



The Comet

The Newsletter of K. International School Tokyo

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“You will never influence the world by being just like it.”
—Author unknown

From the Head of School



Dear KIST Community,

As we welcome the spring season, I am delighted to share with you the latest updates and highlights from our vibrant school community.

First and foremost, I would like to remind everyone that March 19 marks the official arrival of spring this year. It is a time of renewal, growth, and anticipation for the warmer days ahead. With the changing of the seasons comes a reflection on the passage of time, and indeed, this school year has flown by remarkably fast.

This year has been particularly eventful for us with the exciting move into our new building in January. The transition has been smooth, and I am thrilled to see our students and staff settling in and making the most of our new facilities. The new building not only provides a conducive environment for learning but also symbolizes our commitment to excellence in education, aligning with our mission.

Looking ahead, the spring promises to be a busy and fulfilling time for all of us. In the Elementary School, we are gearing up for our Student Led Conferences on March 20. These conferences are a wonderful opportunity for students to showcase their learning and growth while taking ownership of their educational journey—a reflection of our mission to develop academically motivated individuals.

Following the conferences, we will be observing our spring break from March 23 to 31. This period serves as a well-deserved rest for our students and staff, allowing everyone to recharge and return refreshed for the remainder of the academic year in our safe and supportive environment.

In early April, we have an exciting event lined up as we host a joint International Baccalaureate (IB) and Council of International School (CIS) re-evaluation/re-accreditation visit. This week-long visit will involve hosting nine IB and CIS visiting team members. It is a chance for us to showcase our commitment to academic excellence and high standards and to receive valuable feedback for continuous growth.

As we move into April, our Grade 10 students will be preparing for their IGCSE mock examinations, providing valuable practice and feedback ahead of their final assessments. Simultaneously, our Diploma Programme (DP) students will be gearing up for their examinations beginning in late April.

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DATES TO REMEMBER



March 2024

- 20 School day
- 20 (E) Student-led conferences (No classes)
- 20 (S) Quarter 3 PTS conferences (No classes)
- 20 (G8) IGCSE options session
- 23-31 Spring vacation

April 2024

- 1 School resumes for all students
- 1-26 (G1-G5) English/Mathematics diagnostic testing
- 1-11 (G10) IGCSE mock examinations
- 5 (G1-G9) KIST cross country
- 7-13 IB re-evaluation/CIS re-accreditation visits
- 9 School photographs (for new and absent students)
- 11 (G9) PSAT
- 12 (K1/K2/K3) Cross country (*Morning)
- 15-19 (G5) G6 Extended foundation math 1st test
- 17 (G12) Last day of classes
- 18-23 (G12) DP study week (DP teachers available)
- 26-May 17 (G12) DP examinations
- 27 KPASS MS volleyball (B)
- 29 School day
- 29 (P0-K3) ECE concert (@KIST) (*Afternoon)



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These examinations represent the culmination of years of hard work and dedication, fostering the development of competent, academic individuals—a core aspect of our mission.

In closing, I want to express my gratitude to our entire school community for your ongoing support and commitment to academic excellence and the development of high moral character. Together, we have navigated through challenges and celebrated achievements, embodying the spirit of making meaningful contributions to our global community—a cornerstone of our mission at K. International School Tokyo.



Wishing you all a wonderful spring season filled with joy, growth, and new beginnings.

Warm regards,

Kevin Yoshihara Ed.D.
Head of School/Elementary School
Principal



Important Safety Notice

Preventing choking incidents in children

We hope this newsletter finds you well. As always, the safety and well-being of our students are of utmost importance to us. In light of recent incidents in Japan where children have experienced choking while eating, we would like to take this opportunity to share some important recommendations to ensure the safety of our students during mealtimes.

It is crucial for parents to consider the shape and size of the food and snacks they provide in their children's lunches. Sweet, sticky foods that remain in the mouth for an extended period should be limited. Instead, opt for healthier alternatives such as fruit or vegetables, but ensure they are cut into small, manageable pieces. Items like cherry tomatoes, grapes, apples and cheese should not be provided whole, and any pits, seeds or tough skins should be removed beforehand.

Moreover, we encourage parents to teach their children at home about the importance of taking small bites, chewing food thoroughly, and eating slowly. These habits not only promote better digestion but also reduce the risk of choking incidents.

We want to reassure you that our school cafe has been briefed on these recent choking incidents in Japan, and they are taking necessary steps to ensure the size, shape and texture of food in school lunches are safe for our students. Our cafeteria staff is dedicated to providing nutritious meals in a safe environment, and they will continue to prioritize the well-being of our students.



In conclusion, we kindly ask for your cooperation in implementing these safety measures at home and reinforcing them with your children. By working together, we can create a safer and healthier eating environment for all our students.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Kevin Yoshihara Ed.D.
Head of School/Elementary School Principal



New Faces

Since the last issue of *The Comet*, we have welcomed two new staff members, **Aprillia (April) Dewi**, who has joined our Elementary School Grade 1A instructional team as a Learning Support Instructor, and **Maya Edwards** who has joined our office team as an Administrative Assistant.

On behalf of the school community, we wish Ms. Dewi and Ms. Edwards all the best in their new roles.



Aprillia (April) Dewi
Learning Support Instructor
(G1A)



Maya Edwards
Administrative Assistant
(Main Office)

PYP News



Building blocks of math: The importance of basic number skills and multiplication tables in primary education

In the world of education, mathematics stands as a cornerstone subject, with basic number skills and multiplication tables forming the bedrock upon which mathematical proficiency is built. For primary school children, mastering these fundamental concepts is not just about solving equations or memorizing facts; it's about developing a solid foundation that will support their mathematical journey throughout their academic careers and beyond. For this issue of *The Comet*, we delve into the significance of basic number skills and multiplication tables, exploring their importance in primary education and introducing two innovative online programs—**NumBots** and **TT Rockstars**—designed to enhance children's mathematical abilities.

The importance of basic number skills

Basic number skills encompass a wide range of mathematical abilities, including understanding number relationships, place value, number bonds, and mental arithmetic. These skills serve as the building blocks for more advanced mathematical concepts and are essential for everyday problem-solving and critical thinking.

Place value:

Place value is a fundamental concept in mathematics that underpins the entire number system. Understanding place value allows children to comprehend the significance of each digit in a number and how its position affects its value; for example, in the number 325, the digit 5 represents five units, the digit 2 represents two tens, and the digit 3 represents three hundreds.

Mastery of place value enables children to manipulate numbers fluently, perform addition and subtraction with ease, and develop a deeper understanding of mathematical operations.

Number bonds:

Number bonds, in particular, are a crucial aspect of early number skills. Understanding number bonds—the relationships between numbers that add up to a given total—lays the groundwork for mental arithmetic and helps children develop fluency with numbers. By mastering number bonds, children can more easily perform addition and subtraction, which are essential operations in everyday life as well as in more complex mathematical problem-solving.

Understanding number bonds enhances children's mental arithmetic abilities, allowing them to perform calculations quickly and efficiently. It also lays the groundwork for more advanced mathematical concepts, such as multiplication, division, and fractions.

The significance of multiplication tables

Multiplication tables are another cornerstone of mathematical proficiency, especially as children progress through primary school and encounter more advanced mathematical concepts. Memorizing

multiplication facts not only enhances computational fluency but also facilitates problem-solving in areas such as division, fractions, and algebra.

The ability to recall multiplication facts quickly and accurately is particularly valuable in today's fast-paced world. Whether it's calculating the total cost of items at the grocery store or solving multi-step word problems, fluency with multiplication tables enables children to tackle mathematical tasks efficiently and confidently.

Moreover, mastering multiplication tables lays the groundwork for more advanced mathematical concepts, such as ratio and proportion, as well as algebraic thinking. By internalizing multiplication facts, children develop a deeper understanding of mathematical relationships and can apply this knowledge to solve a wide range of problems across various domains.

Introducing NumBots and TT Rockstars

Recognizing the importance of basic number skills and multiplication tables in primary education, educators and developers have created innovative online programs to support children's mathematical learning. Two prominent examples are NumBots and TT Rockstars, which offer interactive and engaging platforms for developing and reinforcing essential mathematical skills.

At KIST, we implemented these programs earlier in the school year, and a significant number of our students have enthusiastically embraced the content. While homeroom teachers may allocate assignments related to these programs, it's important to acknowledge that they also assign other types of homework which may take precedence on certain days. Nonetheless, we highly encourage you to explore these programs with your children and try to make time for them whenever feasible.

NumBots:

NumBots is an online program designed to help children develop fluency with basic number skills

through interactive games and activities. With a focus on number bonds, addition, subtraction, and mental arithmetic, NumBots provides a fun and engaging way for children to practice essential mathematical concepts.

The adaptive learning system of NumBots adjusts the difficulty level of activities based on each child's progress, ensuring that they are appropriately challenged and supported in their mathematical development. Through personalized feedback and reinforcement, NumBots helps children build confidence and proficiency in basic number skills.



