



# The Comet

The Newsletter of K. International School Tokyo

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*“Never stop learning because life never stops teaching.”*  
—Lin Pernille

## From the Head of School

### The power of a kind word

At K. International School Tokyo, our mission is not only to provide academically motivated children with a high-quality education but also to cultivate individuals with high moral character who contribute meaningfully to our global community. One often underestimated yet powerful way we achieve this is through the simple act of speaking a kind word.

In a world that can sometimes feel chaotic and fast-paced, the impact of a kind word cannot be overstated. It serves as an example of positivity, creating a ripple effect that can positively affect others. When our students engage in acts of kindness through their words, they not only contribute to a supportive environment but also actively participate in the development of their own moral character.

Last week, as I hurried past one of the K1 classrooms, a young voice caught my attention with a cheerful greeting, “Hello, Mr. Yoshihara!” Intrigued, I halted, turned around, and saw one of our K1 students changing his shoes. The genuine smile on this little one’s face left me momentarily speechless. In that brief moment, a simple, sincere word from a 3-year-old had the power to pause my day and fill it with joy. It prompted me to reflect on the profound impact we all hold—the ability to bring positivity and delight to others through our words and actions.

At K. International School Tokyo, fostering a safe and supportive environment is at the core of our educational philosophy. By encouraging students to choose kindness in their words and actions, we empower them to build connections, cultivate empathy, and develop a strong moral compass. These qualities not only enhance their personal growth but also position them as responsible members of the KIST community and beyond.

In the journey toward academic excellence, we must not forget the profound impact that a kind word can have on those around us. At K. International School Tokyo, we recognize and celebrate the transformative power of kindness, understanding that it is an essential element in the holistic development of competent, academic individuals who go on to make significant contributions to our global community.



**Kevin Yoshihara Ed.D.**

Head of School/Elementary School Principal



## DATES TO REMEMBER



### December 2023

- 8 (K3-G5) LEAP classes end
- 8 (K1-G3) After care not available on this day
- 11-12 (G6) Semester 1 examinations
- 11-13 (G7, G8) Semester 1 examinations
- 11-14 (G9, G11) Semester 1 examinations
- 11-15 (G10) Semester 1 examinations
- 15 Winter celebration (\*Cancelled)
- 15 End of semester 1
- 15 (K1-G3) After care not available on this day
- 16-Jan 7 Winter vacation
- 18-19 Office open

### January 2024

- 8 (K1-G11) School holiday
- 8-15 (G12) DP mock examinations
- 9 (K1-G11) School resumes/ Semester 2 commences
- 9-26 (G1-G5) Writing diagnostic testing
- 12 (G6-G10) Mathematics diagnostic assessments (\*Morning)
- 12 (G6-G11) Half day for students
- 12 2024-2025 admissions applications close
- 15 (G1-G12) Semester 2 clubs program resumes
- 19 Semester 1 reports issued



## In Memoriam

Dear School Community,

It is with deep sadness that we share the news of the passing of our esteemed former Head of School, Jeffrey Jones. He departed peacefully on Wednesday, November 8, 2023, after facing a courageous battle with illness. Jeffrey's dedication and remarkable contributions have left an enduring mark on our school community, and he will be dearly missed.

Jeffrey's legacy at KIST is one of exceptional leadership and outstanding achievements. From his role as a Secondary School Math teacher to his tenure as Head of School from 2014 to 2019, he played a pivotal role in the growth of KIST. His dedication led to significant milestones, including our rapid success in the Diploma Programme.

In honor of Jeffrey's memory, a memorial event will be held at the school on **Monday, January 22, 2024, from 2:30 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.** This event will provide an opportunity for our community to come together and celebrate Jeffrey's life and the lasting impact his vision and passion for education have had at KIST and beyond.

While we mourn the loss of Jeffrey, we also celebrate the legacy he leaves behind. His dedication, kindness, and extraordinary ability to inspire will forever be remembered. We extend our deepest condolences to Jeffrey's family and all members of our school community who have been touched by his leadership, kindness, and friendship.

As we move forward, let us remember Jeffrey Jones as a cherished part of our school's history, and may his memory continue to guide and inspire us in our educational journey.

Sincerely,

**Kevin Yoshihara**

Head of School/Elementary School Principal



**Jeffrey Jones**

## New Building Construction Update



Soon after this issue of *The Comet* is distributed, we will be moving into our new school building, and as I write this article, I am imagining how busy I am going to be with never-ending packing. I will do my best to complete the move and all other necessary preparations so that we can welcome everyone back in the New Year.

When we moved from Higashisuna to Kiyosumi-Shirakawa, the construction of a new school building was one of our biggest dreams. It is very exciting to finally see it come true. Completion of the new building is a major milestone in KIST's history.

The new building was completed with the support of so many people. To aid with construction costs, we received donations from families across the school. The commemorative tiles created to record the donations received have been beautifully displayed on the wall near the gymnasium entrance on the fifth floor, so please feel free to take a look when you visit. The KIST Community Association (CA) also donated proceeds from various events they have run over the years, and with these funds, we were able to install an additional fume hood in the science rooms.

Additionally, the G7 Liu family donated funds to cover the cost of purchasing hand dryers for all the bathrooms in the new building. A commemorative plaque inscribed with the phrase "Love Flows, Water Goes" has been attached to each dryer to symbolize the goodwill and generosity behind the donation and the ongoing commitment to providing comfort and convenience through use of the hand dryers (Love Flows), and also acknowledges the practical purpose of the hand dryers in removing water from the hands (Water Goes).

We sincerely thank all the families and staff for their generosity in contributing donations to the building project.

On the initiative of the Elementary SRC, many beautiful handmade message cards were collected and handed to the construction crew by ESRC members to thank the crew for their hard work on the new building, especially with the recent tight schedule as completion was nearing. The construction workers

were thrilled to receive the cards. Thank you to everyone in Elementary and the ESRC for your thoughtfulness.

With the start of the new calendar year, students will finally be able to start using the new building, making 2024 a very memorable year for all. We are excited by the prospect of seeing the delighted faces of our students as they enter their new learning spaces.

Finally, demolition of our old school building will begin in January, with our new outdoor field area scheduled for completion in Autumn of 2024.

I would like to say thank you to our old school building for 17 years of dedicated service to our school community! When we relocated to Kiyosumi-Shirakawa from our old school campus, I remember everyone working hard to paint the building together. Thank you for the many happy memories!

**Sayoko Naito**  
Director of Operations





## PYP News

### Unlocking potential: Primary school adventures with IB approaches to learning

For this issue of *The Comet*, I would like to showcase how the International Baccalaureate (IB) Approaches to Learning (ATL) are transforming the way our young learners engage with knowledge and skills.

At the core of the IB philosophy is the belief that education should go beyond the mere acquisition of facts; it should empower students to become lifelong learners who can navigate the complexities of our ever-evolving world. The IB Approaches to Learning provide a framework that fosters the development of crucial skills and attitudes, and our elementary school classrooms have embraced this with enthusiasm and creativity.

One of the key pillars of IB Approaches to Learning is **thinking skills**. In our classrooms, thinking is not a passive activity; it's an adventure, a journey of exploration. Through activities that promote critical thinking, analysis, and synthesis, our young minds are not just absorbing information but actively constructing knowledge. Take, for example, the K3 and G1 How the World Works units where students have engaged in multiple science experiments while learning to apply the scientific method. They don't just memorize scientific facts but engage in hands-on experiments, encouraging them to question, hypothesize, and draw their own conclusions. This not only enhances their understanding of scientific concepts but also instills a love for inquiry-based learning.

Another crucial aspect of IB ATL is the development of **research skills**. In the elementary school, research is not confined to textbooks, but extends to the world around us. Our students are encouraged to ask questions about the environment, society, and culture, and then embark on small research projects to find answers. Whether it's G2 exploring the local flora and fauna in their Sharing the Planet, K2 exploring their senses with food from around the world, or G3 understanding different cultures for Who We Are, the research skills acquired in these activities are invaluable, laying the foundation for a future where information is abundant, and the ability to navigate it is paramount.

