustrations!

There is also the late Steve Jenkins—who passed away late last year—who wanted to get kids excited about science. His books are amazing and give answers to those who are naturally curious about things.



For Japan, I will mention Kako Satoshi here, but as you can imagine there are many more.

Spring vacation is coming up soon, so please enjoy reading some books (any language is fine) to your child/ren while having a picnic, on the train, or as a bedtime story.

Here are also some useful sites for learning about phonics:

- Decodable Readers Australia:
<https://draonline.com.au>
- ABC Reading Eggs (Australia):
<https://readingeggs.com.au/>
- Letters and Sounds (UK):
<https://letters-and-sounds.com/amp/>

Happy reading!

Eri Ozawa

Early Childhood Coordinator (K1–K3)/
K2A Teacher



Elementary Coffee Morning

Shared reading in the home



On January 26, the elementary school hosted a coffee morning focusing on shared reading in the home that was attended by around 50 parents. Last school year, we conducted a survey with K1–G3 families to find out more about shared reading habits at home and we made some interesting discoveries. In K1–K2, most families (39.6%) read with their children every day; however, this number decreased as the children got older, with 39.6% of K3–G1 families, and 66.7% of G2–G3 reporting that they read 1–2 times per week.

Table 3. The number of sessions per week that families engage in shared storybook reading at home, compared with the age of the child.

Number of times	Mean	Age of child (percent)		
		K1-K2 (3-5y.o.)	K3-G1 (5-7y.o.)	G2-G3 (7-9y.o.)
1-2 times per week	41.6	18.6	39.6	66.7
3-4 times per week	20.1	20.9	20.9	18.5
5-6 times per week	16.9	20.9	18.6	11.1
Every day	21.4	39.6	20.9	3.7
Total percent	100	100	100	100

(n=133)

A result that was consistent across all ages groups was the length of these sessions at 10–20 mins (60.5% in K1–K2, 43% in K3–G1, and 44.4% in G2–G3), which was interesting as this is the same length of time that we recommend for in-class guided reading sessions.

Table 4. Comparing the duration of shared storybook reading sessions with the age of the child.

Length of session	Mean	Age of child (percent)		
		K1-K2 (3-5y.o.)	K3-G1 (5-7y.o.)	G2-G3 (7-9y.o.)
Less than 5 mins	5.2	4.7	7.1	3.7
5-10 mins	17.9	20.8	14.3	18.5
10-20 mins	49.3	60.5	43.0	44.4
20-30 mins	16.4	7.0	23.8	18.5
More than 30 mins	11.2	7.0	11.8	14.9
Total percent	100	100	100	100

(n=133)

We also found that many families used similar reading strategies to those that we use in class such as **asking comprehension questions**, **discussing the pictures**, **discussing vocabulary**, and **making predictions**, although results did differ depending on the age of the child.

A final stand-out result was that, while over 40% of our families felt that their level of English was less than fluent, 71.7% reported that they read to their child in English. 85% of families also reported that they read in languages other than English which shows that many of our students are reading in multiple languages.

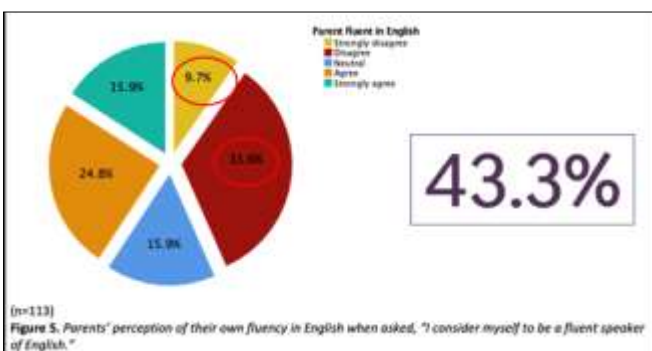


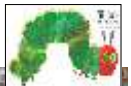
Table 11. Languages that parents reported using when reading with their children – main questionnaire.

Language	Percent
Read with child in a language other than English	85.0
Read with child in English	71.7

(n=113)

Research has shown that reading skills are transferable across languages, so we decided to host a coffee morning to encourage families to read with their children in the language they are most comfortable in and to also try to incorporate some of these simple strategies.

Three of our experienced staff members demonstrated a shared reading session using the same text (*The Very Hungry Caterpillar* by Eric Carle)—**Ms. Eri** in Japanese, **Ms. Wang** in Mandarin, and **Ms. Christie** in English—and then followed up with Q&A sessions. These sessions were excellent, and it was wonderful to see parents joining in and having fun. We also received some valuable feedback with some suggestions of how to help parents access quality children's literature which we will try to act on soon.



The main take-away from this session was that reading with your child regularly (but not necessarily every night) is extremely important, not only for raising their reading level, but also for building a love of books and reading. While you may feel it is important to read in English, we encourage you to read in other languages too, particularly in the language you feel most comfortable in. And, most importantly, try some shared reading strategies like asking simple questions, discussing the pictures and new vocabulary, and making predictions. Building these strategies at home does not just make the experience more interesting, it will help your child transfer them to the classroom, improving their overall reading ability.

Look out for future coffee mornings at KIST as we'd love to see you there.

Oliver Sullivan
PYP Coordinator



Elementary ELS

The challenges of role-playing

Most likely at various times during the year, your child has come home excited about a role-play activity from class that day. Role-playing is used at KIST as both a learning and assessment tool in many of our transdisciplinary units as well as in other lessons such as math and community circle. For example, Grade 3 recently role-played characters from ancient civilizations; Grade 4 role-played different forms of government; Grade 5 role-played different conflict resolutions, and so on. In math, role-play is also used for practicing using money, among other things.

Language learning and content knowledge get practiced simultaneously and very intensely during role-playing, both during the preparation and enactment, making it not only one of the most fun, but also one of the most demanding of learning activities. Having at least two teaching staff in each classroom allows the extra attention that students need when they are preparing, practicing and carrying out a role-play, guiding them to understand both the concepts and facts on the one hand, and the language needed on the other.

Please enjoy these photos from role-plays we have had in different classes recently at KIST!

Rachel Parkinson

Elementary ELS Coordinator/ELS Instructor (G3A)

rachel.parkinson@kist.ed.jp



I LOVE
ENGLISH



G4A's King Scott and Courtiers (L>R: Mototaka, Takuto, Sreevaishnavi, Kitty, Niko, Elaine, Devdeep, Ryoma), photographed by the Royal Photographer during their unit on forms of government.



G3B students (Daniel, Lia, Sara and Yaojia) prepare for role-playing ancient Romans.

ESRC Update

Semester 1 was full of fun! The ESRC hosted free dress days, a candy cane drive, and a whole week of winter wonder fun. We started the semester with Dot Day to celebrate our capacity for creativity. We dressed in samurai blue to support the Japan national team in the World Cup. We had a spooky autumn costume day and a cozy winter sweater day. During Winter Wonder Week, we decorated the foyer and wore bells on our shoes to spread joy. We watched holiday movies and snacked on popcorn. Our goals of having fun and building community were surely met!

Fun was the theme of semester 1, but semester 2 is about caring. We started with a Valentine's Day free dress day to celebrate our friendships and community love. The grade 5 students held their first in-person exhibition in 3 years! To support the anxious and excited grade 5, the ESRC members wrote notes

of encouragement and attached them to a rice cracker snack.

The ESRC is happy to announce that we were able to donate **49,747 yen** to the Red Cross of Japan from our candy cane sales. To increase the impact of our donations we have decided to pick one charity per semester to donate to. The ESRC is proud to announce that for semester 2, our donations will be going to UNICEF to fund their support and protection of migrant and displaced children. The ESRC is currently deciding how to spend the money raised so far for the ESRC. Will we get bean bags for the classrooms? Games for recess!? A school garden!?? A school pet!?! A popcorn machine!?! Let your ESRC representative know what you want so we can make it happen!