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TT Rockstars:

TT Rockstars takes a unique approach to learning multiplication tables by incorporating the excitement of rock music into mathematical practice. In TT Rockstars, children assume the role of rockstar avatars and compete in timed multiplication challenges against their peers.

This gamified approach not only makes learning multiplication tables fun but also encourages children to practice regularly and strive for improvement. By participating in competitive challenges and earning rewards, children develop a sense of achievement and motivation to excel in mathematical computation.

In conclusion, basic number skills and multiplication tables are fundamental concepts that play a crucial role in primary education. Mastery of these foundational skills is essential for developing mathematical fluency, problem-solving abilities, and critical thinking skills. Online programs such as NumBots and TT Rockstars offer valuable resources

for supporting children's mathematical learning, providing engaging and interactive platforms for practicing basic number skills and multiplication tables.



At KIST, we've integrated these online programs into our curriculum. We understand that parents play a crucial role in supporting their children's learning journey; therefore, we encourage you to engage with these programs at home with your children, whether it's by checking their progress, offering encouragement, or even working on the activities together. Your involvement can greatly enhance their learning experience and reinforce the concepts they're learning in school.

Oliver Sullivan
PYP Coordinator



New Building Construction Update!

It has already been three months since the completion of our new school building! The warm, comfortable gymnasium; the well-equipped labs; the spacious, quiet library suitable for reading and self-study; and the restrooms—which have been commented on as being "like in a hotel!"...students and teachers alike are very pleased with our new learning environment. Also, in the newly established student lounge, G11 and G12 students are able to spend relaxing lunchtimes.



We are pleased to announce that we have received various donations and support from parents for the new building. Recently, we received two beautiful Banksy lithographs, donated by the G1 Toda family, to add a touch of color to the student lounge. Parents and guardians are welcome to visit the student lounge while enjoying a delicious café latte from K. Shop.

On the second and fourth floors of the new building, there are multipurpose rooms equivalent to the size of four and two classrooms respectively. The MPR will be used for a wide range of different activities including DP and IGCSE exams and mock exams, information sessions, advisory and PE classes, after-school activities, and various other events.



On January 31, the eagerly awaited Japanese New Year Celebration was held for the first time in three years. In the second floor MPR, K1–K3 students participated in a *sumo* challenge with *sumo* wrestlers, while G1–G5 students watched a demonstration of *sumo* techniques. In the asphalt area on the first floor, students pounded *mochi* rice cakes with the *sumo* wrestlers, and in the student lounge, all students enjoyed freshly pounded *mochi* to celebrate Japanese culture. We would like to thank all the parent volunteers who helped with the *mochi*-making on the day of the event and the preparations the day before. Thank you so much for preparing delicious *mochi* with sweet bean paste, *kinako* powder, and *nori* seaweed.

Furthermore, we extend our sincere appreciation to everyone from the Musashigawa-beya *sumo* stable who generously supported the event, despite having just concluded the *hatsu basho* (New Year Grand Sumo Tournament). We understand that pounding a large quantity of *mochi* in the cold weather must have been challenging. We express heartfelt gratitude to Musashimaru-oyakata, okamisan, and all the *sumo* wrestlers who prepared for this event from early in the morning. Thank you to the G4 Musashimaru family!

Within the school, there are several areas that you don't normally see. One of these is the emergency supplies storage room on the 6th floor of the new building. While we regularly rotate our emergency supplies, as part of a recent replacement, we received offers of donations from a number of Secondary families. Thanks to these families, we were able to replenish three days' worth of emergency drinking water and food rations for 800 people. Thank you very much.



Demolition of our old school building has begun. While it is sad to see the building we have used for 17 years being taken down, we are looking forward to the excitement of a new, larger school field from October.

Sayoko Naito
Director of Operations



Early Childhood News



Hello KIST Families,

I hope this issue finds you all well! Now that we are in March, we are seeing more spring-like days, and the end of the school year is slowly approaching. All of the children in each K1–K3 class have grown so much during the year! I am sure that you are all quite proud of your child's journey, just as we are.

Over this year, the children at KIST have been using Jolly English, Jolly Phonics and Jolly Grammar to enhance their early literacy learning.

With Jolly English, the K1s were introduced to many different types of sounds in the English language, and by using two text books, they improved their fine motor skills. As an example of a lesson with K1 about sounds, to learn the /ar/ sound, all of the children rode together in an imaginary car, had a big barbecue where they ate hamburgers together to learn /er/ and /ue/ sounds, and went up to the dark science room on the 4th floor to gaze at stars for the /ar/ sound.

In K2, we use three textbooks: Jolly Phonics 1, 2 and 3. With these three books, the children learn 42 sounds, including 72 tricky words, homonyms and alternative spellings. By the end of K2, the children can read decodable sentences and some of them can even write sentences properly with capital letters, finger spacing between words, and a full stop! It is very important that we help the children to read on their own confidently by providing and preparing appropriate books and

materials for their level.

Then K3 starts with Jolly Grammar. With Jolly Grammar, students review what they learned in K2 with Jolly Phonics. Remembering all of the tricky words and alternative spellings can be quite difficult for young children. Additionally, the K3s learn about parts of speech and start looking at sentences more carefully when they read and write. As they learn the English language, it is also crucial that they can understand and identify short and long vowels.

On this page, you can see work samples from each grade level. They have done such a good job with their writing!

Lastly, I hope our two new literacy programs that we started providing this year, "epic" and "Reading Eggs", supported your child's literacy learning at home, too. Please remember, if a book is not decodable or is beyond your child's level, please do NOT force them to read it, as it will just discourage them.

Happy reading, everyone!

Eri Ozawa

Early Childhood Coordinator (K1–K3)/
K2A Teacher

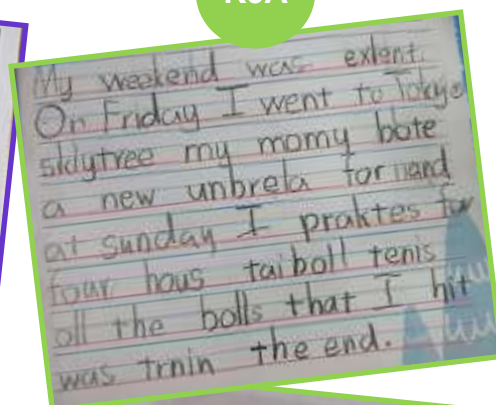


K1A

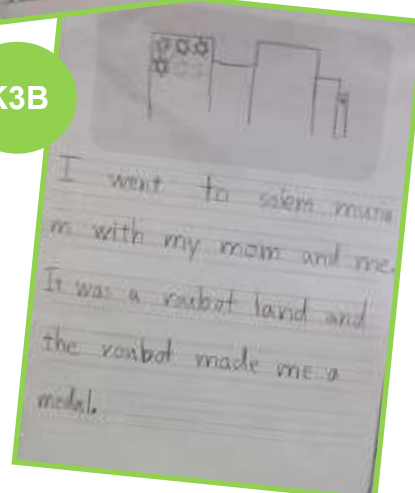
K2A



K3A



K3B



K1B



K2B



A Call to Action for a Sustainable Future



Have you noticed that the seasons seem to be changing more slowly than before? It's not just your imagination; climate scientists from around the world are studying and confirming this phenomenon. The delicate balance of our planet is shifting, and it's up to us to take action. Let's consider the reasons behind the slower change in seasons and think about how we can contribute to preserving and restoring the health of our environment.

Understanding the shift in seasons

The Earth's climate is undergoing unprecedented changes due to human activities, primarily the emission of greenhouse gases like carbon dioxide and methane. These gases trap heat in the atmosphere, leading to a gradual increase in global temperatures. As a result, the natural rhythm of the seasons is being disrupted, causing them to change more slowly than in the past.

One noticeable effect is how certain weather patterns, such as warmer temperatures, are lingering into what was once considered the fall or spring seasons. This shift can have far-reaching consequences for ecosystems, wildlife, agriculture, and our overall well-being. To address this issue, we must adopt sustainable practices that reduce our carbon footprint and promote environmental conservation.

How can we help? Seven easy ways!

1

Reuse and recycle

Remember the three Rs—Reduce, Reuse, Recycle! Use less stuff, reuse what you can, and recycle to help our planet. It's a simple way to reduce waste and protect the environment.

2

Love solar and wind power

Help the Earth by using energy from the sun and wind. You can support clean energy in your community, use energy-saving light bulbs like LED, and turn off devices when you're not using them.

3

Go green with transportation

Single passenger cars aren't ecologically sound. Try taking the bus, carpooling with friends, biking, or walking. Even better, electric cars are cool and help keep the air clean!

4

Protect nature

Get your hands dirty for a good cause! Join tree-planting events, clean up parks, and help save wildlife. By doing this, you're making sure our world stays balanced and healthy.

5

Learn and share

Knowing about climate change is powerful! Stay curious, learn about our planet, and tell your friends what you discover. Encourage everyone to make smart choices that help the Earth.

6

Eat earth-friendly

Support farmers who grow food in a way that's good for the Earth. Choose local and seasonal fruits and veggies, and don't forget to compost your kitchen scraps to help make healthy soil!