**Social skills**, particularly collaboration, are highly valued in the IB framework, and our classrooms are buzzing with the sounds of teamwork. From group projects to peer tutoring, students are learning to appreciate diverse perspectives, negotiate differences, and contribute their unique strengths to a common goal. These collaborative activities not only prepare them for future professional endeavors but also cultivate a sense of empathy and understanding, essential qualities in our interconnected world.

**Communication skills** are vital and expressing ourselves creatively is not just encouraged; it's celebrated in the elementary school. Through Art, Music, and even in subjects like Mathematics and

English, students are given opportunities to explore their creativity. Whether it's G4 producing a visual representation of a government system, K1 hosting art exhibitions for their parents, or G5 sharing their understanding of local and global issues through the Exhibition, these activities not only make learning enjoyable but also nurture the creative thinking and communication skills that are vital for innovation and problem-solving.

The IB ATL framework also places a strong emphasis on **self-management skills**. From setting goals to managing time effectively, our elementary school students are gradually becoming independent learners. Through activities that require planning and organization, such as class projects and presentations, they are developing a sense of responsibility for their own learning journey.

In conclusion, our elementary school classrooms are vibrant hubs of learning where the IB Approaches to Learning are not just a set of principles but a way of life. Through engaging activities that promote critical thinking, research skills, collaboration, creativity, and self-management, our young learners are not just acquiring knowledge; they are developing into well-rounded individuals ready to tackle the challenges of the future. As we witness the transformation in our classrooms, we are reminded that education is not just about preparing students for exams; it's about preparing them for life. And with the IB ATL as our guide, the adventure of learning continues to unfold in our elementary school every day.

**Oliver Sullivan**  
PYP Coordinator



## Early Childhood News



Hello KIST Families. The year goes by so fast, doesn't it? I cannot believe that I am writing this for the December issue of *The Comet*, and we are almost at the end of 2023.

This 2023–24 school year, after the whirlwind that was COVID-19, we were finally able to resume many activities, such as family excursions, cooking lessons in the classroom, and inviting parents to school for presentations in both classes.

Let's take a peek at some of the activities that the children are enjoying in our K1, K2 and K3 classes.

So many parents in our K1 classes have special skills! Many of them came to share their talents in support of the students' studies in the unit "How We Express Ourselves". Can you tell what kinds of talents the parents are sharing with the K1 children in these photos? It looks like everyone was having a wonderful time!



K1A



K1B

The K2s are learning to be 'open-minded' through their "Where We Are in Place and Time" unit. Our internationally minded parents came and presented about their home countries, and students learned about different places through cooking lessons that the teachers planned, where they could eat different foods from different countries each week. The K2s also invited Lia, one of our G5 students, to talk about her home country. Thank you, Lia, all the children loved your presentation!



K2A



K2B

K2A/  
K2B

Through the unit "Who We Are", the K3s are learning and talking about all the different food choices that we make for various reasons. Parents visited to share their family's dietary habits and showed us how to cook those foods, too! The K3s also discussed their favorite sandwiches and the reasons why they chose their favorite type, made a list of ingredients, went to the nearby Akafudado supermarket to shop, and then assembled everything from their list to make their very own sandwiches. Great work!!

There are lots of fun learning activities happening at school. I know at this same time, lots of viruses are still going around. Please eat, drink and sleep well so that you can stay healthy and have a very happy winter holiday!

I am very much looking forward to welcoming you all back in 2024!!

**Eri Ozawa**

Early Childhood Coordinator (K1–K3)/K2A Teacher



K3A



K3B





## Times Tables Rock Stars

We're excited to bring you the latest buzz from the digital realm of mathematics where our students have been unleashing their mathematical prowess with unparalleled enthusiasm and energy. Yes, we're talking about the exhilarating world of Times Tables Rock Stars (TTRS)—an online platform that has transformed multiplication and division into a thrilling musical adventure for our students.

TTRS has not only made learning times tables fun but has also turned it into a competitive spectacle with its Battle of the Bands tournaments. The recent tournament had students from different grades vying for the top spot, and the competition was nothing short of intense. The leader board and Most Valuable Players (MVPs) for the tournament are as follows:

- 1st**—G3A: Riu, Haru, Jino
- 2nd**—G5B: Takuto, Caleb, Elaine
- 3rd**—G5A: Aki, Mirei, Tianyou
- 4th**—G3B: Aneesha, Zihan, Devin
- 5th**—G2A: Akira, Arthur, Kenneth
- 6th**—G4B: You Yu, Alice, Ami
- 7th**—G4A: Tsumugi, Raian, Saif
- 8th**—G2B: Yukimasa, Kenta, Sophie

A special congratulations is in order for **Vaishnavi** (G5B), who emerged as the first-ever player to win the coveted cup for the Most Improved Player. Vaishnavi's dedication and hard work in honing her mathematical skills truly exemplify the spirit of continuous improvement and growth.



*Vaishnavi (G5B)*

The energy and excitement generated by TTRS have not only made learning times tables an engaging experience but have also fostered a sense of friendly competition among our students. We are incredibly proud of each participant for their commitment and enthusiasm, and we look forward to witnessing even more mathematical marvels in the future.

We are also thrilled to announce that a Battle of the Bands tournament will now be taking place every month. This means our students will have the opportunity to showcase their mathematical skills and compete for top honors on a regular basis. To add to the excitement, we'll be awarding our winners and MVPs with certificates to recognize their outstanding achievements.

Stay tuned for more updates on the mathematical adventures of our students as they continue to rock the numbers on Times Tables Rock Stars!

**Anita Prashar**  
G3A Teacher



**G2A**



**G3A**



**G4A**



**G5A**



## KIPS News



### From the P0/P1 classroom...

We were worried about how long the hot days would last, but before we knew it, the cold weather was upon us. Regardless of the weather, the children at KIPS come to school every day in high spirits.

Welcoming our first P0 child in two years, this year's P0/P1 class is full of smiling faces, and now, a few months after entering the school, the children have become totally accustomed to daily life at KIPS. After morning classes are over, the children have some milk to drink and then start to get themselves ready to go outside to play. It is still difficult for the children to put on their socks by themselves, but it is very heartwarming to see them getting their own socks and trying their best to put them on.

We will continue to support the children in cooperation with their parents so that they can overcome these difficulties one by one and continue to challenge even higher goals.



I hope you all have a pleasant winter vacation.

**Minami Nose**  
Nurse



### From the P2 classroom...



Four months have already passed since the start of the school year. The children have learned their routines at KIPS and are now able to think and act on their own without prompting by their teachers. They are enjoying their lessons every day including Language Arts, Science/Cooking, PE, Art, Japanese and Music. They also happily participated in their first big event, the Halloween Party, and wore beautiful costumes.

During my Japanese class, we have a monthly nutrition education session where we learn about different foods. In the four months

since school started, we have learned about 'milk', 'bananas' and 'tofu'. We talked about who makes each item, how they are produced, and how they are different from the end products we see in the supermarket or at the dinner table. The children also tried making butter from milk, learned that bananas are green, made tofu from soy milk, and experienced seeing and tasting how the items change with all their five senses. The children listened to the stories with a twinkle in their eyes, and when the items were mentioned, they remembered them and talked about them, saying things like, "This banana is not green," or "We all made this together, didn't we?"

All the staff at KIPS will continue to devise ways to conduct classes and childcare, not only for nutrition education, but also to see the children's faces sparkling with curiosity.

**Yoshimi Machida**  
P2 Teacher



## IGCSE News

As the first semester draws to a close, I encourage you to engage in conversations with your child about their accomplishments and areas for growth. The first semester has brought about some noteworthy experiences and I want to share these with you as well as what to expect in the new year from an IGCSE perspective.

First, I would like to invite you to read the student articles regarding their G9 and G10 camp experiences. Since the last issue, the G9s ventured to Kamigo in Kanagawa, while the G10s went to Sunset Breeze Hota in Chiba. Each group had a memorable and unique camp experience, as detailed in the accompanying student articles.