Ms Emily and Ms Fern



PYP Exhibition 2023



The Exhibition is regarded as the culmination of an IB student's education in the PYP. It also encompasses a host of ideas and concepts that the students bring to the table. Every year, I am amazed by the sophistication and eloquence that our fifth graders demonstrate in their work as they search for ways to make a positive mark on this planet with all its faults and foibles.

I have included excerpts from four groups to help elaborate the point further. The excerpts define the groups' justifications for highlighting, and intentions for acting on, these important topics. These four are just the tip of the iceberg of the topics that were covered this year in the Exhibition presentations. If you haven't had the pleasure of visiting the Exhibition presentations in the past, I urge you to mark it on your calendar for next year. I promise that you won't be disappointed.

Every year, students from elementary school head out into the world with a mission. That mission isn't trite and insignificant, but rather important and essential to the future not only of our physical environment, but also for the global community and its dreams of a fulfilling, peaceful existence. Strive on Grade 5. Great things lie ahead for you and us all, through your endeavors.

Clay Bradley

Elementary School Vice Principal



Krishiv (G5B) | Exhibition topic: "Inequalities in social media"

Cyberbullying is a big problem in the world. According to Deborah Quinn (2023), cyberbullying is sharing negative, harmful, or false content about another person. This is a big issue that must be fixed to stop cyberbullying and make the world a safer place. Our group is doing everything we can to help address and stop this issue.

Cyberbullying affects mental health in a detrimental way. According to Stuti Mehta (2021), 41% of people who were cyberbullied had developed social anxiety and 37% of them even developed depression, while 26% even thought about committing suicide. It is evident that cyberbullying affects people's mental health a lot so we should reduce it to 0%.

Furthermore, cyberbullying affects your mental health a lot, so our group wants to make a change. Instagram is the place where most people get cyberbullied. According to Christo Petrov (2023), Instagram takes the first position as the platform where cyberbullying is mostly occurring. 42% of cyberbullying comes from Instagram. Over a billion people use it so there are many cases of cyberbullying. This explains that just because of an app people are getting cyberbullied. Instagram is leading to people getting cyberbullied. Therefore, it is necessary to take action to stop people from getting cyberbullied on apps.



Rury (G5B) | Exhibition topic: "Natural disasters"

Natural disasters such as tsunamis, earthquakes, mudslides, and many more are caused by climate change. There are many factors which contribute to making our world unsustainable. According to the United Nations, (n.d.), coal, oil and gas handle the causation of climate change which causes natural disasters. Additionally, experts claim that this cause affects people in the world. This also means that more deaths are caused because of this issue. Therefore, the reasons causing climate change are coal, oil and gas. We can solve this issue by not using these materials.

Climate change is harming human society. It is very unsustainable for people to live on earth. There are many factors that contribute to climate change affecting people. According to the United Nations, (n.d.), injuries, loss of economy, loss of property, less food supply and loss of species and their habitats affect human beings. In addition, if we decrease pollution, increase recycling projects, and use green energy. If we do not follow these instructions, this can lead to people starving to death (loss of food supply). Therefore, experts are certain that climate change is harming human and animal societies.

According to the United Nations, (United Nations, n.d.), early warning systems can alert people and save them from danger. Furthermore, early warning systems can help communities prepare for hazardous climate-related events. Because of this, having early warning systems can help people from danger and it can save many lives. Therefore, scientists and experts have claimed that having an early warning system can save many lives from the dangers.



Akiko (G5B) | Exhibition topic: "Access to clean water"

Not everyone can access clean water. According to Our World in Data, in 2017, 1.2 billion people died because of unsafe water. (Ritchie, H. & Roser, M. 2019) This shows that unsafe water can kill many people. In countries where they cannot access safe water will die by drinking unsafe water or lack of water. Therefore, we need to have everybody to have access to clean water.

The country with the worst drinking water is Ethiopia. Lifewater International explains that in Ethiopia, 60% of the population doesn't have enough basic access to drinking water. (Kahn, C. 2020) More than half of the population in Ethiopia doesn't have access to water. This shows that many people don't have access to basic drinking water. To summarize, all the countries should at least have basic access to clean water.

Unsafe water can cause diseases. UN news describes that more than 85,700 children under 15 die every year because of diseases caused by unsafe water. (UN news, n.d.) Children die just because they cannot access safe drinking water. Diseases are scary, and some are caused by unsafe water! To conclude, water should be safe, so that it doesn't cause diseases.

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Juzo (G5B) | Exhibition topic: "Inflation"

Inflation is a very serious topic right now and is causing harm and stress to people. According to Mr. Jason, "Inflation is a rise in prices and the decline of purchasing power." (Jason, 2022) This claims that inflation isn't a good thing but will affect people in a negative way. This is important because it might cause harm to low wage people and can decrease your purchasing power. As a result, the poor will be affected in a negative way and your saving will decrease in value rapidly.

Ukraine and Russia war can affect inflation in a negative way. In fact, a Forbes Advisor, Adam Strauss said that "Energy prices are likely to rise because of the Ukraine War." (Strauss 2022) This means that inflation is also getting worse because of the ongoing war. Therefore, it is believed that to solve inflation we need to stop an ongoing war from occurring. This states that people will suffer from inflation because of ongoing war.

Inflation can impact the exchange rates in a negative way. According to the Central Charts they state that "If inflation is even in both countries, it doesn't change the exchange rate but if inflation rate is uneven in both countries this is when it affects the exchange rate." (Central Charts n.d.) This claims that exchange rates can be affected by inflation and may or may not attract visitors to the countries. Since it may not attract visitors, this can affect the country in a negative way.



KIPS News



From the P0/P1 classroom...

Hello everyone! We had a new friend join our P1 class in January, and all the children have been enjoying playing and learning together. Recently, the children's language skills have developed into 2- and 3-word sentences, and they have been enjoying exchanging words with their friends and teachers.

In Japanese lessons, in line with the term theme, we have been learning about the seasons through picture books and songs. At first, the children simply watched the teachers read the picture books; however, recently, I have been pleased to observe that they have started to say the names of pictures and objects they recognize in the books out loud, and when a song they know comes on, they join in by dancing with their teachers and singing along with phrases they know.

This year, the P2 class was able to join in the Japanese New Year Party and Setsubun celebrations. At the Japanese New Year Party, we first looked at illustrations of new year games and then played a game called "fukuwarai." First, a teacher showed the children how to play the game, and then they took turns putting on the parts of the face.

For Setsubun, the children performed "Oni no Pants" wearing *oni* (demon) masks they had made in their Japanese lessons. Some children threw the balls without crying; others cried and clung to their teachers when the *oni* appeared, but did their best to throw the balls at the *oni* and say "Oni wa soto" (out with the demons). At the end of the event, the children had a photo with the *oni*.



We hope to continue introducing aspects of Japanese culture through old Japanese games in the future.

Hitomi Hirakawa
P0-P1 Teacher



From the P2 classroom...



"What are the children trying to say?" This year, as in previous years, we welcomed the P1 and P2 children in August with that same feeling, and more than half a year has already passed. When I recall how the children were when they first joined us, I am struck by their remarkable growth.

Especially in terms of language, many of this year's P2s were speaking in different languages at home and at KIPS. When they joined KIPS, some could finally speak sentences in their native language in which words were connected, and others were trying their best to speak, but saying words that were difficult to understand. Now they can say phrases such as: "What's this?" "What are you doing?" "I don't like it," "I like OO," "Show me, please," and "I want to do it." Of course, the degree of development varies from child to child, but these words are not acquired spontaneously; they result from efforts by the children themselves which are not seen by others. The children are now able to convey what they want to say clearly through their words.