7

Reuse stuff and go in circles

Be a superhero for the Earth by choosing things that can be used again or turned into something new. Encourage businesses to do the same! It's like giving things a second chance.

Let's all do our part to make our planet a better place. Small actions can make a big difference!

The changing pace of seasons serves as a reminder of the urgent need for collective action to address climate change. By adopting sustainable practices in our daily lives, we can contribute to a healthier planet for current and future generations. Let's embrace the challenge, make informed choices, and work together to create a more sustainable and resilient world.

Together, we have the power to make a difference.

Clay M. Bradley

Elementary School Vice Principal/Student Care Coordinator



KIPS News

From the P0/P1

More than half a year has passed, and we can see how the P0 and P1 children have grown and developed over the months. As early as this age, our 0- and 1-year-old children are engaged in group activities such as Music and Food Education.

In Music, they get to move their whole bodies to music while playing with a scarf or using a musical instrument. They also have an "instrument time" where they can freely explore different musical instruments related to the term's concept such as beat or pitch.

The P0 and P1 children also join the P2s in Food Education where they listen to the facts about a certain food, look at the pictures of how it changes over time, and use their senses to explore food. In January and February, we had spinach and broccoli as the food of the month. The children had the chance to taste fresh spinach and hold a piece of broccoli with its huge leaves. They also got to compare the raw and boiled vegetables which awakened their inquisitive thinking.



It is fascinating how the children become encouraged to try new things such as eating green vegetables when they see their friends and teachers doing it. Indeed, children learn a lot from copying and observing the people and things around them.

Ma. Cielito Bautista
P0/P1 Teacher



From the P2 classroom...

With the longer than usual summer season and warm weather that lingered until January, it was quite a surprise to have a very snowy day at the start of February. The children were especially delighted because our lessons were all about the winter season—snowflakes, snowmen, winter crafts, places turning majestic white with snow...and yet, the children had not seen all these things until that one amazing snowy day in February. The moment they saw the snowflakes fall from the sky, they started singing the Snowflakes Song as if on cue—"snowflakes, snowflakes, little snowflakes...." The smiles and excitement on their faces were so priceless!

Our Science classes were all about winter animals and how they adapt to the cold. The children are now familiar with blubber, animals changing their colors to white during winter, and hibernation. And since they had not seen any snow yet before that magical snowy day, we made our very own snow using cornstarch and baking soda as our science activity. They were so happy to touch and to feel the "snow" with their bare hands. In Art, we had been making winter crafts such as plastic cup snow globes, snowflakes from cotton buds, and sleeping bear crafts. But the highlight of it all was our winter diorama which the P2s painted and decorated themselves. We also used the "snow" we made in science class to cover the entire ground of our diorama with "snow".

As adults, we may not be fond of snowy days that much. But for children, snowy days can be truly magical, so the next day after the overnight snowstorm, I let the P2 children play with our self-made "snow" and winter diorama on the floor of the P2 classroom. By the time we finished, the floor was a mess. But the laughter, the joy, and the fun learning experiences that the children had were all worth it!

Moreover, aside from academic and exploratory learning, the children's social skills inside the classroom have also improved since the previous term. Although conflicts between friends still exist, the children are now able to apologize to each other by saying "sorry", and they are also learning how to wait their turn. Their English communication skills have also improved. They can now express and tell their teachers how they feel and think in English. Hearing them do so brings a sense of unexplainable glee to all of us in KIPS.



Anna Sophia Valencia
P2 Teacher



"For Tomorrow"—Twelve Years On

In June 2012, our school song "For Tomorrow" was presented to the school community for the first time at our annual end-of-year concert. In recent years, opportunities to enjoy live performances of the song have been severely reduced due to the coronavirus pandemic and the construction of our new school building. In celebration of the song's twelfth anniversary in 2024, we would therefore like to reintroduce the song to our school community.

"For Tomorrow" features an easy-to-sing, memorable melody that was composed especially for us by renowned Japanese musician and songwriter, Tomoyasu Hotei. Unlike many typical school songs, which tend to focus on being a source for creating school pride or for glorifying a school's merits, the idea behind "For Tomorrow" was to create something more meaningful that describes the type of individuals we hope our students will become.

To capture the essence of this concept, the lyrics we developed for the song reflect our mission and vision in conveying the message that we should never forget that we are the ones who shape tomorrow. Just as we are supported by people around us, we must also ensure that we in turn help others. If we support others, or are in some way able to help build a brighter future for those around us, we can take pride in our own lives.

To improve the ongoing state of turmoil in the world, we need talented, caring individuals with a sense of responsibility. It is our hope at KIST to nurture competent, academic young people with high moral character who, through mutual cooperation, can contribute to society by striving to build a better world, not only for themselves and the current generation, but also for future generations. This is the concept behind "For Tomorrow." We hope that the song endures as a source of inspiration for all the members of our school community, and will be cherished for years to come.

Please enjoy listening to "For Tomorrow" at the link below.

Web <https://www.kist.ed.jp/node/614>

Craig Larsen

Director of Admissions and Personnel
(English lyricist, "For Tomorrow")



For Tomorrow

[Karaoke version]

Never forget that all through time
We make the future together
Side by side, hand in hand
Building a better world for tomorrow

We are all sharing the earth
We're not alone
Neighbors and friends helping us learn
All through our lives

Any time you see someone who is in need
Just stop and think what help you can give
Just trust in yourself, believe in yourself
And you can change the world

For everyone

どんなときも わすれないで (Donna toki-mo wasurenai-de)
未来は皆で 作ってくよ (Mirai-wa minna-de tsukuttekuyō)
輝く未来 築くために (Kagayaku mirai kizuku tame-ni)
明日に向かい 歩こうよ (Ashita-ni mukai arukōyō)

人や自然に ささえられ (Hito-ya shizen-ni sasaerare)
私たちは 生きてる (Watashitachi-wa ikiteru)

いつの日か 誰かのために (Itsu-no hi-ka dareka-no tame-ni)
何かができるかな (Nanika-ga dekiru-kana)
誇りをもち 生きてくために (Hokori-o mochi ikiteku tame-ni)
さあ未来へ (Saa mirai-e)

For everyone

La la la la...

We are all sharing the earth
We're not alone
Neighbors and friends helping us learn
All through our lives

Any time you see someone who is in need
Just stop and think what help you can give
Just trust in yourself, believe in yourself
And you can change the world

いつの日か 誰かのために (Itsu-no hi-ka dareka-no tame-ni)
何かができるかな (Nanika-ga dekiru-kana)
誇りをもち 生きてくために (Hokori-o mochi ikiteku tame-ni)
さあ未来へ (Saa mirai-e)

For everyone



Creating Sugoroku Game Boards

In January, Japanese classes in the Secondary School began with the greeting: "*Akemashite Omedetou Gozaimasu* (Happy New Year)." During their first week in the new school building, students made *sugoroku* game boards.

At the beginning of each new calendar year, our Japanese classes provide students with opportunities to experience Japanese culture. Last year, the students experienced activities such as calligraphy lessons, and this year, they experienced playing *sugoroku*, a traditional Japanese New Year's board game. *Sugoroku* is very similar to *Monopoly*, making it easy for students unfamiliar with *sugoroku* to enjoy.

Rather than playing with pre-prepared game boards, I thought it would be more enjoyable for the students to play with game boards they made themselves, so after deciding on a theme and rules together, the students began making their own original *sugoroku* game boards.

The theme we chose was *hatsumode*, which is a traditional Japanese New Year's visit to a shrine or temple for prayer. The students set the 'start point' at their home and set the 'goal' at a temple or a shrine, and then started creating their *sugoroku* boards. Additionally, the students added rules and instructions per square, so that if a player landed on a square, they had to follow the instructions. The students were divided into groups and brainstormed together, incorporating

various rules and instructions related to *hatsumode*; for example, instructions included: "Return home because you forgot your *osaisen* (the offering money)," and "Ask the teacher for *otoshidama* (New Year's money)."

Instead of using the same *sugoroku* board with the same group repeatedly, I encouraged the students to switch groups or exchange their boards with other groups, making it enjoyable for the entire class. I believe it was a valuable cultural experience for the students to link their studies with traditional Japanese customs. Let's

continue to study hard in semester 2.



Yuuki Tanabe
Secondary Japanese Teacher (G6–G10)



Middle School Brain Bowl 2024



The stage was set, the questions were flying, and KIST's Brain Bowl students were ready to dominate at the annual 2024 Middle School Brain Bowl! Six of our sharpest trivia students made their way to Tokyo International School on Wednesday the 7th of February. **Ashlesha** (G6B), **Touma** (G6B), **Taiga** (G6B), **Aakarsh** (G6B), **Hema** (G6C) and **Luca** (Lujia) (G7A), took on the challenge, armed with brains full of knowledge and nerves of steel.

Facing off against mixed teams from seven other KPASS schools, our students proved they were not to be underestimated. From history stumpers to science brain teasers, they tackled each question with enthusiasm that would make KIST proud.



