

Letter from the Principal



16 August 2013

Dear Nexus Families

Welcome to the new academic year at Nexus International School Singapore. I hope that you are refreshed and ready for a productive and engaging semester. I extend a special welcome to our new families. Thank you for choosing Nexus – I hope that we can meet your expectations and that our relationship enables your child to succeed at school. We begin the year with more than 475 students on roll (compared with 325 at the same time last year) and a large number of applications still being processed. Almost 50% of our learners have joined the school during 2013 so we are working hard to create a community focused learning culture.

We love to share stories about our school, our learners and the other members of our community and we will take every opportunity to tell you about events, activities, opportunities and achievements. This first newsletter, however, is more administrative and is designed to provide information about people, systems and processes that you might find useful. I hope that you do find it informative but please contact our Student Services if you have any outstanding questions

Our Philosophy and Values

We have spent some time establishing the foundations for Nexus and I shared these with staff and Secondary School learners earlier this week. All teachers refer to these principles as the basis of their teaching and learning programmes. All of our systems, processes and interactions are designed to be consistent with these statements – in other words, we try to ‘walk the talk’. Please tell us when we don’t.

Vision/Purpose Statement

To educate the youth of the world to take their productive place as leaders in the global community.

Mission

Nexus International School will be an internationally minded learning community that nurtures and supports every child’s emotional, physical, creative and intellectual needs in order that they can achieve academic success and become globally responsible citizens. We will accomplish this by celebrating diversity and challenging minds.

Core Values

Respecting and Caring for Each Other
Being Dedicated to a Culture
of Excellence
Openness in Communication
Acting with Integrity
Being Passionate in What We Do
Creating Enjoyable Environments

At Nexus International School, we promise to:

- Treat everyone as gifted and talented individuals and foster those talents and gifts through careful mentorship and guidance that is based on respect for all.
- Provide an environment that allows these talents to flourish; one that is innovative, progressive and grounded in trust, compassion and respect.

Attendance

We expect all learners to attend every class on time. When this is not possible, please let us know (in advance, if possible). If your child is absent from school, please contact **Student Services** (studentservices@nexus.edu.sg) at your earliest convenience and tell them your child’s name, Year Group and the reason for absence. This is more effective than contacting your child’s homeroom teacher, as Student Services can quickly contact all relevant staff on your behalf. Student Services will then pass the details to the homeroom teachers. Student Services will follow up any absences that remain unexplained after 9.00am each day. May we remind you that only parents or guardians should contact Student Services with the reason for absence. It is not appropriate for learners to contact Student Services themselves.

Late Arrival in the Morning

Thank you to all our parents for responding so positively to the changes in our security and attendance routines that we implemented at the end of the last academic year. We will continue to operate these routines starting on Monday. The pedestrian gate beside the vehicle exit will be used for exit only during school hours (between 8.25am and 3.20pm). This means that all learners arriving after 8.25am must walk to the main gate to be registered by our security staff. Secondary School learners then make their way to class. Our security staff will automatically register learners that arrive late.

Leaving During the School Day

If a learner leaves the school during the school day, they must go to Student Services before they leave. Student Services will update our system to show that the learner has left and will authorise a 'Permission to leave' form, which will need to be handed to security as the learner leaves. This process includes young children who are collected by a parent or guardian from their class or the nurse's station. The child and their parent or guardian will need the form signed by the nurse or homeroom teacher and then leave via Student Services to have the form authorised.

New Academic Staff

We are delighted to welcome a group of high quality and well qualified teachers and teaching assistants as new colleagues. New staff include:

Michele Newman	Head of Secondary English
Rosemarie de Vries	Head of English Language Support
Lisa Smith	Secondary Mathematics
Dr Martin Burgess	Secondary Mathematics
Michelle Miller	Secondary English
Caroline de Kock	Secondary Business Studies
Claire Jefferson	French
Jenny Burgess	Drama
Deborah Uy	English Language Support
Sangeeta Palta	English Language Support
Heather Munoz	English Language Support
Bernadette Jones	English Language Support
Linda Roberts	Music
Richard Poth	ICT Integrator
Marcus Wetherell	ICT Integrator
Liu Ning	Chinese Language and Culture
Jenny Li Xian	Chinese Language and Culture
Catherine Willshaw	Year 1 Class Teacher
Nicola Foote	Year 2 Class Teacher
Alex Baker	Year 4 Class Teacher
William Lowe	Year 5 Class Teacher
Polin Persad	Year 6 Class Teacher
Shahidah Yunos	Teaching Assistants
Deanne McFarlane	Teaching Assistants
Atiyeh Sadeghi	Teaching Assistants
Nor Marlani	Teaching Assistants

We are looking forward to the contributions that our new teachers and teaching assistants will bring to our community.

Communications

A child's success at school depends on strong relationships between parents, child and school. The quality of communication between these three parties is vitally important. In order to ensure that there is good communication between home and school, we have the following processes.