As many of the P2s are aiming to progress to KIST in order to continuing receiving a high quality education, we will continue to work with their parents in providing support to the children so that their transition goes smoothly.

Minami Nose
KIPS Nurse



IGCSE News

As we head into the halfway point of the second semester, our G9s are fully encompassed in all things IGCSE and our G10s engrossed in their preparations for mock exams and IGCSE exams.



Rachit (G9A)
Economics/
Geography



Alexandra (G9B)
Business/History



Eri (G9A)
Visual Arts/
Geography



Xitong (G9B)
Economics/
Geography

It is our G8s, however, that are facing some decisions to make in the next month or so.

What courses do I want to take at IGCSE level?

Who better to offer insight into the IGCSE than the current G9s, who were in the same position exactly one year ago. I asked several current G9s about their experience in selecting courses and their impressions of the IGCSE as whole. Here are some selected responses and insight into their differing G8 subject choices.

Mahipaul (Ron) Dayaram
IGCSE Coordinator



What did you know about the IGCSE before starting G9?

Eri: I knew that the IGCSE would be difficult and included a hard level of studying, homework and exams.

Alexandra: I knew that a lot more time management skills would be at play in the IGCSE, so I had to set myself up and gain better study habits before G9.

Xitong: I didn't have much specific information about it, but I was introduced to it as a better preparation for DP. I heard from an older student that there would be a final test at the end of the two years.

Rachit: I knew that Pearson Edexcel IGCSE provides knowledge that not only helps in academic success but for "learning for life".

Describe the process of choosing your IGCSE courses.

Xitong: After learning a unit on each subject in G8 I&S, I had a general idea which subjects I wanted to choose. In the start of G8, I was planning to choose History as I liked history from the start, but then after learning all units, I decided to learn Economics and Geography.

Rachit: After looking at the course in economics, I realized that business economics is covered in a fourth of the book and would rather cover a wide range of economics. This led me to choosing economics and geography as they are used hand in hand in our daily lives.

Eri: Firstly, I gathered information from my older grade friends. They gave me a brief summary of each subject and the advantages/disadvantages for each of them.

Alexandra: I was certain that I did not want to spend my future working in the field of economics, so Business and Economics were the 2 subjects in which I immediately knew I did not want to study. I was torn between History and Geography, as History was of more interest to me; however, Geography, still a subject

I find enjoyable, provided more benefit in my future career as I was considering taking up an occupation that had something to do with the environment. I also chose Art as I thought that it was a subject that could get my creative mind flowing and it was a subject that was different in the sense that you could free yourself by expressing yourself through something other than words.

Are you happy with your choices or would you change anything?

Alexandra: Generally, I am happy with the IGCSE subject choices that I have made. To be honest, I did not realize that Art is as stressful, but I have no regrets as Art is one of my favorite subjects as it helps me get creative which does not occur in any other subject.

Rachit: Yes, I am extremely satisfied with my choices: Economics and Geography. These subjects can be interrelated and used in the deeper understanding of one another and help in understanding the universe that surrounds us.

Xitong: I am happy with my choices of subjects, although I still sometimes imagine what I would be learning if I took History.

Eri: Yes I am very happy with my choices. History is very interesting and I always feel engaged when learning multiple things and finding more historical information about each country. Business is also good too, the logics that make up a company's structure is complicated, yet beautiful.

What is the IGCSE like?

Xitong: The IGCSE is a 2-year course, and I would say that it is pretty content and terminology heavy. The level of difficulty has increased by a lot from G8 MYP, and especially, in the tests, they are very specific on what they want you answer, especially in English.

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Alexandra: No doubt about it, the IGCSE is more stressful than LSP, with the additional subjects and responsibility that you gain with your own time management. However, in some aspects, the IGCSE is more enjoyable because it is when you get to explore and experience your subjects of interest and it is the time where we get to explore and find your own interests.

Rachit: Although busier than the Lower Secondary Programme, the IGCSE provides many opportunities for experiences related to sports and other extracurricular activities, provides knowledge that can be linked together to form a network, and improves responsibility related skills such as setting priorities.

What are some of the differences between G8 and G9?

Alexandra: G8 definitely had a lot more guidance, in terms of helping one with time management. For instance, in G8, homework diaries were implemented, and teachers would provide a lot of time allowing the student to prepare for tests and exams. In G9, a lot less guidance is given. You have to keep track of your tests and your homework a lot more than one had to in G8. Furthermore, the other main difference is the number of subjects, in G8, there were around 5 core subjects while the IGCSE has 8 core subjects, so it is essential that we as students stay on top of that workload.

Xitong: In my opinion, the biggest difference is the number of subjects and how specific your learning becomes. In G8, we had broad subjects such as I&S and Science, but now we get specific subjects (bio, chem, physics, econ, business, history, geo, art). In one way you get to learn what you are interested in, but also in a way you get much more work and stricter grading systems.

Rachit: Although all knowledge gained in G8 is vital for the understanding of deeper concepts in the IGCSE, some of the differences would include the responsibility (time management, maintaining high grades in academics while gaining experiences such as sports, CAS etc.), workload and extracurricular opportunities provided in G9.

Describe the IGCSE to a G8 student in only 1 sentence.

Xitong: The in-between of LSP where you have your foundation, and DP, where you go in depth for your real passion.

Rachit: A journey filled with acquiring practical knowledge, gaining experience and understanding versatility and resilience: a stepping stone to the IB DP.

Alexandra: It is a journey in which you learn about yourself, your interests, who you want to be in this world and how you plan on getting there.

What are you excited about for next year?

Xitong: I am excited when I hopefully get to do more experiments in Science and in Maths I can learn Further Pure Maths which sounds very professional and I feel excited to take on another challenge.

Eri: I am excited about learning in depth for certain subjects such as Chemistry and History; for example, we will be learning about the Cold War in G10, which is always something I've been interested in and I am excited to have a deeper understanding of that specifically.

Rachit: To attain more knowledge in the different subjects and be able to expand on it by linking it to the surrounding world and combining it with pieces of knowledge I learnt previously to complete a two-year jigsaw puzzle.

What is your favourite course and why?

Xitong: My favourite course is Math, and it has been Math since the start of Secondary. The satisfaction of solving a challenging problem is unforgettable and instantly made Math my favourite course.

Eri: My favourite course is History. Although I am more of a STEM student and better at sciences, I find History more interesting. This is because it allows me to view historical events from a 3rd person perspective and evaluate/assess the mistakes that have happened in the past; I can learn from that and never let history repeat itself again. Not just myself, but all people can cooperate and help establish the world as a better place.

Rachit: Despite enjoying all courses, I would say my favourite course is Biology. A few reasons include that learning Biology aids in the understanding of the fundamentals on how organisms function to carry out various activities and also acts as the basis of the production of medicine and other medications (which can also only be understood by analysing organisms).

Alexandra: Art is my favorite course. It is not like any other subject. In fact, it is one of the only subjects where I get to really think creatively. I enjoy being in that creative mindset and producing a piece of art that conveys meaning or art that represents some aspect of myself.

Effective Study Habits in the IGCSE

Entering the IGCSE is a significant step for students, as they transition to a more rigorous and challenging academic curriculum. To succeed in the IGCSE, it is essential for students to develop effective study habits. Here are some tips to help IGCSE students develop study habits that will set them up for success.