Luca

After multiple rounds covering topics including English, Current Events, Geography, Math, History, Art & Music, Japan, Science, Sport, and General Knowledge, the event came to an end and...a KIST student was part of the winning team! Congratulations to **Luca**, whose team won the overall 2024 MS Brain Bowl.

Well done to all our MS Brain Bowl stars.

Jamee-Grace Rose
Brain Bowl Supervisor



KPASS Instrumental Solo and Ensemble Festival

On Saturday February 24, 2024, four KIST Secondary students represented our school at the KPASS Instrumental Festival held at The British School in Tokyo.

- **Jessica** (G10A)—flute
- **Sungbeen** (G11B)—violin
- **Zia** (G10B)—violin
- **Jiani** (G10B)—piano

The students performed very well, earning positive praise and scoring at the highest level, with commendations from adjudicators.

Robert Collins
Secondary Music Teacher



IGCSE News

Outstanding Pearson School Awards

Since our last issue of *The Comet*, we have received some exciting news about the academic excellence of our recent IGCSE class (current G11). The Outstanding Pearson School Awards were released and KIST had 1 Highest Mark in the World award, 1 Highest Mark in Asia award, and 8 Highest Mark in Japan awards. In fact, KIST students had the highest mark in Japan for all of the Science courses offered by Pearson. Congratulations to these students:



Fumie (G11A):

★ **Highest Mark in the World: English Literature**

Highest Mark in Japan: English Language A

Highest Mark in Japan: Biology

Highest Mark in Japan: Chemistry

Highest Mark in Japan: Physics

Highest Mark in Japan: Geography



Yi Ming (G11B):

Highest Mark in Asia: Further Pure Mathematics



Sungbeen (G11B):

Highest Mark in Japan: Science (Double Award)



Pramiti (G11A):

Highest Mark in Japan: Business



Mamiko (G10A):

Highest Mark in Japan: Mathematics B

Our next group of students are currently preparing for their final IGCSE exams. G10 students and G9 Math B students will sit a mock exam from April 1–11 and the final IGCSE exams will be held from May 10 to June 14. With the upcoming exams, I encourage you and your child to read the next section on exam preparation tips.

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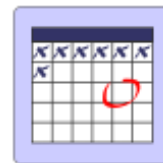
Effective Study Habits in the IGCSE

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.



Keith Erickson
IGCSE Coordinator

Junior Varsity Debate Tournament

Back in September, a group of high school students, led by Ms. McKenzie and Ms. Clarkson, started their preparation for the demanding debate season awaiting them. Most of us, having joined for the first time, were bombarded with new rules and information we had never seen before. As a result, the older members and teachers spent their precious time compiling tips and basic details regarding debate, which they presented to us each week up until December before our first practice round. Thanks to their guidance, the 2023–24 debate season went very well, with multiple students winning debates and some receiving awards!

Before the final tournament, every week in January, the debate team made our way over to St. Mary's International School to do practice rounds. When it was a prepared debate, the topic would be given to the teams the week before the practice round; however, if it were an impromptu debate, we would receive the topic on the day, with only an hour to prepare. Either way, it was stressful—we always sat nervously on the Hanzomon train, grasping our cue cards tightly, as if our life depended on them.

Despite our nerves, the second we were called up to defend our stance on the motion, there was no going back. Words poured out of our mouths as we passionately dominated the floor, appealing to the judges who examined each one of us carefully. We were different people; we were no longer normal KIST students, but much more. After each practice round, regardless of the outcome, each one of us felt a massive wave of satisfaction as we headed back to the long journey home.

The practice debates went by in a blink and soon enough, it was the long-awaited day of the tournament which was held at Seisen International School. Our team consisting of **Joanne, Kanade** and **Ankita** competed as the JV3 (Junior Varsity) team in the tournament along with the other JV teams representing KIST. The motion was "This House believes that the increase in usage of artificial intelligence in secondary education is more beneficial than harmful." The JV teams, despite all our overload of work from school, dedicated time into completing our speeches. The teams collaborated, shared ideas,

and even consulted with subject teachers on how to make strong and concise arguments. We learnt how to establish flexible mindsets from our experience preparing for the debate tournament. Many of us were able to break out of our shells and foster methods to successfully express our views in convincing ways.

Many of us, specifically the G9s who were completely new to the debate team and had never experienced debating before, were extremely anxious about how the tournament would unfold. On the day, we had prepared our cue cards, notes and finalized our detailed speeches. During recess, we would ask our peers to listen to our speeches, give us feedback on our context and help us with our presentation. Some even asked for POIs (points of information) that were very useful in order to prepare for potential arguments that would be made against us.

It was finally the time for the tournament to begin; all debaters were filled with a stir of excitement and apprehension. The rooms in which the debates were held were tense and the atmosphere was heavy but as soon as we would start our lengthy speeches, we were overwhelmed with confidence and passion. After the tournament was over, all debaters were filled with relief and a sense of fulfillment as we all joyfully looked back at our treasurable memories from this year's season.

These past few months have been nothing but memorable—the endless hours of preparation and collaboration, the nerve-racking train rides, the petrifying seconds before each speech. Although the debate season for many of us was a bittersweet experience, we will forever cherish these moments as we prepare for next year.

Ankita (G9A), Joanne (G9A) and Kanade (G9B)



G6 Science Excursion to Yumenoshima

On Wednesday January 31, 2024, all three Grade 6 classes had the opportunity to visit the Yumenoshima Tropical Greenhouse Dome.

After a brief trip on public transport, the classes arrived at the massive greenhouse. There were three sections to the greenhouse, each growing a wide variety of plants for a different habitat. With 20 minutes in each dome, the classes split up in search of plants with distinct adaptations to their leaves, stems and flowers. The activity became a treasure hunt for interesting and diverse adaptations.

Despite the heat and humidity, the students fully explored the greenhouse, finding elegant orchids, fruiting cacao and starfruit, and towering examples of bamboo and *Ravenala madagascariensis*.



By the time the classes gathered for their return to campus, everyone had drawn diagrams and made excellent observations about the various different examples of plant adaptations.



Jarod Elson, Marta Alba, Jamee-Grace Rose
Secondary Science Teachers



Advisory for 'Project: A Peace of Mind'

Our names are **Alex** and **Elina**, and we are the leaders of a newly founded service group, 'Project: A Peace of Mind.'



On the snowy day, we were granted the opportunity to talk with the G5s about conflict resolution during the PYP Exhibition. Being past G5s, (and the most previous cohort to have the Exhibition in-person) we understood the difficulties of working effectively with the same few people for an extended period, and how that may affect the final performance in front of countless students, teachers, and staff.

During the short but fruitful session, we discussed possible conflict scenarios that may have arisen during the remaining time of the Exhibition, and ended with a verbal reflection about the fundamental reasons why conflicts happen and methods to prevent them from occurring.

We hope the G5s had a great experience of undergoing the Exhibition, and we wish them the best—conflict-free—for the remaining months of their Elementary School life!

Alexandra (G10B) and **Elina** (G10A)



G7 Excursion to Ueno Zoo

This February, Grade 7 students had the opportunity to visit Ueno Zoological Gardens for one day as part of their Science and I&S courses. The students spent the day completing a scavenger hunt activity in which they had to visit different areas of the zoo in small groups, take pictures and answer questions.

This excursion was part of the Ecology unit, which is covered in both subjects in Grade 7. Students were able to find real-life examples of things they had learned about in Science and I&S class, including animal adaptations to different biomes and threats to biodiversity in different habitats.

The students got a chance to see gorillas and tigers from the tropical rainforests of South America, as well as rhinos and giraffes from the African savanna, and even giant pandas from the mountainous regions of central China.

Despite the cold and rainy weather, the students had a wonderful time exploring the wonders of nature and the implications of human activities on biodiversity.

Marta Alba and Hanad Mahamed
LSP Science Teachers
Anna Holdaway and Aika Nukariya
LSP I&S Teachers



G7A posing in front of the Steller's sea eagle



(L>R) Xiaoye (G7A), Ishan (G7B), Jun (G7A) and Kaitlyn (G7B) looking at the flamingos



(L>R) Yuki (G7A), Harsh (G7B), Andrew (G7A), Ann (G7A) and Yun (G7A) looking at the penguins



(L>R) Keya (G7A) and Akshita (G7A) looking at the prairie dogs



G7B posing in front of the Steller's sea eagle



(L>R) Ryan (G7B) and Yuki (G7A) showing the otter plushies they bought as souvenirs

English Department Snapshot



Over in English, we have had a busy Semester 1 as usual, with students studying a range of texts from Shakespeare and Charles Dickens, to Margaret Atwood and Nawal El Saadawi. We are delighted to present a departmental snapshot to give you a flavor of what we have been doing!

What does English mean to students?

This semester, our HS English students took a moment to reflect on the importance of English beyond the classroom! We conducted a short survey asking students for their views:

1. What is the first word that comes to mind when you think of English?



2. What are the most important skill/s that you develop by learning English?



Karen Donald-Godfrey
Secondary English Teacher



The importance of reading

We talk about it a lot as English teachers, but why is reading independently so important?

