



Issue No. I
Semester One 2022

HGP

HEARTBEAT

Bringing out the Best in Every Child, Together



Unfolding
Stories

Content | What's inside

Opening Message	03
Food Donation Drive	05
P3 Hydroponic Vegetable Project	05
eCCA	06
Sports Carnival 2021	07
Lower Primary Sports Day	08
Covid Diaries	09
Digital Art Making	12
Code for Fun Programme	14
Voices from our Alumni	16
Message from our Parents	18

“

Stories help us imagine the future differently. Stories create community, enable us to see through the eyes of other people, and open us to the claims of others... Telling stories is our best hope of reflecting the world we want to live in and therefore, gives us hope of creating it.

Peter Forbes

”

Creating a Better World Together



As we learn to live with the COVID-19 virus, it is clear that the world will not be the same as it was before the pandemic. In schools, the incessant disruptions resulting

from the health crisis have accelerated the shift towards a new learning paradigm. Today, online learning is no longer a luxury, but a necessity. Similarly, self-directed learning has become increasingly pivotal, as students gear themselves for an unpredictable future that requires them to learn, unlearn and relearn on their own accord, in order to survive and succeed. As a community, we also want to strengthen our collegiality and cohesiveness so that we truly embrace diversity and stay inclusive.

Despite the need to adapt to the multitude of changes at a relentless pace over the past two years, our students, staff, parents and alumni have demonstrated a huge extent of responsibility, resilience and resourcefulness in rising above the odds and turning the challenges into opportunities, both for themselves and the people around them. They have had to adapt to new and unprecedented learning routines quickly and positively, as well

as encourage and support others to do likewise. In doing so, they have written many inspiring and heart-warming stories centred on the overarching themes of (i) care, (ii) curiosity and (iii) connections. These stories include the learning experiences of our students and staff during the pandemic, reflection by our alumni, as well as notes of encouragement from our parents. I hope that you enjoy reading them as much as I do.

On this note, I wish to extend my deepest appreciation to the editorial team, comprising Mr Cassidy, Mdm Hamsiah and Mr Xavier Ang, for their commendable effort in weaving the articles into a rich and beautiful tapestry of stories that makes us proud to be part of Hougang Primary School (HGP). Many thanks to the writers for contributing so graciously and generously to the newsletter too. As Singapore and the world emerge from the pandemic, I am confident that the care, curiosity and connections encapsulated in our stories will go a long way in helping us imagine, aspire towards and create a better world together, as one HGP family!

Mr Jason Goh
Principal, Hougang Primary School

Care

A heart for others makes society better

Food Donation Drive

In collaboration with Food Bank Singapore, a school-wide VIA programme known as “Food Donation Drive” was initiated in 2021. The main objectives of the programme included inculcating the right attitude in giving and raising the awareness level of the students on food wastage and food security in Singapore. An assembly talk by Food Bank Singapore was held to address the current issues of food shortage faced by certain groups of people in Singapore.

The school received a generous amount of contributions from students, parents, school staff and other stakeholders. These donations were then distributed to the beneficiaries that

Food Bank Singapore serves in the Hougang area, which included the Society for the Aged Sick, All Saints Home, Anglican Care Centre, MWS Covenant FSC and Morning Star Community Services Ltd.

A Student Learning Space (SLS) learning package was designed to engage the students in reflecting on their experiences and as a form of feedback. Students learnt that they should not waste food to minimise food wastage. They felt it was a rewarding experience as they had done a good deed in donating food to those in need. Most parents and teachers felt that the programme was simple yet very impactful and meaningful.



P3 Hydroponic Vegetables Project

The Values-in-Action (ViA) committee collaborated with the Science department and carried out hydroponic farming for the P3 students. The students were equipped with the knowledge and skills on hydroponic farming first before applying them during the planting, growing, harvesting and packing processes. The vegetables were then donated to the various senior activity centres (SACs) near the school and the staff of the centres helped with the distribution process.