- 1 Create a study schedule**

One of the most important things for students to do is to create a study schedule. This will help them manage their time effectively, ensure they are covering all necessary topics, and minimize last-minute cramming. Students should allocate a specific amount of time to each subject and ensure that they have enough time for breaks and relaxation. It is essential to make sure that the study schedule is realistic and achievable, considering other commitments and extracurricular activities.
- 2 Find a suitable study environment**

The environment in which students study is essential to their learning. It should be quiet, free from distractions, and comfortable. It is essential to have a well-lit space, with comfortable seating and a desk or table. Students should avoid studying in places where they are likely to be distracted, such as in front of a TV or in a busy communal area. Ideally, students should create a dedicated study area that is only used for studying.
- 3 Take notes and organize information**

Effective note-taking and information organization are essential for students to succeed in the IGCSE. Students should take detailed notes during lessons and revise them regularly. They should organize their notes and other study materials in a way that makes sense to them, such as by subject or topic. Using diagrams, charts, and other visual aids can also be helpful.
- 4 Practice active learning**

Active learning is a more engaging and effective approach to learning than passive listening or reading. Students should engage in active learning by asking questions, participating in discussions, and practicing problem-solving. They should also make connections between different subjects and topics, as this can help to reinforce learning.
- 5 Seek help when needed**

It is essential for students to seek help when they need it. This includes asking teachers for clarification or additional resources, as well as working with tutors or study groups. There is no shame in asking for help, and it is a sign of strength and dedication to seek support when needed.
- 6 Prioritize self-care**

Finally, it is crucial for students to prioritize self-care. This includes getting enough sleep, eating healthily, and engaging in physical activity. Taking breaks and relaxing is also essential for reducing stress and maintaining focus. Students should not sacrifice their physical and mental health for the sake of studying, as this can ultimately be counterproductive.

In conclusion, developing effective study habits is essential for success in the IGCSE. By creating a study schedule, finding a suitable study environment, taking notes and organizing information, practicing active learning, seeking help when needed, and prioritizing self-care, students can set themselves up for success. With dedication, hard work, and the right study habits, students can achieve their academic goals and excel in the IGCSE.



G11 Economics Student Reflections

Teaching and learning beyond the textbook—Perfectly competitive markets

Over the past couple of weeks, the Grade 11 HL Economics class has covered the first part of the "Theory of the Firm" unit. This unit covers the reasons why a business operates the way it does. We began this topic by exploring how businesses operate in highly competitive markets. Earlier during the unit, members of the class taught an entire lesson based on how firms in competitive markets make profits and record losses. The students who taught these lessons were challenged by questions from members of the class. It was an unconventional, but interactive and engaging method of learning.

That evening, as homework, students summarized videos to crystalize their understanding of what they learned through this experience. There were four videos, and students were assigned to become "experts" in each subtopic. In class, we taught other so that we all could have a deeper or general understanding of each aspect we had learned. Afterwards, Mr. Gombya clarified and deepened our understanding by taking in questions and encouraging us to comment on what he taught us.

We learnt a variety of things; for example, how the perfectly competitive market will pass on price to firms due to the nature of being price takers, how

short run and long run differ, the allocative (market) and productive (firm) efficiency, how firms in a competitive market may shut down due to inefficiency if their costs are too high creating negative economic profit and how firms at the long run will end up with normal (zero) profits.

Overall, this combination of learning from the teacher and learning from our peers and the Internet aided us to broaden our comprehension by exploring the topic through various ways of explanation.

Lance (G11B) and Ruby (G11B)



Japan Cancer Society

I am writing to you to bring your attention to our newly established student-led charity organization, aimed at raising funds for cancer research in Japan. We hope to not only raise funds but also increase awareness of the challenges of cancer in Japan.

Cancer is a significant health concern in Japan, with the highest mortality rate among developed countries. It is essential to act, spread awareness, and make a difference to those affected by this disease. Therefore, we have started our student-led service this year with a goal to help fund research and provide support to those who are fighting cancer in Japan. This service activity supports the work of the official Japan Cancer Society. You can find out more about them in the link below.

Web <https://www.jcancer.jp/>

We would like to update you on our recent donation event held on January 23 and 24. It was our first-ever event, and we are pleased to announce that we managed to collect a total of **40,000 yen** from your generous donations! We set up a donation box in front of the school gate in the morning, and we were

overwhelmed by the support and generosity of the school community.

We would like to thank everyone who donated, volunteered, or supported our event in any way. Your contribution has made a significant impact on the lives of those affected by cancer in Japan.

We invite you to join us in our efforts to make a difference in the fight against cancer. Any contribution, big or small, can make a difference. Your support can help fund research, provide support to patients and families, and raise awareness for the disease.

We are planning more fundraising activities, and we hope to see you there. Thank you for your time, and we look forward to your continued support!

Anant (G11)
KIST Japan Cancer Society





Turning Failure into Success


It is the time of year again when we, as teachers, realize that there are mere weeks until the exam season is upon us again. At this time, it is so crucial to student self-esteem that we, as the adults in their lives, reinforce key messages regarding success but also failure.

As a Care Team, one of our favorite Japanese proverbs is '失敗は成功のもと' or 'failure is the foundation of success'. In the buildup to the exams, students are going to make mistakes, forget things, and realize that there are gaps in their knowledge. The skill is not to view these 'failures' as obstacles, but rather opportunities to grow and improve. If we know how to respond to it, making errors is a key part of the learning process. So how should students respond and how can we support them through this?

Often when students want to discuss a disappointing result on a test, we hear similar sentiments.

 *I have no reason to feel upset. No one else will be reacting this way."*

 *There's no need to be that dramatic. Nobody else is this bothered."*

 *I should be more like Person X."*

All these statements invalidate the disappointment of failing and the complex emotions attached to it. Inevitably, students begin their reflection process by comparing their result or their response to another person. However, the above statements invalidate the idea that disappointment is a natural and healthy feeling. If we can reframe this disappointment in a positive way, it can act as an effective motivator in the future.

Sometimes, students will state that the way they can avoid this feeling again in the future is to 'quit' or completely change the way they are working. This is counterproductive and time consuming at a time when each day has the potential to make a difference. Instead, we can encourage students to become self-

sufficient and come up with solutions independently; for example, the following statements can help students take on a fresh perspective:

'What's the one thing, that if you focused on it, could make the biggest difference?'

This is called setting a 'high leverage goal'. By focusing on the thing that can have the biggest impact, it prevents reviewing from becoming overwhelming and overly critical.

'You're so good at problem solving. What can you do differently next time?'

Reinforcing the notion that a young person has the tools within to create a solution fosters a sense of self-empowerment and builds resilience.

'Let's not spend today focusing on this subject. Work on something else today and revisit this tomorrow.'

By giving a problem space, we can encourage a pragmatic rather than emotional response. Instead of reacting with anger and frustration (and often catastrophizing the situation), giving the feeling of disappointment time to fade can support viewing the response through a more logical lens.

In summary, the goal of this article, and our goal as educators and parents, should be to normalize failure. Pretending that it isn't going to exist in adulthood, too, does not prepare our young people for the realities of work, parenthood, and other inevitable challenges. Instead, we can work together to support our students in reframing challenging situations, encouraging self-reflection, and working smarter, not harder.

Matthew Archer and Hannah Cowie
Student Care Coordinators
(Secondary)



Debate Club

For the first time in three years, our debate club competed in face-to-face practices and KPASS tournaments. Debating has been an excellent activity for our KIST students.

Coming from a UK background where debate was not a common activity, I have learnt a lot from our students this year.

Competing in debate enhances students' ability to communicate through public speaking, persuasion, and argumentation.

Students were given many difficult and complex motions to debate this year. Debating requires students to research a variety of topics in a short space of time, which have exposed the students to new ideas to broaden their thinking and help them become even more open-minded individuals. It has been a pleasure to see our students' confidence grow, especially in their critical thinking skills, which has helped them analyze and evaluate information critically. Well done to all the members who have attended practices and the tournaments.

