

# THE BANYAN



Issue 59

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Zhuhai International School: *weekly newsletter*

## FROM THE FIRST FLOOR

Dear ZIS Community,

As we watch the coronavirus stories unfold around the world, it's natural for our anxiety levels to increase further. This is a normal response to challenging circumstances. As parents and teachers, we have our own anxieties to manage along with those of our children and students to support. When in need of assistance, we should turn to our trusted sources for information and guidance.

One of my preferred health sources through these weeks has been OT&P Healthcare in Hong Kong. Their doctors share regular articles on well-being, especially in relation to the health of children. On March 13 they shared an article on anxiety in children under 10 years old – I will a brief summary but encourage you to read the full article following the link below.

Poor sleep, somatic symptoms, avoidance, and tantrums are among the symptoms of anxiety in younger children. As parents we want to be the first person our child will go to when facing problems. OT&P suggests:

*“...regardless of whether your child has anxiety or not, open and honest communication is crucial to their healthy development. Make sure you supportively convey messages through your words and actions...”*

Rachel Chan Mazariegos, a Behavioural Therapist and Educational Psychometrician at OT&P, shares tips on maintaining structure while children are at home learning from school.

She outlines these valuable foundations:

- *Stick to a daily schedule* – create a visual schedule (find them online) and build it together.
- *Stay on track*– set up clear work and play areas and overlapping study time and relaxation time.
- *Keep things balanced* – keep up with the pace of class, keep motivation high, make your expectations clear, and don't forget to praise.

Though we've been off campus for six weeks, all of this is still very new to us and our children and as parents we have to accept ourselves and our efforts when things don't work out as planned. There are going to be times when we feel anxious, stressed, and overwhelmed. No one is expecting that anyone will be an expert in any of this. Stay connected and reach out to friends, family, and other members of your network to give and receive support.

Sources:

<https://www.otandp.com/blog/is-your-young-child-struggling-with-anxiety>

<https://www.otandp.com/blog/maintaining-structure-at-home-while-your-kids-are-off-school>

(also available in Mandarin)

As we enter the new week of online learning there are a few noteworthy items to share:

- Both Primary and Secondary students will be experiencing online conferences with their classmates using Zoom and Office Teams.
- If students haven't already placed their vote for the yearbook design the survey is still open – check messages for the links.
- Our parent survey remains open throughout the campus closure as well – your feedback is always welcome.
- ManageBac users in Secondary, locally and internationally, should see marked improvements as their tech team has quickly responded to the past days struggles.
- Primary students experienced their first “screen-free” day this past Wednesday – share your feedback with your teachers please.
- The IB maintains that exams will keep their dates as scheduled. Mr. Coffey and the Secondary Team is in contact with Year 11 and Year 13 students regarding coursework and exam preparations.

Zhuhai neighbourhoods are seeing the results of the community's commitment to the epidemic response. These past weeks have demanded a significant amount of sacrifice for the greater good of a healthy community. Restaurants and other services are opening, inter-city travel is unencumbered by temperature checks, our taobao deliveries are arriving earlier and earlier. All of this is pointing to the arrival of an announcement from the Education Bureau on the opening of schools – which I know we are all anticipating with eagerness.

An additional measure is being put in place to ensure that school are ready to reopen. Families will be asked to begin tracking the temperatures of their children in the days leading up to the opening. More details on how this will work will be shared with you shortly. With this, and everything else that is being asked of us, thank you for your continued cooperation and support.

This is in step with today's announcement on the quarantine of arrivals to Guangdong from overseas. For families who are unable to arrange their arrival to synchronize with a still unknown return to campus, classroom teachers will still be supporting students as distance learners.

These are times unlike any we have ever faced before. Our best way through it is by working together and supporting each other. Thank you for your trust and your hard work

in supporting the learning of all of ZIS through these past weeks. Thanks to all of these efforts I know we will return to campus stronger than ever.

Warm regards,

**Andrew VanderMeulen**  
**Head of School**



Perfectly Primary



Dear school community,

We've had quite the week in EY and Primary. We introduced screen-free Wednesday activities. In my house, my children were really excited to use their creativity in other ways. We made stick puppets, drew comic strips, and created a new dance. I hope it was equally engaging in your homes. Many teachers started introducing Zoom into their lessons this week. While it won't be used as a daily lecture forum, we will begin using Zoom at least once a week in primary classes starting next week as a way to build connections. Your child's teacher will give you further instructions to help you connect. Thank you for your continued support and engagement.

Warmly,

**Dr. Lana Staton**  
**Head of Primary**

What's been happening across the classes in the homes of our Early Years and PYP students these past few days? From building patterns, introducing Newton's Laws of Motion, and researching the role of the United Nations, the students sure have been creative and thinkers!

Here's a sampling of some of the learning happening this week.... wonderful work everyone!