Feedback from the SACs was encouraging. They were happy and grateful to receive the vegetables, especially when they knew that the vegetables were the product of the hard work from the students and teachers. The centres also extended their gratitude to the school and looked forward to more collaboration with the school in the future.



eCCA

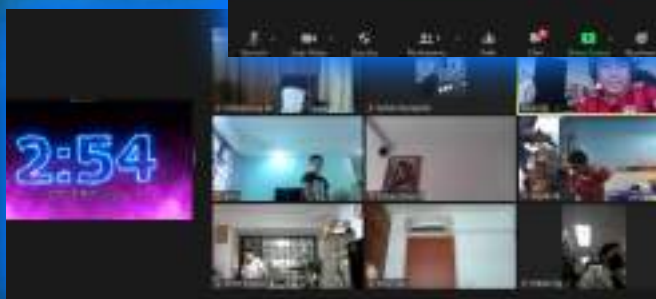
Co-Curricular Activities (CCA) play a key role in our children's holistic and character development. With the suspension of all in-person CCAs, the school organised online eCCA sessions for selected CCA groups for P3, P4 and P5 students. The teachers-in-charge carried out the sessions once they have ascertained that the students were in a safe environment while accessing the eCCA sessions at home. The CCA teachers and instructors were present online during the eCCA to monitor and engage the students during the sessions.

Mrs Gillian Au, the Band CCA teacher-in-charge said, "The idea of having Band eCCA had already been deliberated on for some time among the Band CCA teachers and instructors before we embarked on it. We tapped on the eCCA experience of our Band instructors and with the support given by our school, we finally went ahead with our eCCA. We had to issue the instruments, mouthpieces and scores to the members first and this itself was logistically challenging as we had to do so without taking up too much curriculum time."



While synchronous learning took place over Zoom, there was asynchronous learning too. The teachers leveraged on their knowledge and experience of home-based learning and used some of the tools which could give the same deliverables. Flipgrid was one of them. It allowed the students to submit their videos for the instructors to give their feedback. Mrs Au added, "We are glad to keep the members' passion for music alive during the Covid-19 pandemic. We must thank our dear band members and instructors for their strong support. Their enthusiasm greatly warmed our hearts!"

"I continue to receive guidance from my instructors to hone my skills," said Chong Shou Le, a student from 4F (2021) as he reflected on his experience for eCCA. "I like that I am given the chance to meet my fellow bandmates during the sessions. I have also learnt the value of care as I loan and take care of my instrument. I also learnt to be a more responsible and respectful online user. These are important life skills that will develop me into a better person." "The experience during eCCA has made the students, teachers and instructors appreciate the personal interactions during face-to-face CCA sessions even more. We eagerly anticipate the day when we can return to face-to-face CCA sessions again!" Mrs Au concluded.



Sports Carnival 2021

Same same but different!

The 2021 Sports Carnival for our P3 to P6 students was carried out in line with the Safe Management Measures (SMM) in schools. It was on a smaller scale but by no means less meaningful. Our HGPians got to enjoy a variety of target and racing novelty games. In order to minimise intermingling of students across levels, we carried out the games during our individual PE lessons in Term 4.

The theme of this year's carnival was "Luck of the Draw", where an element of luck was involved in picking their choice of equipment. To promote a growth mindset, the students were also encouraged to have another go at the various stations should they not get their preferred choice or if they wanted to work on improving their personal best. On top of that, we also carried out a team-based Kahoot Quiz challenge regarding interesting health facts where students could continue to contribute points for their houses.

Despite being carried out on a smaller scale, the carnival managed to promote whole class participation and encourage active and healthy living through the many physically challenging activities that were planned. It also provided a platform for students to build camaraderie and teamwork as they worked towards helping their respective colour house clinch the ultimate victory, truly embodying the Olympic values of Excellence, Friendship and Respect.

We would like to thank all students who participated in the various activities for Sports Carnival 2021. Without you, this event would not be possible at all.