Hannah Cowie

Debate Coach 2023



Back (L>R): Remi, Saanvi, Sara, Shaunak, Lander, Alexandra, Teo, Shakti, Muskaan, Arshiya, Sungbeen, Anant
Front (L>R): Andrew, Aryan, Arnold, Ananya, Yixuan, Arnab, Kiichiro, Lance



KPASS debate season 2023 was a remarkable experience. Our KIST JV and Varsity teams went to St. Mary's International School to compete in practice debates. Our JV team then went to Seisen International school for the JV tournament. The Varsity team went to ASIJ for the varsity tournament. There were many victories, and it was an incredible learning experience. We got to meet and compete against students from ASIJ, ISSH, SIS, TIS and SMIS. Our debating skills also improved day by day. We all had so much fun and hope to bring more wins to KIST next year!



Ananya (G9B) receiving a speaker award in the JV tournament.

Alexandra (G9B) was also in the top 10 for receiving the most points.



Saanvi (G12B) receiving a speaker award in the Varsity tournament.



Andrew (G10B), Arnab (G11B), Muskaan (G11A)—well done to the dream team for winning the most debates in their category.

Thank you to Ananya (G9B) for writing this short piece below about her experience.



Back (L>R): Mr. D'Rozario, Kiichiro, Andrew, Shaunak, Sungbeen, Arnab, Shakti, Muskaan, Mr. Charlie
Front (L>R): Ms. Cowie, Ashmita, Sara, Saanvi, Remi, Yixuan, Ananya

Service Activity: Japan Youth Council



Are you aware that the "Basic Act for Children*" will come into effect in Japan in April 2023?

The basic principles of this law are as follows⁽¹⁾:

- All children are respected as individuals and their fundamental human rights are guaranteed.
- Every child shall have the opportunity to express his or her own opinions and participate in society.
- The opinions of the child are respected and the best interests of the child are provided.

I am a member of the Japan Youth Council, which addresses issues and problems in Japanese politics, and I am a member of the Study Council for Guaranteeing Children's Rights in Schools, which discusses issues related to the enactment of the Basic Law for Children.

The Convention on the Rights of the Child, adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1989, stipulates that children, like adults, have human rights, including the right to life and upbringing, as well as respect for children's opinions. Japan also ratified the Convention in 1994, but there was no law that comprehensively stipulates the rights of the child, and the country received a series of recommendations from the UN to establish a law⁽¹⁾. There had been no written law on children's rights for nearly 30 years.

Although unfamiliar to us international school students, human rights violations in the Japanese educational system are wide-ranging. In one Japanese junior high school, a teacher of the opposite sex may check a student's underwear. Why is this done? Because the school rules require that underwear be white. One of the shocked female students refused to go to school.⁽²⁾ Bullying is also a major social problem, and there have been many cases of teachers and school boards covering up bullying and even going to court.⁽³⁾

It is important for all of us living in Japan, regardless of nationality, to know about the rights of children in Japan, and the Basic Act for Children, which will be enforced in Japan.



I am translating the minutes of the meeting into English so that everyone can learn about these issues. The Japan Youth Council is also looking for members. If you are interested in these things, I would be glad to help you. Please feel free to contact me.

Mana (G7A)

*Basic Act on Children (Act No. 77 of 2022)

—Date of enforcement: April 1, 2023

https://elaws.e-gov.go.jp/document?lawid=504AC1000000077_20230401_000000000_000000 (Japanese only)

Web



Citations:

- (1) [Details] How to Protect Children's Rights; What are the principles and issues of the Basic Act for Children's Rights?
<https://www3.nhk.or.jp/news/html/20220614/k10013670771000.html>
- (2) Human rights violated by "black school rules": "Open your shirt to check your underwear" Cause of school refusal in female students [from Fukuoka]
<https://www.fnn.jp/articles/-/163512>
- (3) Bullying court precedents
<https://stopjime.jp/precedent.html>

Arnav Wins National Math Award

I participated in the 2022 edition of the International Youth Math Challenge (IYMC). I discovered the IYMC online while I was browsing for extra-curricular opportunities related to STEM. IYMC is an international math competition which has registered more than 12,500 participants. The 2022 competition consisted of three stages: the qualification round, the pre-final round, and the final round. The qualification round consisted of five questions, from which I had to successfully answer and submit three. The problems were relatively challenging but nothing I couldn't tackle with a little bit of time and effort. The pre-final round was much harder. The submission period was four days long and the paper consisted of eight challenging multi-step problems. One of the problems even required me to read and comprehend a research paper from a mathematics journal. After I passed the pre-final round, I took the final exam which was a 20-minute, 20-question exam. Unlike the lengthy problems in the pre-final round, this exam required me to think and solve questions fast. My score in the final round was 16/20, which made me a top 5% participant of the competition. I was also the highest-scoring participant of the competition in Japan, which won me the National Award!

Participating in IYMC was an enriching experience for me because I've always had a passion for STEM subjects and problem-solving. I am currently a Math HL student and a lot of math that I was taught in school was tested in this competition. Although some components of the exams like the question on the math research paper weren't familiar for me, I was able to answer most of the questions by utilizing the math that I've already learned in school. During math classes, we

often get the opportunity to try several challenging problems, which are sometimes even beyond the scope of the syllabus, towards the end of class once we've grasped the topic well. I believe that the knowledge I gain from these seemingly minor experiences added up and contributed heavily to my success. Opportunities provided by KIST like Math Field Day have also contributed to my success in this competition. I have participated in Math Field Day since Grade 6, and it has helped me to improve my contest math problem solving skills greatly. In particular, the training sessions provided by the math teachers for Math Field Day are enriching because their cooperative and productive environment maximizes my intake of useful mathematical techniques. I look forward to participating in more opportunities like the IYMC in the future and strongly recommend students interested in pursuing STEM like me to do the same.

I am thankful for the work of all my teachers at KIST since without them I wouldn't have had the academic background or knowledge required to perform well in this competition. I am grateful to be a part of such a supportive school community.

Arnav (G11B)



New Faces

Since the last issue of *The Comet*, we have welcomed two new staff members to the school—**Steven Kilty** who is working as a Mathematics teacher in the Secondary School, and **Yoko Akiba** who has joined our office team as an administrative assistant.

Mr. Kilty said of his new role:

I am thrilled to be joining the KIST community! I am originally from Illinois in the US and have been living in Tokyo since 2012. When not teaching, I enjoy long-distance running and playing with my two children. Nice to meet everyone!"

Ms. Akiba said of her new role:

This is my first time working in a school environment. I have lived in the UK, the US, Hong Kong, Jamaica and Malaysia. I have lots to learn, but I am very excited to be a part of the KIST community."

On behalf of the school community, we wish you both all the best in your new roles and hope that you enjoy your time with us.



Steven Kilty
Secondary Mathematics



Yoko Akiba
Administrative Assistant

Individuals & Societies Department Snapshot

Welcome to the Individuals & Societies Snapshot, which provides insight into what each grade level and subject has explored so far during the year!

Keith Erickson

Subject Area Coordinator—I&S



LSP Grade 6

In G6 I&S students have been learning about ancient civilizations and their different innovations. With the introduction of semester exams for the LSP curriculum, students have been practicing good notetaking skills. Good notes are essential for students being able to revise in the long term. Particularly, in early February, students created interactive notebooks. Students were challenged to summarize and organize key information using the creative cut-outs provided.



Lauren (G7A), Amy (G7A),
Carys (G7A)

LSP Grade 7

In G7 I&S, students have been learning about natural environments. With the key concept of the unit being systems, students have been investigating how natural environments work as an interconnected system. One key example we looked at in class was the connection of species in environments. Students made food webs for particular environments showing the energy transfer between species and highlighting roles (producer, consumer, apex-predators, decomposers). To further consolidate understanding of species and environments co-dependency on each other, students in G7 played a card game called "eco system". The game highlighted the significance of biodiversity and mutual benefits species can have on each other.