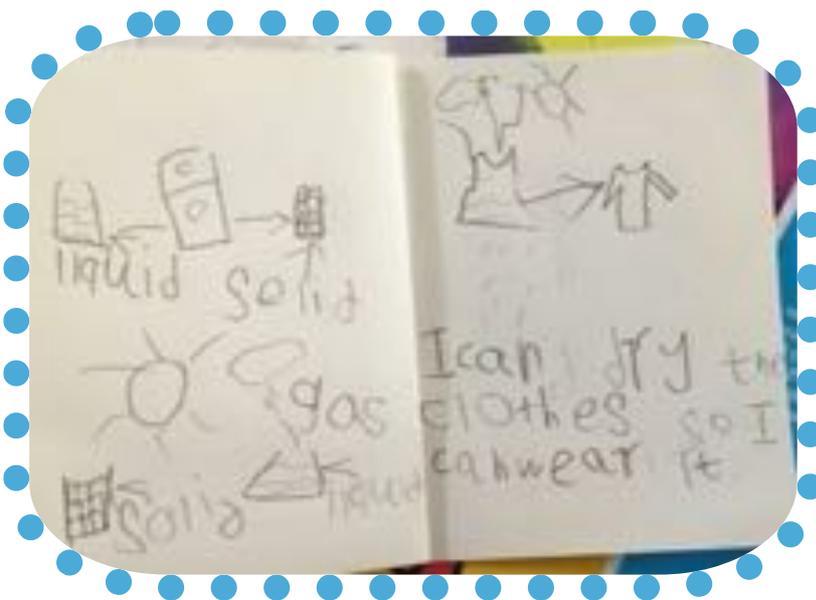
**Nursery:**

Going on a shape hunt,  
matching lowercase and



uppercase letters, texture art

**Reception:**  
Building patterns, spring photos scavenger hunt, creating items with shapes



**Year 1:**  
Narrative writing, designing and building a board game, creating a book about solids, liquids, and gases

**Year 2:**  
Story sequencing using time words, asking questions as part of the scientific method





activity to bring the story to life with a comic

**Year 6:**

Researching the history of the United Nations, relating fractions, creating word birds for library class



Secondary Segment



Middle Years Programme

Diploma Programme

Dear students and parents,

I would like to say thank you to the parents who gave their time to feeding back their thoughts on our online learning experiences : they are helpful as we complete week 6 of the covid-19 closure and moving forward together. Certainly the time frame is extending, as medical, political and social realities form and intermingle.

Please know that we are making contingency plans for different scenarios. These are based on different campus-opening times. In every case our goal is to maximise the learning opportunities for our students using the creativity and care of our teachers and their extensive capacities for using technology for everyone's advantage.

Many students are having more than one online meeting a fortnight per subject and this is as it should be: the minimum remains 1 meeting a fortnight. As we move into week 7 of Semester 2, we are considering other platforms and portals, and evaluating implementing

self-reflections in online learning. Our Secondary team continues to lead, share and extend with best-practices for online learning with their classes.

Have a restful weekend, and have a good Week 7.

Have a great week.

**Micheal Coffey**  
**Head of Secondary**



LS Space



## Universal Design for Learning

The image that always comes to mind when I think about UDL is the wheelchair ramp outside of the hockey arena in my home town. Added years after it was initially built, it is a huge wooden structure that seems out of place against the big concrete building. Well maintained and carefully cleared of ice and snow, it certainly serves an important purpose, but it's not going to win any design awards.



A wooden wheelchair ramp attached to building compared to the library in the Ed Roberts Campus at Berkeley designed by architect Leddy Matum Stacy.



UNIVERSAL DESIGN for LEARNING

Contrast that with some of the beautiful modern buildings we've all wandered through where ramps, railings, water fountains, bathrooms, corridors and windows have all been placed in a way that considers those with more limited mobility as well as braille signs, textured floor tiles and sound cues that make it easier for everyone to navigate and use a space. Universal Design was first an architectural movement that inspired a similar approach to teaching and learning.

Amanda Morin put it well in her article on *Reading Rockets*, "Even if you're not familiar with the term universal design, you've likely encountered many examples of it in your everyday

life. Closed captions, automatic doors and accessibility features on smartphones are all examples of universal design. These design elements help people with disabilities. But people who don't have disabilities may also want to use them." (2019) Allison Posey a curriculum and design specialist at CAST takes this idea and explains how it applies to the classroom, "When you use UDL, you assume that barriers to learning are in the design of the environment, not in the student." (2020)

Like good architecture, once you've been in a building that works for everyone, you tend to prefer how you feel in that space over one that doesn't. The same is true for a great classroom environment. The students certainly benefit but so does the teacher (better learning, fewer classroom management issues) and the rest of the community as everyone is seen as valued.

Morin, Amanda. "Universal Design for Learning (UDL): What You Need to Know." *Reading Rockets*, WETA, 16 Oct. 2019, [www.readingrockets.org/article/universal-design-learning-udl-what-you-need-know](http://www.readingrockets.org/article/universal-design-learning-udl-what-you-need-know).

Pill, Annie. "The Substantive Impact of Universal Design." *The Daily Californian*, 11 Apr. 2015, [www.dailycal.org/2015/04/10/the-substantive-impact-of-universal-design/](http://www.dailycal.org/2015/04/10/the-substantive-impact-of-universal-design/).

Posey, Allison. "Universal Design for Learning (UDL): A Teacher's Guide." *Universal Design for Learning*, Understood, 17 Feb. 2020, [www.understood.org/en/school-learning/for-educators/universal-design-for-learning/understanding-universal-design-for-learning](http://www.understood.org/en/school-learning/for-educators/universal-design-for-learning/understanding-universal-design-for-learning).

"Wooden Wheelchair Ramp." *Accessibility Remodeling*, Accessremodel.com, [accessremodel.com/ramps/wood-ramp/](http://accessremodel.com/ramps/wood-ramp/).

## **Ms. Mirjam Berghuis** **Head of Learning Services**



Lunch Menus,  
our food safety guidelines,  
and past editions of  
"The Banyan" Newsletter  
are available  
at [zischina.com](http://zischina.com)

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