**Congratulations to Purple House
for emerging as Overall Champion!**





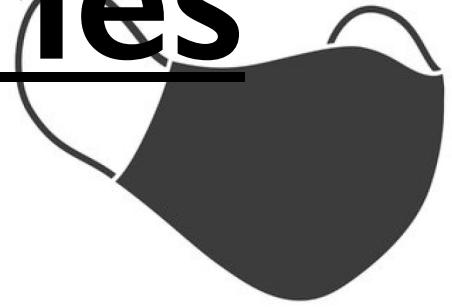
Lower Primary Sports Day

Our annual Lower Primary Sports Day was carried out under strict Safe Management Measures for Primary 1 and Primary 2 students in 2021. In view of the prevailing guidelines, the event was modified to be an Inter-House competition for the respective classes.

The game that they competed in included skills that they have learnt in their daily Physical Education (PE) lessons such as dribbling and striking in Sports and Games as well as rolling and balancing in Gymnastics.

Every child represented his/her House to compete and was awarded with a medal. We would like to commend our students' effort and congratulate their achievements. Through this experience, we hope to have imbued in them, our school values of Integrity and Resilience and the Olympic values of Excellence, Friendship and Respect through their active participation. We are proud of each and every one of them!

Covid Diaries



Student A

When I first heard the news that I was diagnosed with Covid-19, I felt dazed. Soon, when I started realising that I really had Covid-19, I started panicking and felt shocked and worried. Many thoughts ran through my mind, 'What is going to happen to me? Do I need to go to the hospital to isolate myself? Will my family members get it? Will anyone who was in close contact with me get it?' However, even though there were negative emotions in me, I also thought that I was a tad lucky; at least I was not the first child who contracted Covid-19 in Singapore or the world.

Later on in the day, I found out that all my classmates and my teachers had been sent home immediately after my mother had shared the news privately to the school. About an hour after my classmates and teachers had been sent home, my teacher wrote in Google Classroom that my class should stay calm and that the inevitable had come, and that the class should take it in our stride. Soon after, she posted another post, and she had 'opened a café', which was actually a Google Meet. She added in the same post that 'since school ended so abruptly for you, you may come in here and talk to me if you want. Open till 12.15 pm. No drinks served. Special treatment: You can talk without mask on.'

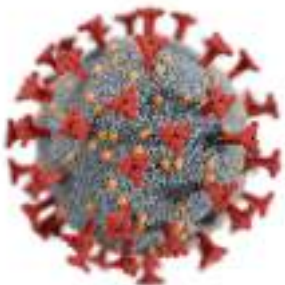
I attended the Google Meet along with most of my friends, and in the meet, we shared our feelings and positive energy with one another. Some of my classmates also commented in the chat-box that if the person with Covid-19 (me) was in the meeting, they wanted to tell him/her to get well and feel better. At that time, they did not know that I was the one with Covid-19. When I saw their messages, I felt very touched.

One day, my teacher also bought food from McDonalds for my friends and me who were under quarantine to cheer us up. When my classmates found out that I was the one who had Covid-19, they did not tease or bully me or talk behind my back. Instead, they showed support and encouraged me when I felt down sometimes. I was extremely grateful for their actions.

When I had Covid-19, I had mood swings and sometimes I would have a loss of appetite. I also had a lot of phlegm in my throat and I would also cough many times. Fortunately for me, I did not need to stay in the hospital and was allowed to recover from home.

When I finally went back to school after I had recovered, I was nervous as I thought how my classmates and other class students would react. To my surprise, when I stepped into the classroom, the whole class clapped and some also said, "Welcome back!". At first I was taken aback, but soon after, I was very moved. According to my teacher, they clapped out of their own will and that my teacher did not tell them to do so. I could easily believe that as I could see the genuine care on their faces. Even the little things my classmates, teachers, and people around me do would be etched in my mind forever.

So, I would like to tell anyone who is down with Covid-19, that if people laugh at you, or tease you, or talk behind your back, or do whatever things that make you uncomfortable after they have found out that you are tested positive for Covid-19, do not let them affect you; always remember, you have your teachers, parents, classmates, friends and me supporting and rooting for you.