LSP Grade 8

In G8, students are beginning their final IGCSE introductory unit – Geography. In this unit, students will learn about the processes of population change and their effect on people and places. As an introduction to the unit, students created a visual display on the factors affecting population density and distribution. Previous IGCSE introductory units included History, Economics, and Business, which will provide insight to students on which I&S course to take next year.



IGCSE Business Management

Studying IGCSE Business has shown me how this links to real life events, when watching the news or reading articles. Overall, I strongly recommend this course to anyone who is passionate about learning how companies are run and organized, as well as students who are unsure about their career paths, as this course will provide you of insights into different types of businesses. This picture is part of my project of creating an employee manual for the Human Resources unit. —**Haruka (G10B)**

IGCSE Economics

Over the last quarter in IGCSE Economics G10 students explored multiple case studies and participated in activities to further solidify their understanding of Macroeconomics. A key highlight from this quarter was a debate the students participated in allowing them to express their communication, argumentative, and critical thinking skills. The purpose of this debate was to help students evaluate the significance of Free Trade in the global economy. The key takeaway students took from the debate was improved understanding regarding Free Trade but also development in debate skills which are extremely significant in many areas of life. —**Arham (G10B)**



G10 Business students engaged in a debate

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IGCSE Geography

G9 Geography students have been studying physical environments (river and coastal environments). As these Geographers have learned about the involvement of human activity in the deterioration of coastal landforms, students had a class debate about whether coastal development should be prioritized over coastal preservation.



Isabel (G9B), Satori (G9A), Eunhoo (G9B), Devika (G9B)

IGCSE History

In IGCSE History students have finished their learning of World War One. Students have consolidated their understanding of how to write a 6, 8, 16-mark question on the causes and course of the war. During the final week of the unit, students created a video to summarize what the main reasons for German defeat were in groups. The process required students to reflect on the entire duration of the war assessing what the strengths of the Allies were and the weaknesses of the Central Powers.



(L>R) Aidan (G11B), Rintaro (G11A), Ethan (G11A), Sadhika (G11A), Naoki (G11A), Lance (G11B)

DP Business Management

Throughout the 2-year course, DP Business students study human resources, marketing, finance and operations. We are required to enhance our knowledge and analytical skills by learning to utilize the business management toolkit; this includes Porter's generic strategies, force field analysis, Ansoff Matrix and others. Currently, we are studying the marketing unit which requires us to heavily utilize one of the four key concepts of business: creativity. In our most recent activity, we conducted field research of the community just outside of KIST and used our critical thinking skills to create a product that may fulfill their needs. Overall, I enjoy the plenty of interactions within my business class, with each student always contributing to discussions and look forward to enhancing my knowledge of the business world! —**Sadhika** (G11A)

DP Economics

Over the past couple of weeks, the Grade 11 High Level economics class has covered the first part of the "Theory of the Firm" Unit. This unit covers the reasons why a business operates the way it does. We began this topic by exploring how businesses operate in highly competitive markets. Earlier, during the unit, members of the class taught an entire lesson based on how firms in competitive markets make profits and record losses. The students who taught these lessons were challenged by questions from members of the class. It was an unconventional, but interactive and engaging method of learning. —**Lance** (G11B) and **Ruby** (G11B)



G11 Economics students discussing diagrams illustrating perfect competition



G11 History students at the Yushukan museum

DP History

The DP History students have finished their learning on Japanese expansion and began their study on World War Two in the Pacific. Following this, the class visited the Yushukan museum on February 20, where artifacts of Japanese history are present. The excursion prompted students to think about the role of this period in Japanese history and how the museum conveys the imperial past. Students picked up on the selective nature of artifacts presented and how events such as the Nanjing massacre did not touch on the violent nature of the Japanese army.

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Mr. Jordan Hattar (center) with Ms. Cowie and the G11 Geography class



Shota (G10B), Teo (G9A), Selin (G11A) and Kiichiro (G11A) raising funds for the relief efforts in Syria and Turkey

DP Geography

Mr. Jordan Hattar from Help4Refugees visited the G11s to discuss how humanitarian work often requires the art of listening. Mr. Hattar gave a very moving presentation on how to raise awareness of those living in refugee camps worldwide. Our DP Geography students study the cause and consequences of forced migration. They often read about these contemporary issues, so this was fantastic for students to understand what the real needs of refugees are. Mr. Hattar predominantly works in the Jordanian Syrian refugee camp. He discussed how it is important to listen to people's stories, to ensure these vulnerable people feel heard and validated about the experiences they have gone through. Additionally, well done to the students for raising money to send to help the relief effort in Turkey and Syria. Students gave up their time and worked collaboratively across multiple services to raise money for this good cause. Thank you to our community members and students for contributing their donations.

Staff 10!

In this month's Staff 10!, we are pleased to present **Emma Argentum** who joined us in August 2016, working initially as a K1 teaching assistant in the Elementary School. In August 2020, after gaining her teacher certification, she moved into a teaching role, and is currently the classroom teacher for K1B.

1) Tell us something interesting about your hometown.

My hometown has a castle called Rockingham Castle and my dad used to live there! His bedroom was in one of the turrets. I spent my summers as a child playing in the castle gardens with my grandparents.

2) What is your favorite place in the world?

Disneyland! There's nothing quite like the magical feeling you experience when you're there.

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

My little sister Marie, I miss her every day.

4) Do you have any special skills or talents?

Unfortunately, I don't! Though as a collector, my friends would say I have a crazy skill of finding rare items. If it's for sale somewhere, I can probably find it!

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

My mum was in an amateur theatrical group as I was growing up. I used to attend rehearsals with her every Sunday, and because of this, I have a huge love of Broadway and West End theatre shows.

6) What is your most prized possession?

I am an avid collector of Final Fantasy merchandise. I have been a fan since I was 10 and it is what sparked my initial interest in Japan. I have two glass cabinets with merchandise from 1997 all the way until now! It makes me feel happy and nostalgic when I look at it.

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

Caring! I have always strived to meet kindness with kindness in excess. We are only around in this world for a short time and if I can make someone's life more peaceful and happier then that makes me happy, too.

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

Absolutely not. We learn from hardships and mistakes and every path that I chose ultimately led me to where I am. It was my dream since I was 13 to live in Japan and work at an international school. I am extremely proud of what I have achieved and grateful for all the learning opportunities that appeared on the way to help me get here.

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

I recently decided to try my hand at digital drawing! It's tricky but I'm enjoying it.

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

Always do what you love, spend time being a little silly with those important to you and work hard to achieve your dreams.



Ms Argentum, spending time in her favorite place in the world.



Athletics Update

Winter season 2022–23 conclusion



KIST teams finished their full winter schedule in the Kanto Plain league and will finish up their ISTAA basketball season in the first week of March. Below are some short summaries from the winter season from the coaches!

JV boys' soccer team

It was an incredibly mixed season of results for our JV soccer team this year. What was consistent was that wherever we travelled to play, we always showed signs of great soccer and teamwork. I've had the pleasure of working with a very talented set of players this season and they've done a great job of pulling together in moments of need. We primarily played against BST, ASIJ and St. Mary's. We picked up a majority of our wins against St. Mary's thanks to some clever soccer and sensible gameplay. ASIJ and BST were tough though and unfortunately, we weren't able to best them this year. We also had the chance to play a friendly against LFIT on what can only be described as the windiest evening in Japanese history. Some special mentions for those in the team as we actually had 3 players who were joint top goal scorers for our season, **Haruto** (G11A), **Aidan** (G11B) and **Malhar** (G11A). Thank you to everybody who either turned up to practice or who played in our fixtures. I look forward to next year and what success it might bring. —**Coach Smith**



MS girls' soccer team

This season, the MS girls' soccer team reached its biggest ever number of participants, with 28 girls across Grades 6–8 joining the team! Throughout the season, the girls worked extremely hard to improve their skills and it showed with some hard-fought performances against tough opposition. I've been particularly impressed by the commitment and dedication all the girls have shown this year, and I am confident that with this group, girls sports at KIST will continue to grow! Excellent work everyone, and I can't wait to see you back on the pitch next season! —**Coach Buck**



MS boys' basketball team

The season has been a good season in building a positive team environment with the MS boys' basketball team. There were many challenges that they all pushed to overcome, and they all for the boys to develop and be more competitive in both the Kanto Plain and the ISTAA leagues.