- Improves reading fluency and critical thinking skills, which helps across **all** your subjects
- Reading about different topics increases your **general knowledge** and understanding of the world—a recent favourite book that I loved was called 'The Mountains Sing' and it taught me a lot about the Vietnam war
- Increases **language acquisition**—the more you read, the more words you know! **A good rule of thumb is that there should be a two to three words that you don't know on every page.**

- Promotes **concentration** and **focus**
- Reduces **stress** and **anxiety**

I hope this encourages you to pick up a book from the LMC today!

Isobel Duncan
Subject Area Coordinator—English



Debate: The secret weapon to academic success!

This year, our debate team worked tirelessly during Semester 1 to prepare for the upcoming season. We shared many highs and lows, culminating in some brilliant success for KIST, as you'll read in this very issue! However, you may be asking yourself: what's the point?

Firstly, engaging in debates strengthens critical thinking abilities. Students learn to analyze issues from multiple perspectives, formulate logical arguments, and evaluate evidence effectively. This fosters a deeper understanding of complex topics and teaches them to think critically about the world around them.

Additionally, mastering debate enhances communication skills. Students must articulate their thoughts clearly and persuasively, improving their ability to express themselves in various contexts. This proficiency in communication not only helps them succeed academically but also prepares them for success in future endeavors, whether in college, the workplace, or everyday interactions. It'll also prepare you for the important IO assessment in Grade 12.

Finally, participating in debates promotes active learning. Instead of passively absorbing information, students actively engage with course material, developing a sense of ownership over their education.

Personally, from competing in my own debate team as a senior, to mentoring younger students, to eventually coaching the team along with Ms. Kemble-Clarkson, I am constantly learning and developing essential communication and critical thinking skills. Sound interesting? Consider giving debate club a go next semester!

Amy McKenzie
Secondary English Teacher



LSP dramatic monologue performances

LSP English teachers watched students perform masterfully crafted monologues, based on a text they were studying. Students were asked to write a script as a selected character, crafting language and structure to demonstrate their understanding of the context and important themes that outline the text. LSP teachers were blown away by the performances! A special mention to students who brought in props or selected minor characters to show off their knowledge of the text:

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Grade 6: 'A Midsummer Night's Dream' by Shakespeare

- **Chan Kwon** (G6B)—acted as Titania
- **Ishika** (G6A)—acted as Hermia
- **Jingwen** (G6C)—acted as Puck

Grade 7: 'A Christmas Carol' by Charles Dickens

- **Jun** (G7A)—acted as Jacob Marley
- **Madoka** (G7B)—acted as Scrooge's relative
- **Suguru** (G7B)—created a meta script where the character summoned the ghosts
- **Shitoku (Antony)** (G7B)—acted as Bob Cratchit

Grade 8: 'Romeo and Juliet' by Shakespeare

- **Noah** (G8A)—acted as Tybalt
- **Jiwoo** (G8C)—acted as Rosaline
- **Tyler** (G8C)—acted as Paris
- **Sarah** (G8A)—acted as the Nurse
- **Mana** (G8A)—acted as Juliet
- **Tianlin** (G8B)—acted as Rosaline
- **Carys** (G8B)—acted as Rosaline

The oral assessments happen once a year for our LSP classes, providing an opportunity for our students to access, break down, and bring to life challenging texts in a way that engages others. These assessments develop their speaking and listening skills, which connect to life beyond the classroom, as they will be assessed in a similar way for their future DP oral exams, and interviews in their future.



Olivia Kemble-Clarkson
Secondary English Teacher

Counting down to KISTory 2024

In 2019, the legendary Mr. Steve Otis (a former KIST English teacher) approached me to see if I could use my previous career experience as a magazine editor to design a magazine that showcased student work. The school had previously run a club publication, KMag, that was spearheaded by editor **Marlinah** (Class of 2020) that had provided students with a chance to showcase their writing. While KMag ceased publication, Mr. Otis was inspired by the students' initiative and was determined to continue their mission to promote a culture of writing in the school. From that, the first edition of KISTory came together, compiled from stand out examples of writing produced in the classroom from English and I&S. It came in at 28 pages. A great start, but we were inspired to do more. 2020 was going to be bigger and better.

And then there was a pandemic.

And no KISTory 2020.

We could have been defeated... but we weren't.

With momentum back in motion, the 2021 edition again topped out at 28 pages and created even more opportunities to showcase the brilliant work of the KIST community. Taking the reigns as editor-in-chief, Ms.

Duncan's guidance and vision saw the 2022 edition of KISTory solidify its form and broaden its horizons to include more specific content. The 2023 edition was the first time every student from G6–G11 made a submission. As a result, not only were we spoiled for choice, but we were able to showcase the incredible breadth of literary talent at this school: even from students who may not have considered themselves writers before.

As the task of compiling and designing the 2024 edition begins in earnest, we are again reminded of the great talent we have the privilege to nurture at KIST. Not only is the writing exemplary, but thanks to the guidance and encouragement of Ms. Cho, this year's cover designs will showcase the incredible creativity in our Visual Arts department. 2024 will indeed be another stellar chapter in KISTORY.



Jade Bonus
Secondary English Teacher

What is ELS?

You're sitting there, working on piecing together some part of an assignment that your English teacher has given you, something that you've read on the board and need to analyze, but you're not sure how to put it into the right words, or maybe, you don't fully understand what the words on the board mean in the first place. You want to raise your hand for some help, but the teacher is across the room helping another student, and you're not sure what to do...

And suddenly, I'm there, looking over your work, asking if you've heard of some other word, or some phrase, some device...and things just *click*. You have an idea of what you're doing and so you can start writing again.

That is the function of English Language Support instructors: we're there to support students in the classroom where they may need some help understanding English or aren't entirely sure how to express their ideas. However, because there's only one of me, I've got to move around between classes so I can be around when and where I might be most needed or effective; sometimes, this also means I will be present in other subjects when a teacher would like me to support a class during some in-class essay writing.

ELS is there for anyone who needs a bit of a boost when working in English, especially writing, but most of what I do is try and give you the tools to let you express yourselves as well as you can so that your teachers can understand your ideas as well as you can make them. From things as small as figuring out a definition, to bouncing ideas back and forth over scaffolding a What-How-Why paragraph, to teaching Academic Writing, English Language Support exists to, well, support you!



Charles Owen
Secondary ELS Instructor

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Holly Thompson—author visit

After finishing reading 'Orchards', we had the rare experience of meeting the author, Holly Thompson! She visited us and gave a presentation which gave valuable information on her time creating the novel. Holly told us about the methods she used as a writer, how she researched and the techniques she used.



Yuki (G7A)

All the students took part in additional writing activities such as writing chain poems, using synonyms in writing, and there was a writing competition too! It was a wonderful experience for all the students.



G6 Visual Art—Unit 3: Assemblage

This unit, G6 are exploring assemblage art. Assemblage, sometimes referred to as junk art, sees artists repurposing found and discarded objects into reimagined creations. With links to sustainability, this unit has been designed to encourage students to consider how they can upcycle items normally discarded in everyday life into art objects.

In our lesson about Kurt Schwitters, a German artist working in the early 20th century, who used small items found on his daily travels, students used a range of thin cardboard boxes (lovingly saved from the recycling collections of the KIST staff community!) to make their own pieces inspired by his 'Merz' paintings.

While creating their art pieces, students enthusiastically cut, ripped and arranged the cardboard, embracing a range of approaches. Some students focused on colour, some on text, while others explored the three dimensions. All students produced pieces of great interest that highlighted their creativity.



As we continue the unit, students will explore the work and practices of prominent artists from the assemblage world such as Rosalie Gascoine and Vhils before creating their own unique pieces.

Jade Bonus
G6 Visual Art Teacher



G11 DP Physics Excursion



In the last week of February, the G11 DP Physics class immersed themselves in an excursion to **Tokyo Dome City Attractions**. It was an exhilarating field trip designed to put their experimental skills to the test within the context of their current unit. In the middle of palpable excitement, strong windy conditions, and some attractions undergoing maintenance, students still had the chance to exercise the technological skills required in the new Physics curriculum.

Armed with nothing more than their smartphones, they recorded videos and used accelerometers built into their devices to collect lots of experimental data that can be used for data processing and analysis in investigations assessing their AO2 and AO3 criteria in S2. The attractions morphed into an expansive physics playground, each twist, turn, and drop serving as invaluable data for their scientific inquiries.

This immersive experience allowed students to witness the real-world applications of scientific principles. Beyond the academic gains, the experience etched indelible memories, serving as a testament to the sheer joy of learning Physics.

Cesar Cely

Subject Area Coordinator—Science



Trip to Trotec

The Grade 12 DP Business Management class visited Trotec Ltd. on the 30th of November to understand business in a real-world context.

Before visiting, we did some research into Trotec's origin and the products they sold. There we learned about Trotec's organizational structure, budget construction and their marketing methods and plans. Later, using this information we created a SWOT analysis for Trotec, and at the end enjoyed pizza while discussing the learning of the day.