Student B

Covid-19 is something we should take seriously and we should start to learn to live with it. Anybody can get Covid-19 from anywhere. At the start of 2021, I thought that there would not be any Covid-19 positive cases in my class. However, I was actually surprised when one of my classmates was diagnosed with COVID-19 in late September and my class was actually sent home. I was shocked as I was considered a close contact with that classmate.

Despite having a classmate with Covid-19, we were positive and cheerful. We did not speculate who the person was. The day we headed home, our teacher organised a mini chat on Google Meet for us to share our thoughts and feelings at home. I was glad that everyone was safe and still bubbly. Although we started HBL slightly earlier than others, we did not mind as we had online Google Meets with our teachers and would usually log in early to chit-chat before class started. It was not as bad as I thought it would be.

However, I had to serve the Quarantine Order (QO) at a hotel. It was not as luxurious as it sounded. The room was small and I had to eat whatever that was provided. I really did not enjoy the stay as I was cooped up in the room twenty-four hours for ten days. When I realised that my friends were in the same hotel as me serving their QO, my mood was better. Although the stay there was not exactly pleasant, I knew I had the

support of my friends and teachers to fall back on until I leave the hotel. As a class, we left our QOs with zero class transmission.

To date, I had received two other Health Risk Warnings (HRW) under the new Covid-19 protocol due to being in close contact with two other unrelated patients. I came out of it without contracting Covid-19. I am glad that the new protocol has allowed students like me to continue going to school as long as we are well and with negative Antigen Rapid Test (ART) results. I cannot imagine missing school and lessons for so many days. HRW may be here to stay till the whole pandemic is over. Do not be frightened if you get HRW, monitor your health and do your ART diligently.

From my experience, I realised that as long as I wear my mask properly, wash my hands frequently and practise good safe distancing, the chances of getting Covid-19 is very low. I would also like to add that if you do get HRW, you are not going through this alone, there were many before you and there will be more after you. Remember, 'Tough times never last, tough people do'. As long as we do our part to keep ourselves and others safe, the pandemic will soon be over. 'What the world needs now is solidarity. With solidarity, we can defeat the virus and build a better world.' Let's work together to support one another and defeat the virus.



“

From my experience, I realised that as long as I wear my mask properly, wash my hands frequently and practise good safe distancing, the chances of getting Covid-19 is very low.

”