Second, I would like to encourage your child to keep organized through their study timetable and Microsoft To Do tasks. Hopefully, your child has modified the study timetable to best fit their academic and extra-curricular activities and allows them to better manage their time. For the G10s, they should be using these tools to focus on revising topics from the previous year, as they prepare for their final exams. For the G9s, they will be able to use more of the scheduled subject revision time, as they begin semester 2. Additionally, I

would encourage you to login to Schoology and view the assessment calendar and individual classes for your child. This would allow you to ask questions about what your student is studying and help them to better manage their progress.

Finally, looking ahead, the G10s have two important dates before the next issue of *The Comet*. On February 23, 2024, the school will host the DP Options day, where parents and students can receive guidance and ask questions about potential subject choices. Also, the G10 mock exams are scheduled for April 1–11. This will be an opportunity for the students to demonstrate their understanding in each of their subjects, as they will take both a Paper 1 and Paper 2 in their respective disciplines.

Thank you for your continued support and involvement and please feel free to contact me for any questions you may have about the IGCSE.

**Keith Erickson**  
IGCSE Coordinator



## Guest Speaker in DP Physics

### PhD candidate, Arnau Albà

In the ever-evolving world of physics, the opportunity to learn from experts in the field is a priceless experience. Recently, our DP Physics students in G11 and G12 had the privilege of hosting an extended member of the KIST community, Ms. Albà's brother and PhD candidate from the Paul Scherrer Institute in Switzerland, **Arnau Albà**.

The enriching experience left an indelible mark on our understanding of what it takes to undertake a PhD. During his talk, Arnau spoke about the importance of an original research project, and the impressive facilities that PhD students can have access to in their research, and also shared information on the core of his research, and about the uncertainty quantification of spent nuclear fuel with multilevel Lasso Monte Carlo and machine learning.

**Web** <https://arxiv.org/pdf/2309.00364.pdf>

Beyond the scientific content, Arnau shared his personal journey in the field of physics, offering advice to all our DP Physics students. He emphasized the importance of curiosity, resilience and collaboration in the pursuit of knowledge. We hope many students found inspiration through his words, realizing that a career in physics and other scientific fields is not only challenging, but also immensely rewarding.



**Cesar Cely**  
Subject Area Coordinator—Science





## G9 Camp at Kamigo

On October 5 and 6, the G9s embarked on a thrilling camping trip to Yokohama to prepare for their IGCSE course. During the camping trip, we visited the Kanazawa Zoo, a nice park with an amazing slide and finally, Hakkeijima Sea Paradise, a seaside theme park that is combined with Yokohama Bay which includes an aquarium.

### Day 1:

In the morning, students excitedly rushed to the biology lab to take attendance and receive initial instructions about the exhilarating camp ahead of us. After an hour-long bus ride, we finally arrived at Kanazawa Zoo—a nature reserve dedicated to endangered species—where we got to stroll around the park in groups and enjoy taking pictures of our fellow classmates and the animals. After lunch, some of us played volleyball, basketball, soccer, or went on the obstacle course. Drenched from the heat and fun from the eventful day, we made our way back to the bus and rode our way to our stay for the night.

Soon enough, we arrived at the camp and received our rooms and organized our things, claimed our beds, and headed to the multipurpose room, where we enjoyed games of dodgeball and volleyball. Despite the loudness and chaos, we managed to play civil and fair games with one another, eventually ending our time there with a comical photoshoot including cardboard cutouts of ties, glasses, sunglasses, crowns, and moustaches. After we finished dinner, we enjoyed warm, enriching baths in the onsens, soaking up energy for the night to come. The clock soon struck 9, so we stayed in our respective rooms, continuing to eat all the delicious candies and snacks we brought, munching as we talked. Some ate chocolates, candies, and bread, while others ate jellies, pudding, chips—no one was left hungry that night! Though a few classmates slept early in the night, most ended up staying awake until the early hours of the morning, whispering (trying not to wake anyone up) as we played, chatted, and had an amazing time, as we made fond memories of everyone like no other.

### Day 2:

After a good night's rest, those whom wanted to visit the morning onsen woke up at 6.30 a.m. and rushed to the warm bath. Refreshed from an early morning's wash, all the students gathered in the dining room where breakfast was served. After breakfast, we hurriedly went back to our rooms to complete our favorite task: cleaning up! Following the goodbye to our comfortable rooms, we were on a roll to go to Hakkeijima sea paradise. On the bus ride over to the theme park, excitement filled the air. There was conversation about what rides to explore, what sea animals to observe

at the aquarium and most importantly what food to eat at the food court. Once we arrived at the theme park, we were all free to go and explore the park on our own. We all keenly moved through the huge theme park to discover the numerous rides and intriguing sea creatures. Many of us hurried to the highlight of the theme park, the roller coaster. This massive roller coaster was right above the Yokohama Bay and was so high up we could glance down onto the whole of the theme park as well as the vast ocean. The scenery from the very top of the fall was mesmerizing although many of us were terrified by the height of the drop and may have missed the view ahead of us. The thrill of the roller coaster was over and hungry students headed to the food court where all students had vouchers to spend there. We each ordered delicious meals from the food court and were off to enjoy the rest of the theme park.

At the aquarium, students saw a humongous aquarium tank where beautiful sea animal shows were being held with radiant, multicolored lights and uplifting music. There was also a dolphin show where you could be splashed by the water droplets created from the astonishing performance and tricks done by the intelligent dolphins.

At the end of all the excitement, some students returned to the stores for a short break. Some grabbed crispy sweet crepes, fruity and refreshing scoops of ice cream or bubble tea filled with tapioca pearls. By the time we had all gotten a chance to look through the theme park, it was unfortunately time to depart. Some of us held gifts that we had bought as a memory from the theme park, while some of us had drinks in our hands. The two long days had been very eventful and remarkable so many of us were exhausted from all the fun. The bus ride back was quiet and calm compared to the bus ride on the way to the camp. Many of us had fallen asleep on the bus. Some students looked over the pictures they had taken with their digital cameras over the precious two days while others discussed the various memories we had made with each other and the new experiences we were able to savor during our trip.

Joanne (G9A)



G9 camp photoshoot

## G10 Camp at Sunset Breeze Hota, Chiba

There was something serene and beautiful about hiking; one step reaches forward, the other pushes yourself up, with only the peak in mind. Such was what the G10s experienced on the first day of camp. The sun was beaming up us as we chatted excitedly about the 2-day adventure ahead of us, perhaps the beach, perhaps the barbeque, perhaps even singing some random songs just to start the festive mood, away from all the studying and tests at school. After two hours on the bus, we arrived at the foot of the mountain, the trees were growing like wildflowers. Everywhere was filled with the green and blue and white, the juxtaposition of Tokyo and its rushing days quickly gone by like a flip of a book.

After a delicious lunch filled with non-stop chitchat and laughter, our eyes set on the top of the mountain, 300 meters above sea level, the Nokogiriyama Mountain looms over us as we slowly took our first steps. Of course, different stamina meant different speeds, therefore separating themselves into three different groups, each aimed for the top of the mountain, although taking different paths. Struggling yet determined, each student pushed their limit and arrived at the peak. As we stood at the summit, we could see the beautiful view of the sea and the place we were eventually going to stay at for the next two days.

The path down the mountain was a quiet one, everyone still reliving the sense of silent joy and pride. We had some extra time where we rested on the field at the foot of the mountain, some playing duck-duck-goose and some just lying down on a sizzling bench under the sun, the hike was over, and the sun was going orange, but the camp and excitement continued to live on.

Then, we had three different sessions in the camp. One session was goal setting, another was yoga and the final session involved teamwork. As everyone had started to finish up the sessions, we had all gathered up on the field and decided to play a game of football together. While some students were playing different sports after dinner, the rest were near the seaside



G10 students enjoying the summit view

taking photos with one another. We eventually ended the night with a campfire while eating a bunch of burnt marshmallows. This night was definitely a memorable moment from the trip as it was when we all came together as a grade and just had fun.