Email

We email you and you can email the school, or individual teachers, at any time. Please be aware that teachers are not always able to answer emails immediately, but you should expect a response within 24 hours. Email addresses are typically surname.firstnameinitial@nexus.edu.sg. Please email Student Services at studentservices@nexus.edu.sg if you're not sure who to talk to.

Phone

Call us at 6536 6566. The phone should be answered promptly during work hours. We are currently upgrading our phone system and soon will be able to provide a comprehensive service of voicemail etc

Website

Large amounts of information can always be found on the website. You should check the website at least once each week to ensure that you are up to date with events and procedures. The address is www.nexus.edu.sg

Parent and Student Handbook

We have distributed the Parent and Student Handbook to all families, along with the Student Contract. If you did not receive one, please phone Student Services and ask for one to be provided. The handbook tries to answer most questions, but please contact us if your query is not addressed

Parent Portal

This function is part of our management information system and should be an effective channel for communications. You can contact staff directly through the portal and we place all important information on the portal. This includes the Parent and Student Handbook and a number of administrative documents. You should have received your log in for the portal, if not, please contact studentservices@nexus.edu.sg. Please check your personal details on the Portal and let us know if they have changed. It is really important that we have up-to-date contact information for all families

Newsletters

The Principal's Friday Newsletter contains news about events and achievements, as well as administrative information. Heads of Primary and Secondary Schools contribute to this newsletter as well as sending regular updates of their own

Academic Reports

We provide written academic reports at specific times during the school year. However, you are welcome to meet teachers at any time if you have concerns. We will contact you if we have any concerns, questions or information about your child's progress

Face to Face Meetings

These can be formal or informal. We schedule a number of formal opportunities for meetings and we encourage you to come along and talk to us at these events. Informal meetings can be arranged easily by emailing or phoning. All teachers will try to meet you whenever possible to discuss your child's progress. Admin staff will try to address any administrative question or concern. We expect you to ask questions and make comments. We cannot read your mind so, if you have a question or comment, please talk to us

These are just some of the channels for communication. We will actively inform you about school procedures and expectations, and about your child's progress. We expect you to make an effort to be informed and to talk to us when you have questions or comments.



Stuart Martin, Principal

Nexus Parent Group

As a parent with at least one child in the school you are automatically a member of the NPG. For more information about the NPG please see <http://www.nexus.edu.sg/About-Nexus/Parents,-Teachers-Friends.aspx>

Annual General Meeting

We will be holding our AGM on Thursday, 29 August at 7.30pm at the NPG room, located at Block C, Level 2. The main purpose of the evening is to elect the NPG Committee for Academic Year 2013 - 2014. The posts are as follows:

Chairperson

Manage committee meetings, serve as official representative of the NPG

Secretary

Manage communications from npg@nexus.edu.sg, organise contribution to Principal's letter, keep minutes at Committee meetings

Treasurer

Manage the NPG accounts, liaise with school accounts, maintain spreadsheet and receipts book

Social Secretary

Manage social events including monthly coffee mornings and evening events

Secondary School Liaison

Oversee appointment and management of Secondary School Parent Class Rep. network and liaise with Secondary School Head

Primary School Liaison

Oversee communication with Primary School Parent Class Rep. network and liaise with Primary School head

Please email npg@nexus.edu.sg by Friday, 23 August indicating

- Which post you would prefer if you would like to stand. Interest has already been shown in some posts. There will be a secret paper ballot where there is more than one candidate for a post;
- whether you will attend the AGM only or will also join us for the post-AGM supper (details TBC)

Special Interest Groups

Book Club

Led by Della Cheal, 9.00am - 10.30am

Usually the last Friday of every other month. The book to be discussed on 30 August will be "Gone Girl" by Gillian Flynn.

Discussion Group

Led by Pallavi Bhargava, 9.00am - 11.00am

Usually the first Tuesday of the month although the first meeting of this year will be held on 20 August. This group is for parents of children with learning issues (e.g. Dyslexia/Dyspraxia etc, ADD/ADHD, Auditory Processing, Autistic Spectrum)

Parent & Pre-schooler Group

Led by Hannah Pye, 8.30am - 10.00am

Every Wednesday from 21 August. Open to all Nexus parents with a pre-school child (0 months and up). Please park any strollers under the stairwell of Block C

Secondary School Pot Luck Lunch

Led by Jan Evans & Susan Ryan, 12 noon onwards

3rd Tuesday of every month. Bring and share your favourite food on 20 August

All Groups/Clubs meet in the NPG Room. If you have an idea for a group or have a query regarding any of the groups mentioned above, please email npg@nexus.edu.sg.

Jan Evans

NPG Committee Member

Meet & Greet for Parent Library Volunteers: 10.00am on Friday, 23 August

Thank you to everyone who has already expressed interest in helping out in the Library. We would like to extend an invitation to all parents who are keen to help out in the library to a meet and greet morning coffee Friday, 23 August at 10.00am. All welcome.

It will be a great opportunity for everyone to meet, and to provide you with important information about the role of volunteers, as well as to plan our activities for the rest of the year.