Curiosity

HGPians See, Think, Wonder

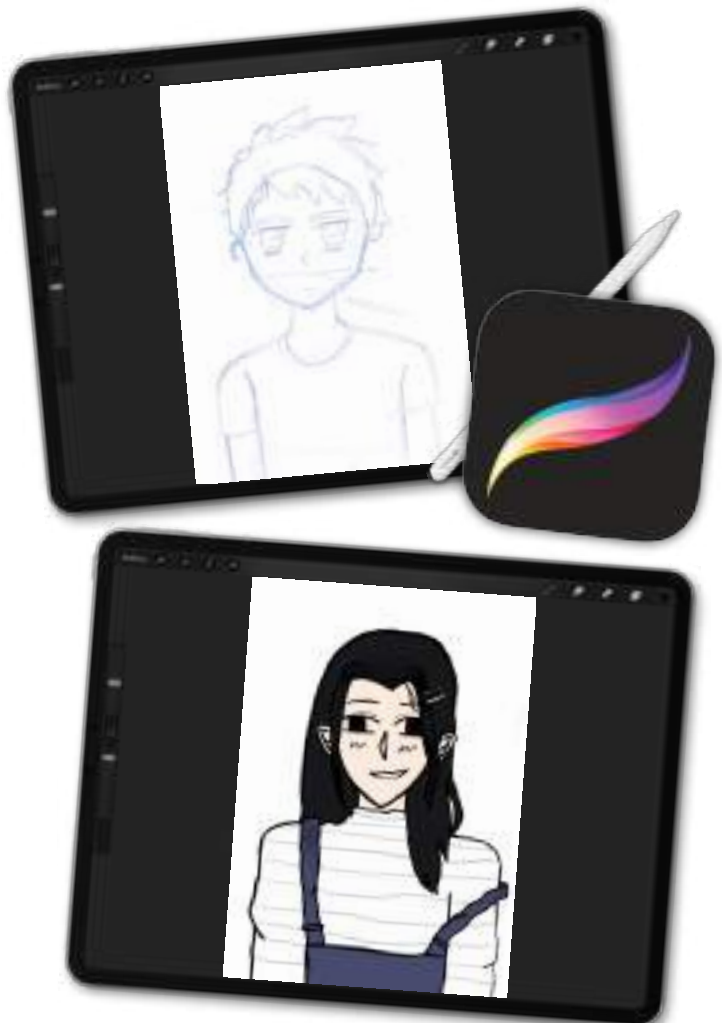
Digital Art Making

In 2021, we introduced digital art making using the Procreate app on iPads! Student were equipped with iPads and Apple Pencils to enable them to create digital drawings on their own. Our students had fun creating art in a different medium that is unlike what they were used to doing.

Drawing digitally is a very forgiving process. Students are free to make mistakes, undo their mistakes and zoom in to make changes to their drawings. This helped students to draw confidently, thus leaving room for more creativity.

Students were also taught how to use Procreate for the first time. In this project, students were tasked to add their own drawings to a photo to give it a fun twist of their own.

Students go deeper into the digital art making process and use it to create their own manga art. Through this project, they were able to experience the workflow of how an artist creates art digitally.



Warren Leong 6C (2021)

Procreate is easy to use and has more than enough tools to let you draw freely and creatively. You can even import custom brushes and customise ready made brushes which is extremely useful in order to achieve what you like. Overall, Procreate is not just a mobile photoshop app but is really a great app and I personally recommend it.



Wong Jia Cheng 6D (2021)

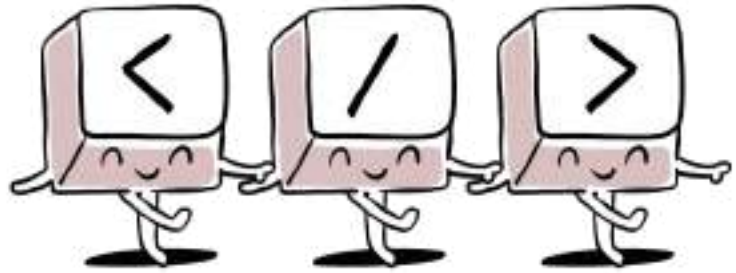
I thought that the experience was really fun and interesting as I have never really done digital art before. I think that with just a little bit more time, I could have done a better job, but I was still satisfied with how my work turned out. I also learned many tips about drawing manga art and drawing on Procreate.

Claire Yeo 6D (2021)

Procreate is easy to use and has a lot of different tools to help me draw easily. The tools are categorised in such a way that I was able to access them easily. Throughout my experience in digital art, Procreate is definitely one of the best apps. I really enjoy drawing manga art and it helps me to relax after school. I hope to continue drawing manga art in the future.