Early the following morning, we went down for a fabulous Japanese-style buffet breakfast where we were also able to just sit down and chat with our friends casually around the table. After that, we went to the community center for a gradewide dancing class, where we got to do interactive activities, like choreographing our own dance. Not only was this an enjoyable activity but it helped us to put our communication and collaboration skills to use. Finally, we had the opportunity to enjoy the cool breeze whilst submerged in the lukewarm water, joyfully and just enjoying ourselves as a final goodbye to camp. Inevitably though, the day had to come to an end. Or did it? On our way back, amid the frustrating traffic jam, we made a surprising stop at 'Umihotaru'. This place had an observation deck which had a stunning view, and it was a great place to just stretch and hang out with our friends before going back. This marks a wonderful end to our G10 camp, an unforgettable one for the years to come.

Ananya, Howard, Jiani, Reshma (G10B)



## New Face



Since the last issue of *The Comet*, we have welcomed a new staff member, **Takayuki Sakuma**, who has joined our office team as a Physical Trainer.



On behalf of the school community, we wish Mr. Sakuma all the best in his new role.



**Takayuki Sakuma**  
Physical Trainer



## G11 DP Camp

The anticipation was high as I gathered my things, packing my bag for the upcoming camp. The night before, I made sure to have all the essentials that Mr. Hiro asked us to bring ready, eager for the next three days of fun that awaited me.

The first day kicked off with extended essay and university guidance sessions with Mr. Gombya and Mr. Waterfall. Mr. Gombya explained to us the significance of the Extended essay, choosing our subjects, and the general process of writing the essay. In the university guidance session, Mr. Waterfall went over the key aspects that make a strong university application and how we can improve, and make a well-rounded application.

The highlight of the evening was cooking delicious curry together, that we painstakingly made over a fire that we had to make ourselves. The curry, at a glance looked nothing special but the effort and time we put in made it taste like it was from a Michelin starred restaurant. As the sun set, we gathered around a campfire where we laughed and shared scary stories and saw some impressive dance performances.

Day two started with an exciting TOK session with Mr. Gombya where we learned about the acquisition of knowledge and how we know what we know. Later, we embarked on a hike to a breathtaking coastline. The scenic views of the ocean were soothing and relaxing. Some of us even swam in a nearby beach where we saw Mr. Gombya wrestle Kazuki in a WWE-style bout in the water. That might have been the funniest thing in the entire camp if I'm being honest. At the end of the night, we all split into groups and each group had to put on a performance where we enacted the events of the past two days. We then played some team games, and called it a night.



On the final day, the excitement continued as we prepared for a kayaking expedition. With our paddles in hand, we navigated through the waters, exploring the tides and embracing the surroundings. We then played some beach volleyball, and me and Zoran explored the tide pools, finding crabs, fish and many more cool creatures hiding in the rock formations. It was a tiring day and as I cleaned up, I realized that camp was coming to an end, and that we had to go back to school the following week.

We packed up our things, thanked the staff and hopped on the bus back to KIST. The bus ride included several controversial games of UNO, and a well-deserved nap.

As the camp came to an end, I returned home with a sense of fulfillment and memories that would last a lifetime. I want to thank Mr. Hiro for organizing such a wonderful experience and all the other teachers (Mr. Gombya, Mr. Waterfall, Ms. Cowie and Ms. Duncan) who helped make this experience memorable. I learned many lessons and I hope that we continue to make more memories like this as a grade.

Arjun (G11A)



## I&S Department Snapshot

### G6 LSP I&S (Ms. Cowie's class)

G6 students have been concentrating on map skills and projections. Their recent task involved creating a contour map using playdough models of mountains. The students showcased their creativity by producing a map that illustrates the height and elevation of mountains, depicting how they would appear on an actual map. During this activity, students also took a moment to reflect on the challenges faced by map makers in the past.

*Aditya and Isabella (G6A) with their mountain models*



### G6 LSP I&S (Mr. Beaton's class)

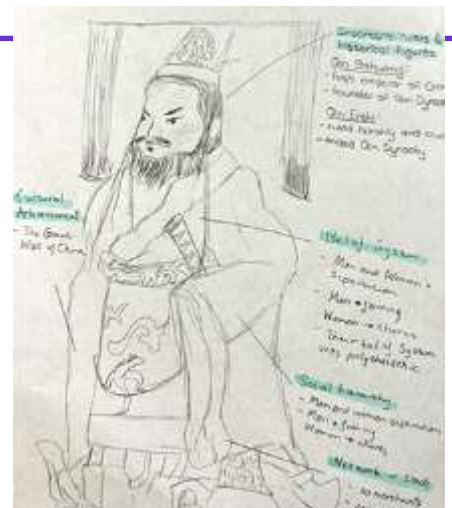
On the final day of quarter 1, students in G6 I&S participated in an orienteering challenge, which saw students navigating from the school entrance to the roof in search of clues and prizes. Students put their geographical skills to the test using compasses to navigate and answering questions drawing upon their study of maps this semester. It was a great way to finish off the quarter before Autumn break and students displayed excellent effort and attitude!

### G7 LSP I&S—History (2 options)

In G7, students have been learning about the period between 200–1500CE, often looked at as a 'dark age'. We have been looking at the significant Roman Empire and Han China and the impacts of their collapse, but students are beginning to question the term 'dark ages' as we also see a wide variety of empires and dynasties that were thriving and successful during the time period.

**Option 1:** Students plotted out key geographical features on the world map and considered whether they helped or hindered trade. Then students used this to analyse the possible impact of specific geographical features on certain empires; for example, who had access to seas and oceans? What mountain ranges or deserts may have hindered connection? What innovations or natural advantages allowed certain groups to overcome these challenges?

**Option 2:** Students were learning about causation, so they chose a specific empire and analysed the cause of their collapse. Was it internal, external, or environmental? Was it for political, social, economic reasons? Here, you can see group work where students personified specific aspects of the empire into body parts (e.g. significant figures = head, spine = government, cultural achievements = hands, etc). Students then wrote an 'Autopsy of an Empire' to decide what was the 'sickness' that finally brought them down.



### G8 LSP I&S —Business

In G8, our I&S curriculum focuses on preparing students for the IGCSE in G9. As part of the business unit, students devised new products/services, collaboratively forming marketing teams to explore target markets, pricing, distribution, and promotion strategies. They engaged in primary and secondary market research, applying their findings to craft business proposals. Mr. Anil Raj, a KIST parent and successful entrepreneur, generously shared insights during the students' market research, offering real-world connections to their studies. His impactful talk left a lasting impression, and we extend our gratitude to Mr. Raj for his valuable time and support.

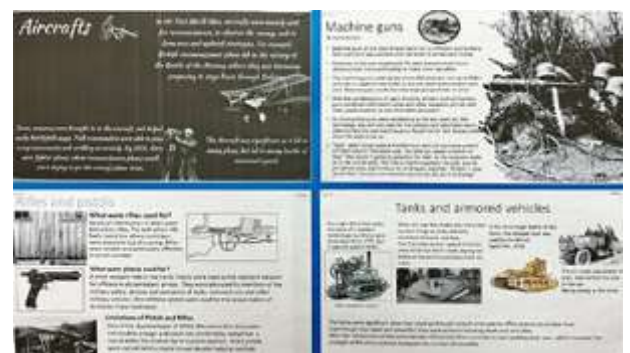
*Ms. Holdaway and Mr. Anil Raj with the G8s*



### G9/G10 IGCSE History

G9s are finishing up their learning about the First World War. They have been analysing the causes, how the war was fought, and now the final reasons for and impacts of the Allied victory. Here are some posters that they made to show the impact of certain weapons on the fighting.

G10s are firmly in the tense period of the Cold War, looking at how the different superpowers related to one another through proxy wars and ideological debates. We have been discussing how we can connect our learning to many modern conflicts.