MS boys' basketball A team

MS boys' A team were 1 win and 7 losses, but their record does not show the big improvements they all have made. Three of these matches went to overtime in which they all tried their best but did not have the

endurance to attain the crucial lead in these games; however, in the ISTAA league, they played with 2 wins and 1 loss which shows their hard work is paying off. The MS tournament was cut short by BST losing 25–16 but they came around and beat Aoba 25–21.



MS boys' B team track record also does not show the development they all had. With the games being 0 wins and 6 losses, they all played cohesively developing their own skills within practice. Even coming close with St. Mary's till endurance got the better of them. They all played well and I am looking forward to next season! —**Coach Mahamed**

JV/HS boys' and girls' basketball teams



Having no gym this season made things difficult as the KIST basketball teams had once-a-week practices at local Elementary school gyms that are smaller than regulation courts. A couple of practices saw the girls have practice on the KIST ground. That being said, the KIST teams remained very competitive in their first full Junior Varsity (JV) Basketball seasons in the Kanto Plain league.



JV girls' basketball team

The JV girls finished 1 and 5 in league play but their record did not do justice to how well they played. We lost one by 13 points and had four losses which were by 4 points each. Mixed in was a solid 15-point win

over Yokota. In the JV tournament at ISSH, KIST faced the #2 seed, Seisen, and were leading 18–10 to start the 4th quarter before the wheels fell off, succumbing 20–18. In ISTAA U-18 league play, KIST has only played two games thus far and has three more to go before the tournament. A 1st or 2nd finish in the tournament is in the cards with this team.

The JV boys finished Kanto league play with 2 wins and 3 losses—one loss being a 44–43 loss to YIS. The boys had wins over CAJ and Saint Maur. In the JV tournament at ASIJ, KIST faced the #2 seed ASIJ and were leading by as many as 6 points but lost 37–32. In ISTAA league play the boys are 1 and 1 with a comfortable win over Columbia. They have 4 games before the tournament. Like the girls, a 1st or 2nd finish in the ISTAA tournament is attainable. Updates will be available in the next issue of *The Comet*! —**Coach Ota**

Thank you to all the coaches for making the winter season possible!!

Spring season sports



KIST has started up some spring season sports already in preparation for the Kanto spring league. ISTAA league futsal will start in April. The teams shown below are participating in the Kanto league:

- **MS Girls' Basketball (A and B pool)**
- **JV Girls' Soccer**
- **MS Boys' Baseball**

Results, team rosters, schedules and other information can be found on Schoology under KIST Athletics by any member of the KIST community.

Dennis Ota
Athletics Coordinator



Nurse's Notes



Learning simple first aid skills

How to perform cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and use an automated external defibrillator (AED)

Many cases have been reported of people's lives being saved when a person in a sudden cardiopulmonary arrest situation receives first aid from someone before an ambulance (paramedics) arrives. For this reason, it is important that as many people as possible can acquire first aid knowledge and practical skills. According to the law, first aid is considered as being a 'socially appropriate act' so there is no legal liability unless it is administered unnecessarily or in a way that is grossly negligent. Please don't be afraid to be proactive in administering first aid to anyone in need!

CPR steps and procedures

If you see someone collapse or sustain an injury and they appear to be unconscious:

- 1 Check the safety of your surroundings.
- 2 Check for a response: firmly tap the injured person on the shoulder and ask in a loud voice: "Can you hear me?" and check reaction (awareness).
- 3 Ask for help if there are people around.
 - A. Ask someone else to **call 119** and **request an AED**.
 - B. If no one else is around and you are alone, put your smartphone on speaker and call an ambulance.
- 4 Note whether the person is breathing or there are chest movements.
 - A. Normal respiration: check while they are lying on their side with their face slightly downwards.
 - B. Abnormal respiration: start chest compressions while they are facing upwards.
- 5 **Sternal compression***: place the base of one hand on the bone in the middle of the chest and place the other hand on top of it, concentrating the force on a single point for compression.
- 6 Switch on the AED and follow the instructions.
 - A. Place one electrode pad on the upper right side of the chest and the other on the lower left side.
 - B. Do not touch the body while the AED is analyzing whether an electroshock is required.
 - C. If an electroshock is required, press the shock button after the audio instructions are given (if an electroshock is not required, the AED will not operate even if the button is pressed).

*Chest compressions

Fast rate of compression, about 100 compressions per minute. Compressions should be administered "hard, fast and unceasingly." Chest compressions should be continued until the paramedics take over or the casualty has recovered breathing, with several rescuers taking turns to perform chest compressions.

If you are interested in taking first aid training courses, please visit the following websites:

 Japanese Red Cross Society
<https://www.jrc.or.jp/english/activity/safety/>

 InterAssist first aid training
<https://www.interassist.ne.jp/>

Yukiko Yamazaki
 School Nurse



Reference:

American Red Cross. (2022). *Adult First Aid: CPR/AED Ready Reference*.
https://www.redcross.org/content/dam/redcross/atg/PDFs/Take_a_Class/Adult_Ready_Reference_Card.pdf



KIST Community Association (CA) News



Bake Sale, December 2022

Some goodies were donated by the CA through Mr. Archer to the G9 Second Harvest Project.



Coffee Mornings



January 9, 2023

KIST Secondary Math pathways explanation session



February 23, 2023

What parents of middle school students need to know to start helping prepare themselves and their children for university.

Holiday Wreath Charity Workshop, December 2022



Safe and Secure Online Session by the IT Committee

HEART Service Group

The CA supported fundraising for the Turkey and Syria Earthquake relief.

BASIC POLITENESS for Students and Families



CA Members' Voice

As a CA volunteer, I gained a very good relationship with the children, as well as the teachers and the local community. I think that a diverse environment is very important, and it's a joy to improve my skills. I would like to continue to support the CA and help with school-related matters as much as possible.

—Yoshimi, Parent of Maru (K2A)

I have learned more about the different activities taking place in school being a CA volunteer. I am happy that I can support the school community in some way. Even though I work during the week, there are jobs I can do in my spare time, and it was good to know that I can participate in the CA in various ways using online and other means.

—Makiko, Parent of Ramya (G5A)

It was amazing to see the parents who have served the CA for so many years and to see their dedication and commitment to the group. The bake sale was very popular with the children and teachers and raised a lot of money. The coffee and morning tea service provided a relaxed environment for parents and teachers to talk, to get to know the school, to get the latest information and to understand the needs of the parents.

—Zheng, Parent of Yixuan (G9B)/Yicheng (G7A)

University Guidance News

What's new in university admissions? (and how does this affect applications?)

Around this time each year, universities and other educational organizations make changes in preparation for the following application season that will begin in six months' time. Similar to last year, there have been a few major changes that I would like to focus on.

Oxbridge tests are changing

Last year, I focused on the changes coming to SAT. This year, there has been a change announced for those applying to top UK schools, especially Oxford and Cambridge.



Cambridge Assessment Admissions Testing

What's the big change?

Cambridge Assessment Admissions Testing—CAAT (the group that provides entry exams for both Oxford, Cambridge and other top programs) has announced that they will discontinue offering many of the current tests required for admissions, including BMAT (medicine), ENGAA (engineering) and others. This will take place over two years with some being discontinued immediately and others in the following year. The full chart can be seen below.