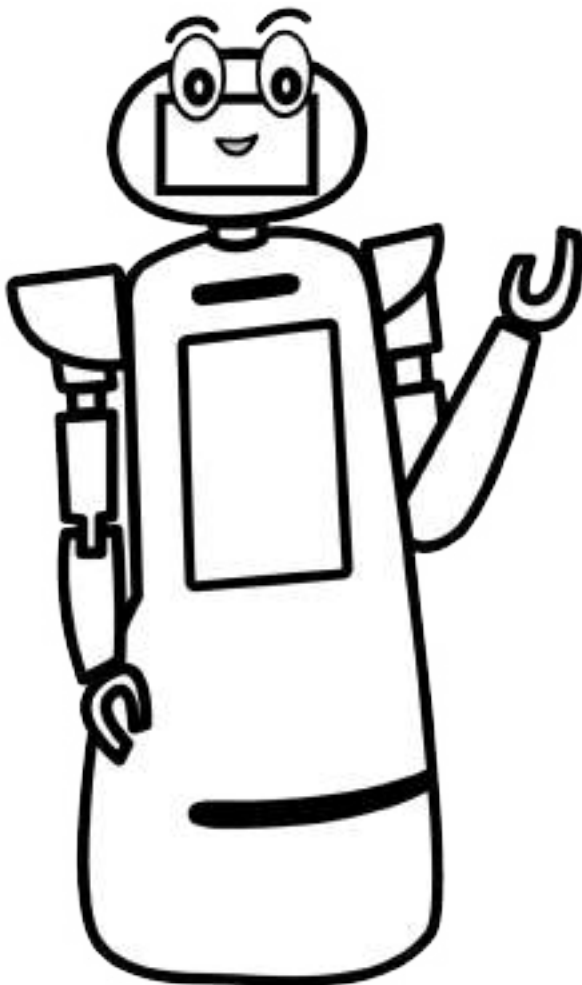


Code for Fun Programme for P6 Students



The first post-PSLE activity, Code for Fun, was conducted for all the Primary 6 students in from 11th October to 15th October 2021. This 2-day programme was run by trainers from the Infocomm Media Development Authority (IMDA) via Zoom and the school loaned iPads to the students to facilitate hands-on learning. They learnt more about computational thinking and how it can be applied to other aspects of their life. Basic programming concepts such as events, loops,

variables and functions were taught to the students. The programme also allowed them to develop logical thinking and problem-solving skills by breaking down problems into bite-sized ones. Students got a chance to work individually to program a dance sequence using code.org. Lastly, they ended off the 10-hour session with an introduction to artificial intelligence or AI for short and cyber security.



Reviews from our students!

- **86%** enjoyed the course
- **82%** are now very familiar with computational thinking
- **83%** have a better understanding of AI
- **75%** have a better understanding of cyber security

We hope this engaging and educational programme has ignited some of our Primary 6 HGPians' curiosity and interest in coding!

Connection

Strong partnership between school and its stakeholders



Voices from our Alumni

Alisha Insyirah Jasni
Hougang Primary School Class of 2017
President Guide Award Recipient, Raffles Girls' School Class of 2021



It is with great honour that I say I am a Covid-struck President Guide.

I am truly blessed to have been selected as one of the five President Guide Award (PGA) recipients this year. Undeniably, Covid-19 had brought about various setbacks and numerous changes to the demands of the award. Nevertheless, my PGA journey was not short of meaning. In fact, the pandemic had added much more value to it and I would definitely not trade this experience for anything else!

Flashback to the last two months of 2020: My PGA journey began. My CCA batch mates and I were scrambling to complete five compulsory proficiency badges—Homemaker, Friends to the World, Pioneer, National Heritage and Emergency Helper—to qualify for PGA. We had a mere two months to do so. In the past year, CCA sessions had been suspended due to the pandemic which resulted in us not having sufficient time to hone our skills and sharpen our Guiding knowledge.

My main worry was whether I would be able to pass the Pioneer badge test, a test of our outdoor Guiding skills. These included having to light a fire with self-collected sticks, chopping wood with an axe and constructing a ladder using necessary knots. I remember returning to school three times a week with my batch during the holidays to practise for the Pioneer test. When our seniors came down to help, it took a

lot of humility to accept our shortcomings and work on them. Sometimes, we were robbed of the few CCA sessions we had because of the rain. I also recalled how my friends and I broke down several times because we were unable to light a fire under 20 minutes.

We were all so desperate and I blamed the pandemic for putting us in that situation. Nonetheless, those two months shaped the mindset that I adopted during the rest of my PGA journey: Effort will always pay off. With effort, I managed to attain all five badges and could qualify for PGA!

2021 came rolling by. To get the award, candidates had to clear the following three stages—the Planning and Organisation (P&O) Test Camp, the Be Prepared Test and a dialogue session. The P&O Test Camp was the most challenging yet memorable part of my PGA journey. My group's task was to plan an advocacy project that would be conducted for 18 Lower Secondary Guides from other schools.