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### G9 IGCSE Business

We have had a great time studying business over the past few months. Especially learning through Seneca and Blooket at the beginning of the class to review the learning from the last lesson. We decided to choose Business for the following reasons: we wanted to study business as we believe that it is useful for understanding what companies want, being a consumer myself. We recently had an inquiry task on multinational companies in different countries. The task was very interesting for both of us; we focused on IKEA in the Philippines and Toyota in America. It was eye-opening to see how the multinationals that we enjoy were spreading all over the world. For example, we did not know about the various rules and laws that companies had to follow in those host countries. We have gained much knowledge in the past few months, and we are excited to keep learning business for the next two years. —**Moka (G9A) and Rumi (G9B)**



(L>R) Fuwa (G9B), Son Kwon (G9B), Rumi (G9B), Ami (G9A), Luca (G9A), Dipin (G9A), Linya (G9B), Moka (G9A), Vardaan (G9A)



Kento and Howard (G10B) present their recommendation to the Monetary Policy Committee

### G10 IGCSE Economics

During semester 1, students learned about the six macroeconomic objectives (economic growth, inflation, unemployment, balance of payments, protection of the environment, and income redistribution) and how governments optimize each of the objectives through different types of policies. To better understand the relationship between objectives and policies within a real-world context, the students worked in teams to recommend whether the South African Central Reserve Bank Monetary Policy Committee should increase, decrease, or maintain the interest rate. Through the presentations, the groups were able to explain how monetary policy is used to achieve certain macroeconomic outcomes. The presentations were completed prior to the monetary policy committee's decision on taking action with the interest rate and the teams were then able to compare their findings.

### G10 IGCSE Geography

In semester 1, G10 Geography students have been learning about development and human welfare, considering different factors that influence the two topics. With conflict being one factor that brings significant repercussions to a country's development, students examined the ongoing conflict between Israel and Hamas. Examining this conflict as their case study, G10 students explored how conflict can bring numerous environmental, social, economic and political impacts that could impede development overall.



Poster by Alice and Alex

### G12 DP Business Management

In early October, Mr. Cowe visited the G12 DP Business class as a special guest to give a lesson on leadership and management, specifically about his role at our school. He discussed his responsibilities and previous efforts he made as a secondary principal to better this school. Mr. Cowe is a situational leader—someone who adapts their leadership style for each task and member. As such, he also shared his past situations and scenarios as a principal where he demonstrated aspects of leadership, management, or both. He also uncovered student mysteries, such as why he sits in the corridor during classes instead of staying in the office: To feel less isolated from all of us students and create a community-like atmosphere. In the end, we got an opportunity to have a Q&A session, where each student got to ask a question we usually couldn't get an answer to. I asked whether he had been hesitant to delegate, to which he answered he had been many times. Another student asked about methods for keeping staff and teachers motivated, to which he replied, 'by staying positive and consistent, whilst being organized.' He also added that 'adults are harder to teach than children,' which the whole class was surprised to hear. We all assumed that student interaction and relations would be the harder aspect of being a principal; in reality, establishing a positive community also from the teacher's side was the greatest challenge Mr. Cowe faced every day. Thank you, Mr. Cowe, for the insightful lesson! —**Maya (G12B)**



### G12 DP Geography

As part of the DP Geography course, students are required to design and execute an investigation into the urban environment for their internal assessment (IA). This year, the students delved into the impact of urban stress, microclimates, and the Urban Heat Island effect on urban areas—wherein the built-up urban environment experiences higher temperatures compared to the surrounding rural areas. The chosen focal point for this investigation was Shinjuku. The primary objective was to examine how green spaces possess the potential to enhance the environmental quality of an urban area. The students systematically tested parameters such as particulate matter (P.25), sound levels, temperature, and ground reflectivity at each site. Additionally, some students engaged in collecting survey data from the public, honing their Japanese interviewing skills in the process.



## Avogadro Chemistry Exam



In May 2023 (2022–23 school year), KIST students took part in the Avogadro Chemistry Exam, a challenging chemistry exam run by the University of Waterloo. The Avogadro Exam is designed for Grade 11 high school students in their first year of their high school chemistry course. Topics include: structure of matter, bonding, reactions, solutions, and gases. The test includes a few probing and demanding questions on some of the main topics of high school chemistry.

Worldwide, 4741 students participated in the exam, and 2023 was the first year that KIST students took part. In total, 15 KIST students (now in G12) chose to take the exam.

*Sample question*

To a weighed, clean and dry 1.000 L volumetric flask is added some pure  $\text{NH}_4\text{Cl}$ . The flask is reweighed. Then distilled water is added to dissolve the  $\text{NH}_4\text{Cl}$ , and finally enough water is added, with stirring, to bring the solution to the 1.000 L mark. The flask is reweighed. Data are shown below.

Mass of clean and dry 1.000 L flask:	224.3 g
Mass of flask plus $\text{NH}_4\text{Cl}$ :	280.1 g
Mass of flask plus $\text{NH}_4\text{Cl}$ plus water:	1239.5 g

Which of the following statements concerning the resulting solution is correct?

- A The molar concentration of  $\text{NH}_4\text{Cl}$  is 5.23 mol/L.
- B The density of the solution is 1.24 g/mL.
- C The solution is 22.6%  $\text{NH}_4\text{Cl}$  by mass.
- D All of A, B and C are true.
- E None of A, B and C are true.



Four KIST students were in the top 200 in the world: **Xinyi** (G12A), **Arnav** (G12B), **Luer** (G12B) and **Haruto** (G12A). Xinyi was in the 98% percentile and was 86th in the world, and Arnav was 91st in the world. The world average score was 40%; KIST students achieved an average of 66%.

The Avogadro competition provided a chance for our students to challenge themselves beyond the scope of the DP syllabus, and show universities their commitment to their scientific studies.

This was the first year that KIST ran the Chemistry Waterloo competition, and the results were very impressive. Well done to all the students who took part.



**Judith Peel**  
Secondary Chemistry Teacher



*The top 3 students in Japan: Luer (G12B), Xinyi (G12A) and Arnav (G12B)*





## KPASS Music Festival

On Saturday, November 18, some G6–G10 students represented KIST at the Kanto Plain Association of Secondary Schools (KPASS) solo vocal and piano festival. This was the first time KIST participated in this festival and our students did an excellent job, taking home gold, silver and bronze awards in their categories and receiving generous praise and guidance from the festival adjudicators.

**Jessica (Eri) (G10A)** remarked:

“ I played Moonlight Sonata III Presto Agitato by Beethoven for my piano solo. I strongly believe that this event allowed me to enhance my full abilities, motivating me to continue my ambitious passion, since childhood, towards classical music. The power of music is amazing; this event made me feel that engraved deep in my heart once again. Thank you, truly.”

**Mr. Rob, Ms. Nina**



**Mimi (G6A), piano**  
Bronze award



**Ashlesha (G6B), voice**  
Silver award



**Kanae (G6C), piano**  
Gold award



**Eri Gu (G10A), piano**  
Gold award



**Eunhoo (G10A), voice**  
Silver award



**Chak Hang (G10B), voice**  
Bronze award



**Edward (G10B), voice**  
Silver award



**Jiani Li (G10B), piano**  
Silver award

## Managing the Holiday Season



In Japan, the Christmas and New Year period can be an exciting time. There are so many activities to go and enjoy, alone or together. In the build up to Christmas there are intricately designed illuminations, bustling Christmas markets, and Christmas music filled shopping malls, draped in red, green and gold. As soon as Christmas Day passes, the New Year focus begins. This year we can expect dragon-themed decorations to be everywhere we look! Yet, amongst all of these exciting things, there can be particular situations that feel overwhelming.

Depending on the person, what is fun for one group, may be an anxiety and panic inducing experience for another. Perhaps, you have noticed that your child struggles to manage a specific situation or is more difficult to engage with when they know a particular event is approaching. This article is going to focus on the eight senses and how, if they are over/under stimulated, we can support children.

Before we begin, let's define two key terms.