Would you like to volunteer? There are many ways to become involved at Nexus Library. Some of the tasks that may be done by library volunteers:

- Maintaining the current collection - shelving returned books and shelf-reading to be sure books are correctly placed
- Preparing new books to go out
- Displays
- Helping with book repairs
- Helping with events, preparing NLB books for distribution to classes, book week, visiting authors

If you are unable to help out on a regular basis, we also need parent volunteers who are willing to work on special events and projects on an occasional basis. Drop me an email anytime to library@nexus.edu.sg. I look forward to seeing you next week.

Shaun Russell, **Teacher Librarian**

Primary School News

Welcome to the Primary School

The Primary School has been a hive of activity this week as we have welcomed lots of new families and new staff to the Nexus community. It has been a pleasure visiting classrooms, talking to the learners and seeing them establishing their essential agreements that will provide them with a framework to positively engage with their learning journey over the year ahead.

Congratulations

Our congratulations to two of our teaching staff, Mrs Lucy Soliman and Mrs Krista Merrill, who have both announced that they are expecting. Both babies are due early in 2014. The recruitment process to cover their maternity leave has already begun; we will introduce you to the newly appointed teachers in Term 2 and ensure that there is a smooth handover at the start of Term 3.

Meet and Greet Sessions

Early next week, you will be invited to attend an informal meet and greet session with the teaching team working with your child. This will be an opportunity for you to be introduced to the teachers and ask any general questions you may have about school routines and procedures.

Class Parent Volunteers

In the Primary School we have many activities that require the support of the parents from our school community. We would like one or two parents from each class to volunteer as class parents to assist the teacher and coordinate with the other parents from that class. If you would like to take on this role please let your class teacher know.

Key Housekeeping Items

You will have received the 2013 - 2014 Primary School Parent Learner Handbook through email. The handbook covers all aspects of school life, so please take time to read it thoroughly. In particular, please may we bring your attention to the following key housekeeping items that will help us with the smooth running of the Primary School.

Before School Routine

Learners are expected to arrive at school in time for registration at 8.25am and we will welcome children in school from 8.10am onwards. Children who arrive between 8.00am and 8.10am must wait in the cafeteria where supervision will be provided. Please note that there is no supervision of children by staff before 8.00am and therefore children should not arrive before this time. We have this arrangement in place to ensure that the children are all supervised in one location and are not left supervised in different parts of the school. Staff are involved in a number of duties and meetings before school and may not be in class until 8.10am.

After School Routine

With many more children in school this year, the pods are busy places, especially at the end of the day. Therefore, we ask all parents and carers to remain outside the Pods until school finishes. A member of staff will let you know when the children are ready to be collected. You are welcome to use the cafeteria or the NPG room while you wait.

Labelling Property

Please make sure all of your child's property is labelled in permanent pen with their full name and class. This is particularly important for water bottles, hats or caps and all snack and lunch containers and bags. This allows us to easily return your child's misplaced belongings to them.

Snack and Lunch

At Nexus we promote healthy eating habits. Please make sure that the snack and lunch food you provide is healthy. In addition, the snack and lunch food should be in separate containers. This allows us to take the snacks to the cafeteria at mid-morning and the lunches can remain in an air-conditioned classroom so they do not spoil.

If you have any questions about this or would like something clarified then please email me (beach.p@nexus.edu.sg) or come and see me. I am on duty at the bus bay (the top of the main school steps) most mornings and afternoons. Along with the whole Primary Team, I very much look forward to working with you over the coming year.



Best Regards,
Paul Beach
Head of Primary School

Secondary School News

Welcome back to all our "old" learners and welcome to the large number of new learners who have joined us this year. It is exciting to see so many new faces and also to realise that the Secondary School is now becoming quite full.

We have also recently received our IB and IGCSE results and it is pleasing to see so many learners achieving at high levels and many of our IB learners moving on to the universities of their choice; we wish them well. I would like to make specific reference to one of our learners. Nyemedo Addae Dappaah earned 4 A*, 2 A, 1 B and 1 C grades in her IGCSE exams. This is an outstanding achievement – congratulations from us all.

In order to get things off to a smooth start it would be most helpful if learners could aim to arrive at school after 8.00am. Before 8.00am there is no formal staff supervision available. If a learner does arrive a little early then we would ask that you support us by encouraging them to wait in the cafeteria area until teachers are present in the classroom pod areas at about 8.10am.

The timetables for most Year groups are finalised with some Year 10 and Year 12 learners still confirming their subject choices. Years 7 to 9 all have their residential visits coming up. If you have recently joined us and would like your child to attend these visits then please contact **Graeme Massey** for Year 7 and **Andy Jefferson** for Years 8 and 9. Final arrangements need to be made in the next few days particularly for the Year 8 and 9 visit, as there are flight bookings to be made.

The 2013 - 2014 academic year is now underway and I am confident we will build on the success of last year and continue to improve and develop every element of what we do as a school community. Please monitor our webpage and your emails for information and upcoming events. We also welcome you to come and talk to us at anytime, as good communication with our community is one of our priorities.

I look forward to meeting you through the course of the next few months



Best Wishes,
John Evans
Head of Secondary School