Comments from some BM students:



"I was actually able to contextualize what we learned in class and earned new calculations like the closing ratio."



"I was able to use my prior knowledge of business and new understanding of finance (leads and closing ratio) to recognize Trotec's business operations."



"I liked being able to learn about the SWOT analysis and budgeting from a new contextual perspective to apply in my future business projects (and the pizza!)."

Visiting Trotec deepened our understanding about corporate decision making in consideration of marketing, finance, and organizational structure. It was a great experience for all of us and gave many of us a more realistic outlook on many theories we learned during our class. I hope such trips will keep occurring, helping spark new ideas and experiences in the future for us all!

Diya (G12A)



G12 Visit to the JPX

The students of Grade 12 Economics recently went on a field trip to JPX, the Japan Exchange Group, to learn about its history and the operation of the Tokyo Stock Exchange (TSE). During a tour of the establishment, students learned how the stock exchange works through an informative video and saw the real-time fluctuations in the stock market. We were also given advice on how to trade shares and further general information about the Japanese stock exchange, such as the daily flow of money in the stock exchange and the total market capitalization of the JPX, as can be seen on the big screen in the picture above.



Towards the end of the trip, students were given an opportunity to attempt stock trading on their own in a simulated game containing three fictitious companies and ¥10 million. In this game, the 23 students competed against each other to strive to make the largest profit within ten days of trading in the simulated market. Not only did we have to use critical thinking and make educated predictions based on the trends of the market, we also had to consider changes within the economy through imaginary news articles that



informed us of interest rate fluctuations along with other changes and how they would affect share prices. Through this activity, students were able to interactively learn about the stock market with a hands-on experience. At the end, a ranking was given based on the total profit through trading, with G12B student **Han** winning the competition with over ¥3.1 million made in profit. Overall, it was an invaluable and engaging trip for the students of G12 Economics, perhaps inspiring a generation of future stock traders.



Kushagra (G12B)



Athletics Update

Winter season 2023–24

Kanto JV boys', JV girls' and ISTAA U-18 girls' & boys' basketball

Our JV girls' team had a very competitive season in the Kanto League finishing with 4 wins and 3 losses with one of the losses being by 3 points to ASIJ, and two losses being by 2 points to CAJ and ISSH. The girls were in every game and were unlucky to not have finished better. An unfortunate series of events happened in the first round of the tournament which saw KIST lose to a Seisen team they had thoroughly beaten 10 days earlier. They went on to beat BST after that game. In **ISTAA U-18 girl's** action, KIST were almost unbeatable suffering just one loss to LFIT 22–21. In the ISTAA tournament held at KIST, the girls played arguably their best basketball of the season thrashing Columbia 36–13 in the semi-finals and exacting revenge against LFIT 31–22 to become **ISTAA Champions** for the first time since 2015.



U-18 girls' basketball champions

Our JV boys' team started the season competitively and were close in every game except the last one in which a very well-practiced St. Mary's team gave us a thumping. The boys finished with one win and 5 losses but were unlucky to not have had a few more wins (we gave CAJ and YIS their only wins of the season in games KIST could have won). Some extenuating circumstances prevented the JV boys' participation in the tournament at Kinnick. In **ISTAA U-18 boys** action, KIST were missing players in key games against Aoba and then Horizon and lost winnable games. In particular, the game against Horizon was a case of



U-18 boys' basketball

subpar free throw shooting which is where the boys lost the game. To illustrate how close the top boys' teams were this year, KIST lost a close 4-point game to LFIT, the eventual tournament winners. It was a sad ending for the U-18 boys, having won the ISTAA championship last year and not making the tournament this year.

A special thanks to all the seniors who have been part of the KIST basketball team for several years: Haruto (G12A), Ethan (G12A), Anant (G12A), Selin (G12A), Amane (G12B) and Maya (G12B). Fabulous effort over the years!! —Mr. Ota



U-18 basketball seniors

Kanto MS girls' soccer

The MS girls soccer team, despite best efforts from all, had a tough season finishing 9th on the ladder. The girls played with heart the entire season with special mentions for our star keeper **Keya** (G7A), highest scorer **Iora** (G8B) and our youngest but most energetic player **Aki** (G5A) who scored our final goal of the season. —**Coach Beaton**

Thank you, Mr. Beaton for your efforts in organizing the MS girls' football team!



MS girls' soccer

Kanto Varsity/JV boys' football

The JV boys' team was a blend of players from G9 to G11 and over the course of the season played 8 games against other Tokyo schools. The squad fostered a fantastic team spirit and determination, and despite the challenges posed by limited facilities due to the new building construction, they worked hard to improve every game. The season culminated in the JV tournament, where the KIST boys put in an outstanding performance against BST to win 5–0, and finished a well-deserved 3rd place in the tournament. Everyone who participated throughout the season made a valuable contribution, and as their coach for these games, I was very proud of the players' positive attitude, commitment, and perseverance. —**Coach Arnold**

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JV boys' soccer

The Varsity soccer team had several positive performances that unfortunately did not translate into positive results. With long travel required for a number of games, KIST always tried to match the efforts of bigger squads but came up just short. Despite the results, the team scored some sensational goals, the pick of which include a Beckham-style strike from the halfway line by **Aidan** (G12B) and an incredible solo goal by **Linya** (G9B). A 3–1 victory over the German school was the highlight of the season, with many players getting a chance for game time in the win. — **Coach Archer**

Thank you, Mr. Arnold, for taking the JV team this year! Some very close results. A shout out to Mr. Archer who has supported many of the football teams each year!



Varsity soccer

Kanto JV wrestling

This year, KIST participated in Kanto Plain wrestling for the first time in our history. Training was tough, but



JV wrestling

the KIST wrestlers rose to meet the challenges head on. When competing, KIST performed admirably at the CAJ invitational as well as the JV end of season Jamboree racking up a number of medals, including numerous bronze, silver and golds. Great job this season KIST—I cannot wait to see everyone back on the mat next year! — **Coach Buck**

Kanto MS, ISTAA U-14 boys' basketball

The boys still have the ISTAA U-14 tournament to go which happens in early March. The season has been very tough for the MS boys. There were many challenges that they all faced; however, they were all resilient and faced their challenges head on. MS boys' A team were 0 wins this season but their record does not show the big improvements they all have made. We had a range of boys on the team with even some G6s showing KIST spirit. I have been proud of them this season. The MS boys' B team track record also does not show the development they all had. With the games being 0 wins, they all played cohesively developing their own skills within practice. Even coming close with teams such as CAJ and Saint Maur till endurance getting the better of them. They all played well, and we hope they carry on developing their skills to be ready for next season.

A very big thank you to Coach Mahamed for his efforts in coaching our MS boys' basketball team again this season and also to assistant Coach Grant for running the B team this year.



MS boys' basketball

Spring season Kanto teams (baseball, MS girls' basketball, MS boys' volleyball, JV girls' football) started training in February. Games will start in March with tournaments on the first Saturday in May. The ISTAA League futsal teams will start training in the first week of April.

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

Dennis Ota
Athletics Coordinator



KIST Train Safety Campaign

In recent weeks, we have, as a whole school, been learning about how we can keep ourselves and others safe. In Advisory classes, we have been learning how to spot the signs of *chikan* and *tousatsu* behaviour, two of the main issues facing young people when travelling on trains. For those within our community who are not familiar with these terms, *chikan* is the touching of another person without consent and *tousatsu* refers to the illegal filming or photography of another person without consent. Whilst *chikan* usually refers to behaviour that occurs on the train or at the train station, *tousatsu* could occur anywhere—on the train, on the street, or in a shop. In 2023, a new law was passed specifically to deter *tousatsu*.

Not only have we been learning about safety tips, we have also launched a badge design campaign. These badges are going to be sent off to a badge making company and all students in the school will be given one of these badges to wear on their blazer or school bag.

The purpose of displaying the badge is to show two things. Firstly, KIST students have been educated about these issues and understand their rights to travel safely without fear. Secondly, students will not tolerate this behaviour and will actively represent the KIST values of community when traveling around Tokyo.

A big congratulations to **Jash** (G9B) and **Aimi** (G7B) whose designs (pictured on this page) have been

chosen to represent the school. Both these designs will be turned into badges and students will receive one of the designs at random. Thank you to all the students who entered the competition.



Furthermore, we have also prepared a short information presentation for KIST families. The presentation has been recorded by Mr. Archer, and in Japanese by KIST students **Satori**, **Mamiko** and **Reika**, who are all in G10A. A huge thank you to the girls for doing such a professional job. These videos will be released via E-Communications and available for all families to learn the same content as the students.