1. Under-responder is someone who seeks a great deal of sensory input
2. Over-responder is someone who tries to avoid the sensory input

**Matthew Archer**

Student Care Coordinator (Secondary)



Sense	Under-responder behaviour	How to support	Over-responder behaviour	How to manage
<b>Gustatory</b>	Enjoy spicy foods and strong flavours After eating a strong flavor, alertness and engagement increase Attempts to eat non-food items	Drink fruit infused water Have gum with flavour Bring crunchy/chewy snacks	Be oversensitive to food Eat a limited range of food Appear extremely anxious when trying a new food Avoid social settings where there may be a wide range of foods/ strong smells/tastes	Use a mellow toothpaste flavour Create a list of 'safe foods' and bring these when eating/travelling in public Reduce sensory stimulation (light/sound) at mealtimes
<b>Tactile</b>	Not notice when they are touched Not have a good sense of pressure and inadvertently hurt others Seek pressure from a range of sources (pressing against a surface)	Carry fidget toys Try different textures in a safe space and carry a preferred item of clothing when out in public for a long period of time Find opportunities for sensory play	Have strong reactions to fabrics / clothing tags Appears to 'over-react' when touched	Choose one fabric and stick to it Find seamless clothes Prepare statements that give clear boundaries about touching Favour bathing over showering
<b>Olfactory</b>	Not notice strong smells Not notice toxins or food that has become spoiled	Play 'guess the scent' games Use herbs and spices when cooking and invite the child to smell Use scented playdough or markers	Have a strong reaction to smells (gagging/ headaches) Be bothered by strong fragrances (perfume / chemicals) Respond to the smell of cleaning products with a sense of nausea	Use chemical / fragrance free cleaning/body products Change the garbage regularly Keep rooms well ventilated Encourage mask use in areas where smells may be overwhelming
<b>Visual</b>	Engaged by spinning objects, bright lights, and reflective items Finds it difficult to name colours, shapes, and sizes	Reduce visual clutter Create visual structures/ timetables Have items for visual stimulation (e.g. lava lamps)	Avoids environments that are visually overwhelming Wary of moving objects Sensitive to bright / flashing lights	Reduce visual clutter (patterns on walls/clutter on counters) Use dim/natural light whenever possible Avoid excessive screen time
<b>Auditory</b>	Failure to notice sounds Seeks out intense auditory experiences (turns up volume inappropriately high)	Use visual supports to get their attention Watch TV/movies with subtitles Touch them gently to gain their attention	Be easily distracted by auditory stimuli Hear things that others are unable to hear	Use noise cancelling/sound blocking headphones Be aware of background noises at home
<b>Vestibular</b>	Seeks out activities that provide rocking, swinging, or other similar movements Strong desire to jump/ bounce regardless of safety	Find equipment / toys that incorporate more vigorous movement e.g. trampolines / swings	Nauseous when moving through space e.g. on a ride in a car/theme park Struggles with movements that require precision	Take it slowly when trying new activities Move slowly down stairs Place child at front of vehicle
<b>Proprioception</b>	Prone to accidents Lacks awareness of impact of moving body aggressively in space	Provide as many hugs, deep pressure back massages, or other safe physical contacts as you can	Avoids physical contact / timid around others Develops anxiety in crowds	Walk them through expected movements in public spaces (lining up / using play equipment) Avoid unnecessary physical contact
<b>Interoception</b>	Be unaware of pain/thirst/ hunger signals Find it difficult to describe specific emotions	Set alarms to take sensory/drink/snack breaks Ask for your child's teacher to check in regularly	Have a heightened reaction to feelings of pain/thirst/ hunger Continue to feel an injury long after it has healed	Engage the vestibular system to decrease anxiety (rocking/ swinging) Discuss appropriate ways to react to feelings of pain (e.g. not hitting others)



## Athletics Update

### Fall season 2023

#### Kanto Plain cross-country

Like last year we had a very large number of participants through the middle and high schools this year. Some great efforts this season with many students greatly improving their personal best times.

*Thank you all for putting your heart, soul, and sweat into our cross-country team this season. Goodbye and good luck to our grade 12 students Ethan and Yudai! You two have been a consistent positive influence on our team and we won't be the same without you.— Coach Cobbs*

**A massive thanks to Coaches Cobbs and D'Rozario for their time organizing and taking students to races! A big thanks to Coaches Owen and Peel for their efforts as well!**



#### Kanto Varsity boys', JV girls', and ISTAA U-18 girls' & boys' volleyball

Our girls' team played Kanto JV and ISTAA U-18 this year. The JV team struggled to start the season though very competitive throughout. In the JV tournament at YIS, we upset the higher ranked Seisen 2–0 in the QF and then lost 2–0 to ASIJ in the SF but both sets were very close. Great tournament! The ISTAA U-18 team were the reigning champions from last season but struggled with consistency this year. We finished with 2 wins and 2 losses on the season and blew a 5-point first set lead to BST and lost 2–0. In the 3rd place game, KIST beat Columbia 2–1.

This was our first year playing in the Kanto league Varsity boys division and the boys were competitive in all but one of the games. On a couple of occasions, someone was missing, which was the difference



*Varsity boys' volleyball ISTAA tournament*



*Varsity girls' volleyball tournament@BST*



*Varsity girls' volleyball seniors*

between winning and losing close games. In the Varsity boys' tournament @ ASIJ (again, one member was missing), the boys started well, taking the 1st set from BST and leading deep into the 2nd set only to make some poor errors and blow the chance at a SF opportunity losing 2–1. They recovered in a non-pressure game beating YIS 2–0. In the ISTAA U-18 boys division, KIST finished 4–1 to take the top seed for the tournament. At the tournament at Columbia, KIST were dominant from start to finish beating Columbia 2–0 and DSTY (last years' champions who beat KIST in the final) 3–1 in the final to become **ISTAA U-18 Champions** for the first time since 2013. DSTY had beaten the same BST team in the SF at ISTAA this year, so it was sweet revenge on two fronts for our boys. Congratulations!!

**A special thanks to all the seniors who have been part of the KIST volleyball team for several years: Selin, Jia Hang, Maya, Stephanie, Haruto, Ethan, Kaito, Aidan and Shakti. Fantastic effort!!—Mr. Ota**

#### Kanto MS girls' volleyball

This year the KIST MS girls' team had the largest number of participants ever with a total of 30 girls participating. We had both A and B teams in the Kanto league and the A team finished 3rd in the league standings and then 3rd in the season-ending tournament—a top 3 finish two years in a row! The B team had less success but worked hard and made improvements later in the season.

*Great job on getting 3rd place in the Kanto A team tournament this year. There was some tough competition, but we still did great!—Coach McAllister*

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**Thank you, Mr. Jay for another season of successful MS girls' volleyball!**



MS girls' volleyball

### Kanto MS boys' soccer

Another year of MS boys' soccer saw numbers swell to almost 30 boys this year with many G6 students participating. KIST finished 8th of 10 teams in the league standing but were a comparatively young team and the future looks bright.

Great job this season boys! We know it was tough at times, but with such a young team, there is so much to be excited about for the future! Thank you to everyone who participated and made this season and team atmosphere a success!—Coach Buck and Coach Archer

**Thank you, Mr. Buck and Mr. Archer for the time you have put in for the soccer teams over the past few years!**



MS boys' soccer

### Kanto Plain Varsity/JV boys' tennis

Our boys' tennis team had 15 boys this year with a mix of Varsity and JV competitors. We had a relatively young team and though we had quite a few close games, KIST did not win any of the team games this year. In the JV tournament at ASIJ, KIST had some success with our top-seeded player getting to the QF round.

**A very big thank you to our Secondary Principal, Mr. Cowe for his efforts in coaching our boys' tennis team for the past 3 years!!**

### Kanto Plain Varsity/JV girls' tennis



We had 18 girls participate in the tennis team this year and were playing a mix of Varsity and JV games. On many game days, weather forced cancelations and rescheduling making it a very challenging season, but the team and coaches persevered.

Overall, the HS girls Varsity tennis team had a very positive yet challenging season this fall. We played against six different schools and participated in two tournaments. In the Varsity tournament at ASIJ, both Jessica and Shreya won two matches and lost one. Shreya won against two of the singles players from Zama and reached the best 16. Jessica won against YIS and Yokota, but was knocked out in the quarter final, reaching the best 8. Although we didn't do so well in the JV tournament at St. Mary's, everyone in the team gave their very best in some challenging matchups. Of particular note was Yixuan's quarter final match, which was a close defeat against one of the top seeds from Seisen. Well done to everybody in the team who came to practices and games in what was a tough season, and our first time taking part in the Varsity league. A big thank you to Ms. Cowie for helping out with the coaching. Both Ms. Cowie and I saw a huge improvement in all players. Good job everybody!—Coach Alba

**A huge thanks to Coaches Alba and Cowie for their efforts in organizing and time attending games.**

**Winter season teams** started practices the first week back from Fall break. I am pleased to announce that we have officially started the wrestling program (a first at KIST—thank you Coach Buck!) and are looking forward to getting our feet wet in the Kanto league against the 'goliath' schools.