Undeniably, it was difficult to balance my schoolwork at the same time. As my examinations were also around the corner, I often had to stay up very late to complete the proposal after finishing my revision. Then, a day before my Additional Mathematics Examination, something unfortunate happened. My group was informed that we had misinterpreted the entire task! We only had seven days left to replan the entire programme. Naturally, I was defeated, my spirit deflated. I felt like all the effort that I had put in had gone to waste. However, I recalled the seventh Guide Law: A Guide has courage and is cheerful in all difficulties. In the next seven days, I managed to bounce back stronger than ever. In the end, I was able to plan activities that were even more creative and relevant than those before! Truly, each cloud has a silver lining. It is important to stay resilient in times of difficulty!

Through my PGA experience, I also grew to become more confident. Despite being an introvert, the PGA tests really pushed me out of my comfort zone and I soon became more confident in my communication and presentation skills. There is a saying that goes, 'Great things never come from comfort zones'. Dare yourself to try new things because you never know how much you may grow!

Four years ago, I never would have imagined that I would become the Girl Guide I am today. I joined the CCA with great reluctance after being



rejected by all my other choices. At that time, the only impression I had of Girl Guides was that it sells cookies. However, with an open mind, I decided to challenge myself by trying out for leadership positions and the various opportunities laid out for me, like PGA! They say that our mind is like a parachute—it works best when it is open.

To all my HGP juniors reading this, especially those moving on to secondary school, never be too swift to dismiss any opportunities laid out for you. Instead, journey through your school life with an open mind. Take every setback as a learning experience and do not be afraid to laugh at your own mistakes. There's so much in store for you and you just have to keep exploring!

(<https://www.straitstimes.com/singapore/outstanding-girl-guides-and-venture-scouts-awarded-at-istana>)



Scan QR code to get to read the article!

Message from our Parents

PiA Exco Chairperson

Dear Hougang Family,

We've made it to the end of yet another school year despite the hurdles of Covid-19. The Hougang PiA Exco team would like to express our deepest thanks to all of you who have rendered your services in one way or another in 2021. Every little bit of time spent, has helped our children to grow and thrive. Whether it was answering requests for contributions for this year's Teachers' Day and Children's Day activities or undertaking the responsibility of learning to manage HBL, we appreciate all the effort that has been put in. Please remember to continue to practise safe distancing and take extra special care to maintain and support your health. Covid

will continue to be part of our every day lives and the best we can do is to take as many preventative measures as possible and learn to live with it. We hope that this newsletter will provide a more steady means of communication between the school and parents so that you can be sure to be kept informed on upcoming events for both students and the stakeholders. Looking forward to working closely with you all!

Sincerely,
Mdm Gopica Rasiah
PiA Exco Chairperson

Serene Lee Ai Lin (Parent of one of our students)

HBL didn't drive us completely crazy ... the system worked and we adjusted quite well!

We could sense that home-based learning would be around the corner when the Covid-19 measures were tightened. Thankfully the school introduced it in a remarkably smooth manner, and we were able to have our son move into this quite seamlessly.

Credit must be given to our educators who spared no effort in ensuring that our children would not be affected in their holistic development. Care was put in place so that academic learning would continue while at the same time, sessions like FTGP was also scheduled so that the students' socio-emotional learning is addressed as well. We did not fuss about having to manage our WFH schedules along with HBL. It was quite an interesting experience to observe our son attend classes, ensure timely submissions and even engage in recording some fun routines for his co-curriculum.

In many ways, it was a big change from him going to school, interacting with his classmates, moving around, chatting, and all. While during HBL, he was alone in his space attending classes and doing his work, we made sure that it would not leave him distanced and he knew that this model would only be temporary. It allowed him to be more adaptable, self-directed and independent. The remote learning cannot replace a full school experience – but we feel that it has benefited him to enhance his personal efficiency and effectiveness as a digital learner at a young age.

All in all, it was definitely something we remember (fun at times too). Our son took the model seriously and adjusted quite well. We hope that a model such as HBL can actually be implemented sometimes for our children to learn and grow.