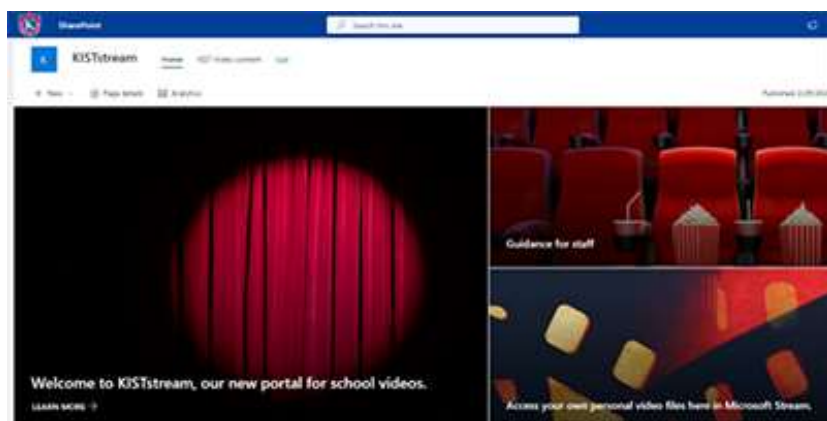
Together, as a KIST community, we can keep the current (and future) generations of students safe when travelling to school.

Matthew Archer
Student Care Coordinator (Secondary)



Introducing KISTstream

A new location for school video content



Due to a change in the Microsoft Stream video service, the school has created a new SharePoint site, called **KISTstream**.

KISTstream replaces the previous Microsoft Stream portal and is the new central location for the KIST community to access and enjoy important school video content, including announcements, graduate forums, concerts, etc.

KISTstream can be found at the web address below (please feel free to add this link as a bookmark):

Web <https://kisted.sharepoint.com/sites/StreamPortal>

The school community can also access a catalogue of old school video content by navigating to the Resources section of the **KISTv** group on **Schoology**.

Web <https://kisted.schoology.com/group/5891518227/>

Please contact IT Support (it.support@kist.ed.jp) if you have any questions about this change.

IT Support Team

Spotlight on Clubs



Sculpting Club (Elementary)

There's something quite magical about being able to create something with your hands. It's a very fulfilling feeling to hold an artwork that you've worked hard on for many hours. Students who share this sentiment have joined this year's sculpting club, where they can direct their creativity and artistic skills to make things they didn't think they could do.

The club members use an air-dry polymer clay that they don't normally get to use in class. This type of clay can be difficult to work with when you first use it, but a great material once you get used to it. To help the students make their sculptures, they also use professional-grade sculpting tools that allow them to cut, slice, poke, smoothen, form and assemble their work. After a sculpture finishes drying, the students paint them using acrylic paints and coat them with a layer of clear varnish. The students have made some amazing things from small figures to decorative key chains that some chose to hang on their bags.

The sculpting club has 14 members composed of a mix of grade 3 and grade 4 students, some of whom are returning members from last semester. Making sculptures is a fun and rewarding activity that can be enjoyed by anyone who has a desire to create.



Julian Dave
Club Supervisor



Music Clubs (Elementary/Secondary)

Band

The school band welcomes G6–G11 students who are interested in performing a variety of rock/pop songs. In Semester 2, the band plans to participate in the inaugural Modern Music Festival in Yokohama in April and KIST's end-of-year concert in June.



Musical

Acting, singing, and dancing—musical club members spent Semester 1 learning music from the 'Wizard of Oz'. In Semester 2, we have been broadening performances to include well-known songs from other hit musicals.



Orchestra

The school orchestra consists of G4–G11 students who have spent this year learning special arrangements of popular film music. As well as performing at school events, several students have represented KIST at KPASS music festivals this year.



Choir

Elementary (G4–G5) and Secondary students have enjoyed learning to sing in harmony in the school choir. Welcoming all interested

students, the choir club meets weekly, with students hoping to participate in local choral festivals and school events.

Staff 10!

In this month's Staff 10!, we are pleased to present **Yuqi Zhao** who joined us in August 2020 as a Mathematics teacher in the Secondary School. She is also the homeroom advisor for G10B during the current school year.

1) Tell us something interesting about your hometown.

My hometown is Beijing, and people often say it was home to many old emperors, which is indeed true. I believe that half of the sightseeing spots in Beijing are linked to the places where emperors once lived or frequented (e.g. the Forbidden City, the Summer Palace, the Temple of Heaven). One of my cherished childhood memories was frequently visiting these ancient places with my parents.

2) What is your favorite place in the world?

Lake Tekapo—I'll never forget the stargazing experience there. There were so many stars and they felt so close that I could almost grab them. It was also my first time seeing a few zodiac constellations. I was asked not to use my phone to protect the dark sky. It was truly unforgettable to disconnect from the world and to embrace nature with my whole heart.

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

I cannot think of anyone I would like to meet and talk to. I am already grateful for being able to meet my family and friends from time to time.

4) Do you have any special skills or talents?

Unfortunately, I do not have any special skills or talents or not as far as I found. I do wish I could sing perfectly though.

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

When I was a kid, I was sent to practice gymnastics for a few years. I was so eager to try every movement without any fear. Seeing me like this, my parents decided to let me go back to regular school since they were worried that I would get critically injured in this sport. However, despite practicing for a few years, I cannot even do a split now!

6) What is your most prized possession?

I like to collect memories, so my most precious possession so far is a 'Cookie Time' box (a brand from New Zealand selling cookies) containing various objects I collected during my years back in New Zealand. There are letters, gifts, photos, and even a card key for the apartment I used to live in.

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

Reflective by nature, I tend to reflect a lot. When I was a student, constant reflection on my learning was an effective strategy. It helped me see the connections between topics, and reflecting on my mistakes also contributed significantly to my improvement on exams. Now, as an adult, reflection helps me to understand myself better—my strengths and weaknesses. It also serves as a means of self-acceptance.

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

I just wanted to get more involved in team sports during my school years, but the chance was so limited because I had to focus on my academics. I remember having so much fun every time I played sports with my friends in PE, and that's also where I learned about teamwork, tenacity, and maintaining a positive mindset.

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

I guess I would have the same answer as some of my students, which is the ability to manage stress. I tend to get very nervous and stressed internally when a lot comes up.

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

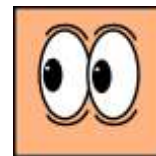
You never know what someone is going through. Be kind. Always.



Ms. Zhao meeting a "resident" of Shirakawa-go, Gifu.



Nurse's Notes



Protecting your child's eye health

The number of children with low vision is increasing every year as their living environment changes. Nearly 70% of high school students, 60% of junior high school students, and more than 30% of elementary school students have naked eye visual acuity of 1.0 or less. Let's protect our precious children's eyes by controlling the progression of myopia.

Factors that increase the risk of developing myopia in the future:

- Parents are nearsighted (not only genetic factors, but also environmental factors influence the risk of developing myopia)
- Reading at close range (within 30 cm), such as when holding a book close to their eyes
- Playing video games or using smartphones for more than 1 hour continuously
- Sleep deprivation
- Late bedtimes
- Spending less time outdoors



If your child seems to be having difficulty seeing in daily life or you have any concerns about the way he/she sees things, visit an ophthalmologist and have a vision examination. The ophthalmologist will examine the child and, if necessary, correct the child's vision (including nearsightedness, farsightedness and astigmatism) according to the child's needs.

Some ophthalmologists offer the following treatments to control the progression of myopia:

- **Orthokeratology:** Special hard contact lenses that are put in at night before bed and removed in the morning. The lenses correct vision by changing the shape of the cornea while the patient sleeps.
- **Eye drops:** Eye drops are used to control the elongation of the ocular axis (depth of the eye). A doctor's prescription is required.
- **Multifocal contact lenses:** Contact lenses that vary in power from the center to the periphery of the lens.
- **Progressive spectacles:** A single lens that varies in power according to its position.

The condition of a child's eyes can change easily during the growth period, so even if the vision test shows no problems, your child should still have regular eye examinations.

What you can do to prevent myopia and further progression of the condition:

- **Get exposure to sunlight through outdoor play.**
If possible, children should be active outdoors for at least two hours per day. It has been reported that the risk of myopia decreases with more time spent outdoors, even if their parents are myopic.
- **Avoid prolonged close-up work.**
Activities that involve prolonged close-up work put strain on the eyes and increase the risk of myopia: It is important to take a 5-minute eye break every 20–30 minutes to rest the eyes, such as by opening a window and looking into the distance.
- **View things in a bright environment.**
Reading in bed in a dark room or looking at a monitor such as a smartphone is very stressful on the eyes.
- **Have regular eye examinations.**
Myopia tends to develop around the age of eight, and with the recent development of myopia at a younger age, even children under the age of six can develop myopia. It depends on heredity and their living environment.
- **Be aware of eyestrain.**
Prolonged up-close viewing not only tires the eyes, but also add to the risk of myopia developing. Avoid prolonged TV viewing and smartphone use and rest your eyes in moderation.
- **Actively consume foods that are good for eye health.**
 - * **Crocerin**, a type of carotenoid, is effective in inhibiting the progression of myopia. Examples: saffron, beech nuts (saffron rice, chestnut kinton, takuan [pickled radish] etc.).
 - * **Lutein**, a type of carotenoid, protects the eyes but cannot be produced by the body. Examples: broccoli, spinach, molokheiya, egg yolks etc.
 - * **Vitamin A** is a fat-soluble vitamin that maintains eye health. Examples: pumpkin, carrots, eel, liver etc.