We have two soccer teams this year at the HS level (Varsity and JV) as we had about 35 boys try out for the team. It has been quite challenging for the basketball teams thus far without a facility, but we are doing our best under the circumstances and looking forward to our new gym in January. Baseball will be starting up in mid-January with Coach Nogami.

At present, the below teams are in action with games coming up very soon: JV/Varsity boys' soccer, JV & U-18 boys' basketball, JV & U-18 girls' basketball, MS/ U-14 boys' basketball, and JV & MS wrestling.

From January we will have some home games and we hope that students, teachers, staff and parents can come cheer on our teams.

Please check **Schoology >> Groups >> Resources** for game information and results.

**Dennis Ota**  
Athletics Coordinator





## Staff 10!



In this month's Staff 10!, we are pleased to present **Derek Rogers** who joined our Elementary School instructional team in August 2018. Initially working as a teaching assistant and subsequently as an ELS

instructor, he moved into a teaching role in August 2022, and is currently the homeroom teacher for Grade 1B.

### 1) Tell us something interesting about your hometown.

I grew up in Kissimmee, Florida, which is a thirty-minute drive from Walt Disney World. I spent my high school and college summers working in a souvenir store there. My job title was a silly portmanteau that I will never forget: merchantainment.

### 2) What is your favorite place in the world?

Colossal Café in Minneapolis, Minnesota. I lived in Minnesota for two years and I met my friend for breakfast there every Sunday morning. One time I almost crashed my car as I drove there in a Minnesota snowstorm because I couldn't bear to miss our weekly tradition.

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

Björk! Besides being a talented musician who has written some of my favorite albums, she has so many fascinating opinions on creativity.

### 4) Do you have any special skills or talents?

I once made a cake shaped like my pet tortoise. While it didn't hit "Great British Bake Off" heights, I'm proud to say it wasn't as bad as something you'd see on "Nailed It!" Plus, it tasted great.

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

I love doing New York Times crossword puzzles. Even though I've done them for years, I can't finish a Saturday puzzle (the hardest) without extensive googling. One day!

### 6) What is your most prized possession?

I have one of those electronic picture frames that my family can remotely upload pictures to. It is such a simple thing, but it brings me so much joy because I never know when I'll see a new picture on it. It doesn't hurt that my nephews are so cute.

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

I would pick **reflective**, as reflecting on and making changes based on experience, new knowledge, and honest self-examination is so important.

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

When I lived in Los Angeles, I went to the same restaurant on three different occasions. All three times, I saw Jeff Goldblum. I never once approached him.

While I objectively made the right choice of not disturbing a human having a meal, I sure do wish I had a picture with him.

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

Over the summer I got a motorcycle license, and it has been fun getting better at that. Unlike driving a car, I find driving a motorcycle keeps me present and in-the-moment, which I love.

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

Have a beautiful day!



Mr. Derek inquiring into the link between microphone color and sound quality.

## School Calendar 2024–25



To assist families planning overseas trips, the dates of school vacation periods for students and other important dates for the 2024–25 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 2024.**

#### • First day of school for students:

**August 19, 2024**

#### • KISTival 2024:

**October 26, 2024**

#### • Autumn vacation:

**October 27 – November 3, 2024**

#### • Winter vacation:

**December 14, 2024 – January 5, 2025**  
(Classes resume from Monday, January 6)

#### • Spring vacation:

**March 22 – 30, 2025**

#### • Golden Week vacation

**May 3 – 6, 2025**

#### • Last day of school for students:

**June 11, 2025**

## Spotlight on Clubs

### Crochet Club (Elementary)

Crochet, the art of creating fabric with a crochet hook and yarn, allows for versatile crafting with materials like thread and wire. In our upper-elementary club, we focus on mastering techniques using yarn, primarily the 4 basic stitches: chains, slip stitch, single crochet, half double crochet, and double crochet. These foundational stitches open up a world of creative possibilities for our young crafters.

Known for its therapeutic benefits, crochet serves as a stress-relieving and meditative hobby. Practitioners often experience a sense of achievement and concentration while creating intricate patterns. Moreover, it enhances fine motor skills, hand-eye coordination, and encourages creativity, perseverance, and patience, making it an enriching addition to students' skill sets.

Comprising 15 students from Grades 3 to 5, our crochet club is divided into two sections: the first section concentrates on teaching traditional crochet techniques, emphasizing the significance of patience and practice in mastering each step; the second section encourages students to explore diverse crochet styles, such as hand and finger crochet, through collaborative learning. This structure not only fosters a creative space but also facilitates the formation of friendships and a sense of camaraderie among the students.



Through our club's inclusive and adaptive approach, students not only hone their crochet skills but also develop social connections and a deeper appreciation for the art of crafting.

**Muskan Manwani**  
Club Supervisor



### Drama Club (Secondary)

During the Autumn Break, while most of us were on holiday, ten brave KIST students from the Drama Club gathered to attend the annual KPASS Middle School Drama Festival at the National Olympics Memorial Youth Centre in Yoyogi. Representatives from twelve different schools came together to learn more about performing, practice improvisational skills, and create new pieces of art with their peers. The first time that it's been held since the end of COVID restrictions, students were able to interact with each other without masks, letting them express themselves as fully as possible to attentive audiences.



Mr. Charlie was present for the event, leading one of the workshop classes for most of the day, but our students were spread out and working alongside students from the other schools and they've kindly provided some quotes below about their experiences to share with everyone.

Hopefully, the students who attended this year will be able to return next time, with many more interested friends in tow!



- ...The KPASS festival has brought me and students from other schools to perform a work. It was a very interesting experience, and I am willing to participate in next year's."
- ...The drama festival helped me build up my confidence. I'm really glad that I participated in this event."
- ...I was surprisingly able to talk to at least 2 people within my group."
- ...I went in to do drama, and I came out with more!"
- ...The drama festival is a very good opportunity to make friends from other schools."
- ...An astonishing experience to return from with so many everlasting memories."
- ...I got to meet a lot of new people and make some great experiences."



## Nurse's Notes

### Staying healthy this winter

This summer has seen an unprecedented influenza epidemic, and many people are concerned about the trend of viral infections in the winter. In particular, children under eight years of age tend to be more susceptible to viral and bacterial infections than adults because their immune systems have not fully developed. It is therefore important to actively adopt a healthy lifestyle.

#### How to stay healthy

##### Practicing good hygiene

Teach good hand hygiene and pay particular attention to your child's hygiene before and after each meal and after playing outside, patting pets, blowing their nose, using the bathroom, and when arriving home from school. Reducing germs does not technically boost immunity, but it is a great way to decrease stress on the immune system. One of the simplest and most effective strategies is washing their hands often with soap and water.

##### Have the flu vaccine

The Japan Pediatric Society recommends two doses for children aged 6 months to 13 years, and one dose for those aged 13 years and older. It has been shown that two doses should be given two to four weeks apart, but it is more effective to give them at least three weeks apart.

##### Eating a balanced diet

Take enough vitamin A ( $\beta$ -carotene), which strengthens the mucous membranes of the throat and nose, and vitamin C, which helps fight invading viruses.

- Vitamin A: Green and yellow vegetables such as spinach, carrots, pumpkin and green pepper
- Vitamin C: Vegetables, strawberries, citrus and kiwifruit

To relieve fatigue, take vitamin B1, which converts carbohydrates into energy, and allicin, which improves its absorption.

- Vitamin B1: Pork, salmon and soybeans
- Allicin: Garlic, onion and leek

##### Regulate the intestinal environment

If the intestinal environment is disturbed by constipation, etc., the immune system will be weakened and this makes it easy for the body to get sick, so it is important to keep the intestinal environment in good shape daily.