2023 affected tests
Classics Admissions Test (CAT)
Oxford ELAT
History Aptitude Test (HAT)
Mathematics Admissions Test (MAT)
Modern Languages Admissions Test (MLAT)
Oriental Languages Aptitude Test (OLAT)
Philosophy Test
Physics Aptitude Test (PAT)
2024 affected tests
Biomedical Admissions Test (BMAT)
Engineering Admissions Assessment (ENGAA)
Natural Sciences Admissions Assessment (NSAA)
Test of Mathematics for University Admissions (TMUA)
Oxford TSA

What does this mean? How should current G11 or earlier students prepare?

2024 graduates – Please prepare the same as always and for the same exams! While CAAT will no longer administer these tests, it seems most likely that the universities will either arrange them by themselves and/or work with another partner to administer the tests. It is unlikely that there will be a major re-working of the test itself or a cancellation. If you have been preparing for PAT already, please do not give up; keep working towards that goal! Universities **plan to update us by June** for exact details.

2025+ graduates – There is no need to prepare at this moment for these exams. It is better to wait and see what changes are officially decided by universities in the UK. For now, time is better spent focused on getting good grades and focusing on your outside of class activities and finding your unique qualities!

What about other questions or quicker updates?

You can review updates from the following sites to assist with future planning and arrangements.

- [Cambridge Assessment Admissions Testing](#)
- [University of Oxford Admissions Update Blog Post](#)
- [University of Oxford Admissions Assessments Page](#)
- [University of Cambridge Admissions Assessments Page](#)

What about US admissions?

Digital SAT – As reported this time last year, the Digital SAT has arrived, and from now, any SAT taken will require a student to bring a laptop/tablet to the testing center.

What's Changing	
Current SAT	Digital SAT
Taken on paper	Taken on laptop or tablet
Takes three hours	Takes two hours
Scores available in about two weeks	Scores available within days
Calculators allowed on one Math section	Calculators allowed on entire Math section
Score reports connect students with scholarships, college info, and practice recommendations	Score reports also connect students to workforce training and two-year college programs
Multiple students test on the same form	Unique test forms for each student

The dates below are the known upcoming test dates.

Notes:

- Test dates in *italics* are tentative and not officially confirmed.
- Tests that are not offered at KIST may be offered at other locations around Tokyo. Students can register at any test center convenient for them, they do not have to take it at KIST.
- Our recommendation is for students younger than G11 to focus on the Practice SAT (PSAT) which will be taken in April of G9 and October of G10. The first SAT is usually best taken in August of G11 with preparation done in the summer preceding.

SAT test date	Registration deadline	Note
March 11, 2023	February 28, 2023	
May 6, 2023	April 25, 2023	*Not at KIST
June 3, 2023	May 23, 2023	
August 26, 2023	August 11, 2023	
October 7, 2023	September 22, 2023	
November 4, 2023	October 20, 2023	*Not at KIST
December 2, 2023	November 17, 2023	
March 9, 2024	February 23, 2024	
May 4, 2024	April 19, 2024	*Not at KIST
June 1, 2024	May 17, 2024	

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Financing for university and the meaning of "need blind" vs. "need aware"



While most universities across the world do not connect your financial ability to pay with admissions decisions, this is not always the case in the US. There are still many schools, especially in regards to international students, that will take into account a family's financial ability to pay when making admissions decisions. Even if they do not have such policies, it is still worth looking at the overall financial commitment necessary and speaking with your child in advance for what is and is not possible when making future plans.

What do "need blind" and "need aware" mean? What should we do about it?

Need blind means that a college/university *should not* consider your financial situation when making an admissions decision. This is standard in most other parts of the world, where the school will let you in, send you the required tuition payment, and you can decide whether to enroll. **Need aware** means that the school will ask for your finances, including but not limited to, tax files, current bank statements, pay stubs, etc. It is possible that if the school is unsure if your child is the best fit for them and finances are also slightly an issue, that an offer could be made to a comparable student with a better ability to pay. **What to do?** I think it is important to present honest information to schools when making applications regardless of policy. Make a list of schools that provide the best opportunities first and foremost. Just because a school is "need aware" does not mean that a student will be denied if they are not financially secure. Likewise, a "need blind" school does not necessarily mean easier acceptance or offer scholarships to all students. **If financial need is necessary to comfortably afford a school, it is best to be upfront with universities when that question is presented. I would not risk putting immense financial strain on a family as well as pressure to perform on a student just for the sake of going to a school that is slightly higher in rankings.**

How do we know which schools we can consider financially?

Schools across the globe are very upfront about the costs required for attending. Also, in most cases, scholarships will be offered as a nice bonus without covering the entire cost of attendance. That being said, it may be a good idea to target very competitive schools that offer large scholarships, while keeping some backup choices that are reasonably affordable according to your budget, just in case. [This list shows](#) the chances for scholarships for international students for almost every well-known school in the US. For schools, both in and outside of the US, it is also good to check both their estimated cost of attendance and their scholarship offerings one by one. You find some surprises!

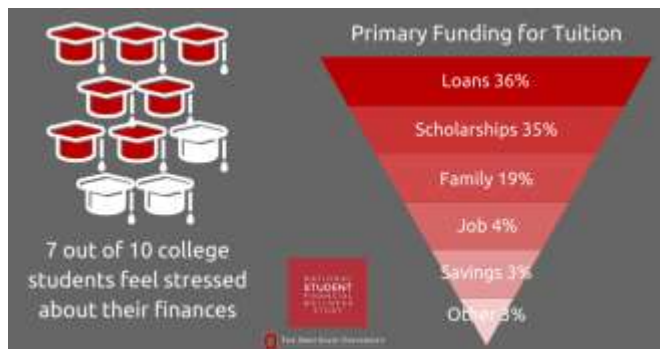
How should we move forward if we are accepted to an expensive school and the final cost is slightly above our reach?

If the conversation has been had within your family about a maximum that is reasonable per year, it will help this conversation considerably at this stage. As mentioned in a prior section, it would not be recommended to go towards something that is too far out of reach because of the emotional strain it could put on a family. Likewise, a student should be able to work hard and enjoy their time in university without worrying about things such as re-taking a class or changing a major creating massive financial difficulties for families.

Suggestions:

- **Create a budget and be direct** about what is reasonable as early as G9, so students can understand what they can realistically be researching

- If you are willing to consider, **low-interest loans are often offered from banks** in cooperation with countries a family has permanent residency in. Planning about who should re-pay the balance (parents or the student) can help a student make smarter choices while understanding expectations.
- If financial situations change, it can be awkward, but do not underestimate a student's ability to understand. Students are quite aware if there are problems and often prefer to work towards helping those situations, not worsening them. **Up to 70% of students are stressed about their financial situation regarding universities**, leading to decreased performance in university and decreased graduate and career outlooks!



University of Cambridge visit for KIST families, March 24, 2023

If you are reading this as soon as it comes out, you are still not too late [to register for our event](#) welcoming the University of Cambridge to KIST. It has been more than three years since their last in-person visit and we are excited to welcome them back. This is open to students from G8–11 and KIST parents from any grade level. We look forward to seeing you there!

Date: Friday, March 24, 2023

Time: 4:30–6:00 p.m.

Venue: Morishita Cultural Center, Multipurpose Hall (3-12-17 Morishita, Koto-ku)

Presenter: Olivia Matthewson, Regional Manager East Asia, Cambridge Admissions Office

The presentation will cover topics related to the following:

- What is it like to study at the University of Cambridge?
- What are the costs involved?
- What grades do you need?
- How do you apply?
- How to maximize your chances of success



Thank you for reading this far! If you have any questions, please reach out to me via the contact information below.

Thomas Waterfall

University Counselor

thomas.waterfall@kist.ed.jp

Office hours: Monday–Friday, 8:30 a.m.–5:30 p.m.

University Guidance Office (3F Secondary Building)