We are considering offering eye exams for students over several days later in the year with the assistance of parents. If this plan goes ahead, families will be informed at the appropriate time.

Yukiko Yamazaki
School Nurse

Reference:

Children's Eye Health Development Guidebook for Educational Institutions: Rohto pharmaceutical company.
Retrieved from <https://jp.rohto.com/learn-more/eyecare/all/myopia/menokenkou/>

KIST Community Association (CA) News



Library Committee

The CA hosted a holiday bake sale on December 15, 2023. This event was held in collaboration with the ESRC for the first time. The ESRC funded free popcorn as well. We appreciate the school community's generous donations, which made the event possible.



As the new school building was inaugurated in January, library volunteers assisted in setting up the LMC.



Events Committee

The Events Committee held a holiday wreath event on Friday, December 15, 2023. We helped the Union of Friendly Reforestation with a wreath-making event in the MPR. A secondary student service group gave a brief presentation on SDGs.

The event was enjoyed by 15 children and their parents. Many beautiful and interesting wreaths were made.



The committee extended their help with washing the rice and cleaning utensils the day before the Japanese New Year celebration *mochi* making event.



Service Committee

The Service Committee supported the Service and CAS explanation session (English/Japanese) on February 9 and 16. CAS and Service activities are elements that students must complete as part of the DP/IGCSE/LSP. To assist parents to understand CAS better, the CA invited Ms. Wakasa, the KIST CAS Coordinator, to explain the content of CAS. The session was attended by 52 parents.



Join us!



*Thank you
for all your
support!!*

University Guidance News

KIST university updates!

Thanks to our new building, we have some updates on how university advising will work and things to look forward to in the future. I hope to continue improving efforts here so that university applications can be more efficient (saving families time and money), while also having more students getting into their top choices.

A new office location



Although a lot of us have settled into our locations in KIST, to make things more convenient and accessible, the University Guidance Office will be moving across the hall on the fourth floor. It will now be next to the care office on the north side of the building. **You walk past room 419 and it will be the third door on the left.** Please come visit soon!

World map

A world map has recently been posted on a corkboard of the fourth floor. This shows the final choices and study destinations for KIST graduates from the last three years. This provides two large benefits:

- First, I hope it inspires students to see the **variety of locations** that are possible after graduation. 95% of the universities on the map are providing programs in English. Whether our students are in France, the Netherlands, Korea, or Hong Kong, they can study what they like and in a language they can understand. Of course, learning another language while in their new study location is also highly recommended.
- Second, because this shows *only the last three years*, it gives us not only a realistic perspective of what is possible "now", it also means that we have a point of contact if students/families have questions. If you see a location on the map that is of interest, I can contact our graduate and see if they are willing to have a conversation with you.



Limiting applications

A small change, that may sound large at first, will be coming to the university application policy within KIST and will match many international school policies. Since I have been a counselor here, I have never instituted a limitation on the number of applications a student could apply to; the word "limit" rarely sits well with me. However, to keep supporting students in the best way I can, that will be changing from the 2024–25 school year.

Why the change?

I want to be very forward and mention this change is **not** from a lack of resources or wanting to reduce the amount of work I do. **The main issue is efficiency and opportunity cost.** Students have increasingly felt pressure from their families and peers to apply to more and more destinations, some of which they have no intention of attending. During the IB Diploma Programme, time is precious. Students are sitting for mock exams, preparing for university entrance tests, writing essays, doing interviews, and trying to maintain a social life alongside their extracurriculars. **Applying to universities that you will never attend is wasteful.** Time spent on applications without direction or done solely to "show off" takes away from time that could be used making more purposeful applications.

How does this benefit students?

A student can only attend one university. If we are all on the same page and have more focused targets, the quality of applications will increase. For the past two years, over 90% of our graduates have gotten into a university they listed as a "top choice", and this is the most important metric to track, in my opinion. The average number of applications for these past graduates has been less than 10. **Focused applications will open a lot of time and reduce stress.**

What is the limit?

The exact number is still being determined, but it will have flexibility built in. The last thing I want to do is take away opportunities. I want the trend of students missing classes, having a lack of sleep, and being overly stressed due to the pressure associated with too many university applications to decrease. A recommendation guide for applications is pictured in the image below. I will work together with students to help identify what a "Safety", "Target", and "Reach" may mean for them.

SAFETY	TARGET	REACH
75%	50%	25%
or higher chance for admission	chance for admission	or less chance for admission
1-2 Applications	4-5 Applications	2-3 Applications
KIST Career Counseling		

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What can we do as a family?

- Please take the above information seriously and reach out to me with any questions.
- Help students narrow down where they really want to go and make a smart plan. Students need one or two safety options only, the others should firmly be targets or dream schools.
- Don't force students to apply to universities they will never attend. It's nice to be proud of successful university applications but applying only for reasons of "ego" or hopes of "showing off" is more harmful than beneficial.

SAT test center increase

Our new building has allowed us to increase the number of students who can take the SAT at KIST by almost 50%.

While our students can take the SAT at any center they like, I hope this will allow KIST to be an easier option to book during peak season (bookings are made on the College Board website).



When to take the SAT and why?

The SAT is in most cases recommended only for students who want to apply to the United States. It has been optional for most universities during COVID but is slowly becoming mandatory again; please plan accordingly. All KIST students take a Practice SAT (PSAT 8-9) during Grade 9 and another (PSAT 10) during Grade 10. I recommend students considering the US to take the real SAT for the first time in August at the start of Grade 11. This gives them time during the summer between G10 and G11 to prepare.

University visits at KIST!

I am happy to announce that we are resuming regular university visits this semester. The visits will be held by default during lunch in the fourth floor MPR (MPR4). This will allow students to have lunch while listening to a university presentation. Parents are also invited to join if time allows. Our upcoming schedule follows, and I will send e-mails at the end of each week promoting upcoming visits.

- **March 6 – University of Toronto**
- **March 14 – University of Cambridge**
- **April 10 – Purdue University**



Times Higher Education (THE) certified

Lastly, I am happy to announce that I have completed the certification process through Times Higher Education to get our school certified as a **THE Accredited Counselling School**. This required a series of lectures, exams, and a peer-reviewed proposal essay in order to evaluate that our counseling team's and school's resources were adequate to provide university application and career support. I hope that this provides more comfort for our families. Just as we expect of our students, our staff is also busy making sure they are constantly educated about best practices for teaching, counseling, and advising.



Thomas Waterfall
University Counselor
thomas.waterfall@kist.ed.jp
Office hours: Monday–Friday,
8:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m.
University Guidance Office (4F
Main Building)



Math Field Day

We are thrilled to announce the outstanding achievement of our school at the KPASS Math Field Day event held at Zama High School on March 5, 2024. Approximately 260 students from twelve international schools in the Kanto region participated in the event, including 27 students from KIST ranging from Grades 6 to 11.

We are pleased to share that KIST excelled remarkably, with an impressive performance that placed us at the forefront. Out of all participating schools, KIST had the highest number of students on the podium, with a total of seven students. The second highest was St. Mary's International School with six students, followed by Seisen International School and Saint Maur International School with three students each. (Note that Grade 12 results have been removed from the list as KIST did not participate in this division and only six schools out of the twelve schools participated.) Considering that the average number of students on the podium for other schools was only 1.5, our students' achievement is commendable.

Congratulations to the following students for representing KIST on the podium in the individual contest.

- **Satori** (G10A): 1st place in the G10 category
- **Wing Hei (Jeremy)** (G9A): 1st place in the G9 category
- **Mamiko** (G10A): 2nd place in the G10 category
- **Tongxi (Len)** (G9A): 2nd place in the G9 category
- **Teppei** (G8C): 2nd place in the G8 category
- **Zongtai (Anthony)** (G7A): 2nd place in the G7 category
- **Naoya** (G6B): 3rd place in the G6 category

It is also worth mentioning that out of the 27 students from KIST, 20 students (74%) ranked in the top 10. Among them are the following students who missed the podium by only one mark:

- **Fumie** (G11A)
- **Ota** (G8B)
- **Rintaro** (G8B)
- **Natsuki** (G7B)

In the Tech Challenge and Energizer Round, where students work in teams with students from other schools, our students demonstrated their ability to communicate effectively with others, with some of them taking the lead in their groups. The teams with the following students from KIST secured top 3 positions:

- Tech Challenge (Senior division): **Fumie** (G11A)
- Energizer Round (Junior division): **Yifeng (Max)** (G6A) and **Tyler** (G8C)

One of the teachers from another school shared with me how touched he was when he saw one of our senior students becoming so happy whenever the names of our students were called during the award ceremony. Through this event, our students not only demonstrated their excellence in math but also showcased their ability to work cooperatively with others and their school spirit.



This accomplishment shows the dedication and hard work of our students, as well as the guidance and support provided by our teachers. Let's celebrate this achievement together and look forward to seeing more KIST students excelling in various areas in the future.

Nanami Sakuma
Subject Area Coordinator—
Mathematics