##### Refill vitamin D levels

The body creates vitamin D from direct sunlight on the skin when outdoors and vitamin D reduces the risk of respiratory infections. Vitamin D is also found in a small number of foods such as salmon, sardines, herring, mackerel and dried *shiitake* mushrooms.

##### Stay hydrated

Drinking enough fluids is also very important throughout this cold season because many people are unaware that cold-weather dehydration exists.

##### Physical activity

One of the benefits of exercising in winter is that your child's immune system works well to defend itself against the virus and stress is relieved through physical activities, the parasympathetic nervous system increases, and the body relaxes, which in turn activates immune cells.

##### Develop the body's thermoregulatory function

Immune cells are activated when body temperature is high. Let children play outside and exercise as much as possible to develop their sweat glands and build a body that can properly regulate body temperature.

##### Encourage sufficient regular sleep

Establishing a regular bedtime to get enough sleep every night promotes general health, helps children heal from illness, and improves concentration throughout the day.

- Preschool (3–5 years): 10–13 hours, including naps
- Children aged 6–12 need 9–12 hours sleep
- Teens aged 13–18 need 8–10 hours sleep

##### Humidification

During the winter, indoor relative humidity can drop below 30%, which increases virus transmission and other health hazards. Adding moisture to the air you breathe with the help of a humidifier can relieve health issues such as cold and allergy symptoms, dry sinuses, dry skin, cracked lips and more.

##### Control specific medical conditions

e.g. asthma, dry skin and eczema. Cold outside air and dryness can easily aggravate the symptoms of children with asthma and eczema, so make sure to take proper care of your child on your doctor's advice. It is also important to choose clothing that is appropriate for the weather and temperature.

I hope you all stay healthy and have a happy winter break!

**Yukiko Yamazaki**  
School Nurse



#### Reference:

Healthy information for western Australians. (2023, March). *Staying healthy in winter*. Government of Western Australia, Department of Health. [https://www.healthywa.wa.gov.au/Articles/S\\_T/Staying-healthy-in-winter](https://www.healthywa.wa.gov.au/Articles/S_T/Staying-healthy-in-winter)



## KIST Community Association (CA) News



CA Team 2023-24



The enormous response from the school and the parents to the kick-off meeting.



The coffee morning held on September 18, 2023, by the Communications Committee had a huge response.



Library Committee volunteers diligently participated in a book-covering session. Volunteers were also actively involved in sorting and pricing books for the book sale held on October 9, 2023. Despite bad weather and heavy rain, all volunteers reported for duty, and the event was a successful one.



Tetrapak collection drive by the Service Committee.



Safe and secure online workshop by the IT Committee was held on November 7, 2023.



A second-hand uniform sale was held by the Events Committee on November 23.



*Join us!*



## University Guidance News

### Is a gap year the new trend in Asia?

The concept of a gap year between high school and university is not a new one, but it is something that has been increasingly common over the past few years. In Europe/United Kingdom, a gap year is considered normal, taken by 10% or more of students, and is even an application option when applying directly to the UK. However, it has generally been seen in the US and the majority of Asia as "not an option", or something that was only for poor performing students. I would like to debunk some of the rumors of a gap year, and even provide situations when it may be necessary.

### When would a gap year be necessary?

The benefit of the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme (IBDP) is that it allows us to apply to almost any country worldwide; however, "application season" differs greatly from country to country. A few countries are provided below as examples. There may be more worldwide and if there is a specific country you are targeting that isn't common for our students to apply for, please check and/or ask me!

Country	Required gap length	Why?
Japan (Courses in Japanese) Korea (Courses in Korean)	Half-year	Courses start in Spring, so applications don't open until after KIST graduation
Australia/New Zealand	Half-year	Courses start in Spring, so applications don't open until after KIST graduation
Sweden	One-year	Not enough time to apply and get a visa after the IB results come out (cannot apply with predicted IB scores)
Denmark and some other European countries	Not required for entry, but recommended one-year for some top schools/majors	Some schools will recommend because they will need your final IB results first before application to make the strongest applications

### When would a gap year be a good idea, if not necessary?

A gap year is something more and more experts are suggesting due to increasing mental health and stress issues for young people. It also provides opportunities that may not exist without. KIST has students taking gaps every year for a variety of reasons. Below are some common situations where a gap year would be recommended.



- A student who wants to apply for very competitive US universities but has few extra-curriculars.**  
 Aiming for Ivy League or similar universities is becoming so competitive that without a published paper, research/work internship, patented device, national level athletics, or something similar, the route seems impossible. A gap year for a dedicated student would provide the time to achieve something like this, especially if it has been a struggle to do so in Japan because of time or language.
- A student who has received offers from universities, but had tremendous improvement in G12 leading to better IB scores than planned.**  
 A student in this case may have improved so much that their academic profile with their semester grades and/or IB Diploma results have enabled them to apply to universities that they were not eligible for prior.
- A student who has pushed themselves past their limit and is struggling to simultaneously focus on all of the G12 requirements while also applying to universities.**  
 We all need to prioritize our health and wellbeing. No one can have 100% energy throughout the entirety of their life and for some students, regardless of academic ability, this is the time to focus on themselves and their IB courses before taking the next step. *A strong application is better than an early one.*

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### GAP YEAR STATISTICS

- 90%** of students who took a gap year returned to college within a year (<http://online.wsj.com>)
- A recent survey of **300k college freshman** found that only **1.2%** waited a year to enter college.
- U.S. universities report gap year students achieve **23% higher grades** in college than those who went straight to college.
- 60%** of gap year students say they were more serious about academics after returning.
- 60%** of gap year students say their gap years helped them choose a college major.
- 88%** Gap year takers believed it helped their **employability**.
- Average time to graduate for those taking a gap year is **4 years**.
- Top schools like **Amherst, Princeton, and MIT** are now adopting admission policies that make it easier to defer admission for a gap year.

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- **A student who has very ambitious plans for their future (medical school, PhD, law school) and wants to take a break to travel.**

Students with very competitive majors who might be in university for 6+ more years may want to enjoy some time learning about more global cultures and/or doing some short exchange program before they commit themselves to their upcoming academic journey.

- **A student who is facing financial difficulties in terms of their future studies.**

Whether the family needs time to get back on their feet, or the student wants to take the year working to earn money and/or searching for scholarship opportunities and/or searching for more affordable universities (while waiting for the Japanese yen to hopefully become stronger), it is also not a bad choice.



### When would a gap year be a bad idea?

While this article is about the positive ideas behind a gap year, it does not mean it's something everyone should consider. The most concerning part is for a student to do a gap year and do nothing productive. For almost every university across the globe, they will have the question, "Did you take a gap year? If so, what did you do during that period?" If you cannot answer that question with something positive, it may mean that your application results may be worse compared to if you just applied normally during G12.

At KIST, we have around 5–10% of our students taking a gap year each year for many of the above reasons. When entering G12, it may be a good idea to consider if it is something that would work for you or your child. Part of your KIST tuition covers university assistance for applications during one application season. We are still here to provide you with full assistance no matter when you decide to apply. So, please be confident, work hard, and more importantly, take care of yourselves!

### KIST graduate forums—Winter 2023–24

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 below for upcoming events and check the university guidance page on Schoology to view recordings for any you have missed this year or last year.

Date and time (Monday JST)	Name	KIST Class of...	Forum language	Undergraduate university
Dec. 4   7:30 a.m.	Heet	2023	English	Georgia Tech University, USA
Dec. 11   7:30 a.m.	Varun	2023	English	Audencia Nantes School of Management, France
Dec. 18   5:30 p.m.	Hriday	2023	English	National University of Singapore, Singapore
Jan. 8   7:30 a.m.	Shuonan	2023	English	Stanford University, USA
Jan. 15   5:30 p.m.	Saanvi	2023	English	Johns Hopkins University, USA
Jan. 22   7:30 a.m.	Su Yeon	2023	English	University of Tsukuba, Japan
Jan. 22   5:30 p.m.	Hajime	2023	Japanese	Waseda University, Japan
Jan. 29   5:30 p.m.	Shreya	2023	English	University College London (UCL), UK

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