



UNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL

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Dear Parents

Annual Survey Findings & Feedback 2022

Thank you for participating in our Annual Survey 2022. Your feedback are important to us for school improvement.

About 70% of parents have responded and given favourable feedback. We are especially proud and heartened by your complimentary comments about the school and staff. We append **some verbatim across 6 levels** for your perusal.

Lower Primary

- Thanks for providing a safe and enriching learning environment for the children in UPS.
- We are very happy and proud being in the Unity Family.
- I am happy to see many positive changes in my child since the time she has joined Unity Primary School. Thanks to the teachers and all its staff members.
- The teachers, staff, including the security, everyone is amazing. The well-being of my child is utmost to them is very visible. Being a volunteer, I am able to see first-hand the dedication towards all children. It is highly commendable.
- Good school with great dedicated teachers.
- I would like to commend the school for the effort in updating the school website in the past year. I have noted the addition of new information such as those on School Advisory Committee as well as inclusion of more photos in the photo gallery. This has allowed parents who are keen to know more about the school to have updated information.
- My son is happy to come to school every day so I'm glad and sure he enjoys his learning journey. Thank u Unity Primary School.
- School is very good and accommodative. Teachers are great and coaching is adequate.
- The teachers are very dedicated and responsive. Thank you!

Middle Primary

- Good facilities!
- We are thankful to school for being part of our kid's development.
- Teachers are extremely caring and very responsible.
- Appreciate the school and the teachers for doing their best for the students.
- Kudos to the Principal and Staff of Unity Primary School. Keep it up!
- P4D teacher, Mrs Hoe, is always on top of things. She takes effort in updating us parents. Well done!

Upper Primary

- Thanks for everything Team Unity. Great school and teachers.
- It is appreciated that parent teacher communications are done online. Thank you.
- I am very happy and appreciate the additional effort that Ms Tan as a Form teacher has done which makes my daughter keen to work and learn harder with enthusiasm. Thank you so much for good teaching culture in Unity Primary School.
- Good school with great dedicated teachers.
- Comms between school and parents has improved tremendously this year. Well done!

The school appreciates your recognition, understanding and encouragement of our efforts to support the students and staff in attaining the desired educational goals. We also hear your concerns and suggestions and assure you that we review and continually improve where feasible.

When planning and reviewing programmes, the school is guided by the following:

- Alignment to national imperatives and policies
- National curriculum
- School direction and focus
- Student outcomes
- Distinctiveness of student and staff profile
- Benefits to and well-being of whole student population
- Resources like funds, manpower, physical facilities which impact feasibility, sustainability and scalability

Based on the above considerations, responses to key concerns raised are as follows:

1. School-Home Communication

a. Can parents have a platform to communicate directly with the teachers, e.g. through WhatsApp or phone chatgroups?

School has various channels of communications, e.g. school generic email, teachers' email, school website, Letters to Parents, Parents Gateway (PG), Student Handbook and Parent-Teacher Meetings. Parents are encouraged to use any of these channels.

Communication applications like WhatsApp and iMessage are private and non-MOE platforms. MOE staff are to use authorised means for official communication.

The school respects teachers' privacy particularly after-school hours and in view of staff well-being, it cannot impose on them to release their private contact number to stakeholders. For urgent matters, parents can call the General Office and leave a message for the teachers. Teachers have many students under their charge, daily marking, lesson preparation, after-school lessons/activities, duties, meetings, training and so on to juggle. As teaching is demanding and schedules are dynamic during curriculum time, teachers will respond to messages after their classes and when it is convenient to.

We seek your understanding to exercise consideration and patience to give the school or staff reasonable time for replies to emails or calls.

b. School should use only one online app for all communication and homework related information. It becomes easier for parents to have all activities in one app.

Developed by the Ministry of Education & GovTech, Parents Gateway (PG) is a one-stop portal that strengthens school-home partnership to support children in their education journey. Parents can get access to all school announcements and consent forms from this single app.

c. Can the school provide us with the details about school activities?

Prior to the commencement of any level/school activities and in a timely manner, details and consent forms are sent out to the respective parents via PG. Parents can check PG for such notifications and consent forms. All letters sent out are uploaded on the school website so that they can be retrieved for easy reference anytime. Parents are advised to read these notification/letters carefully so as not to miss out pertinent or urgent information.

d. We appreciate more Parent-Teacher Meetings (PTM) and feedback about our children.

Because many parents are working and/or have busy schedules, the school has strategically structured 3 PTM a year for purposeful School/Teacher and Parent engagement. Beyond these sessions, teachers and parents may connect with one another via the other official platforms such as phone, email, student handbook, etc. As good practice, teachers have been providing updates to parents at appropriate junctures. We encourage parents to do likewise and contact the teachers should you need to discuss or require assistance/information about your child.

e. Would like to have PTM face to face and hope it will continue.

During the pandemic, the school conducted PTM online and majority of the parents gave feedback that they welcomed the convenience it afforded. Going forward, the school will continue to conduct PTM online. Parents who prefer to meet the teachers face-to-face can contact the teachers to arrange.

2. Assessments

a. Inform Parents about the dates for Assessments including Formative Assessments.

With the removal of Mid-Year Examination (MYE), ongoing non-weighted Formative Assessments (FA) serve to provide appropriate feedback on student learning. Being an integral part of the teaching and learning process, FA across all levels are carried out, taking into consideration the progress of students, pace of the class and at timely junctures such as immediately after a lesson or upon completion of a topic and not fixed.

Dates for Weighted Assessments (WA) and P6 Preliminary Examination are communicated in Letters to Parents. Parents can also refer to the **School Calendar** on school website and download a copy on their own electronic devices such as smartphone and laptops. Essential information such as the scope and components of assessments are in the **Information Booklet for Parents** obtainable on the school website as well.

b. Cut down on out of classroom activities so that the students can focus on learning subjects and do well in examination.

With the evolving and rapid advancements in the world, it is important that citizens are prepared to constantly upgrade themselves throughout their lifetimes to keep pace and stay relevant. That is why MOE has made bold shift in our education system – to move away from the over-emphasis on grades and examination results and to nurture a generation of students who enjoy learning and are not bogged down by chasing every last mark. While academic excellence stands us well and is necessary, broader set of foundational skills and core competencies are needed for our children to thrive in today's fast-changing world.

MOE FY2021 Committee of Supply Debate Response by Minister for Education Lawrence Wong - "The competencies that matter for success in the real world go well beyond academic abilities. They include skills like effective communication and teamwork, creativity and innovation, curiosity, resilience and grit."

Students can acquire these crucial life skills from the varied schooling experiences the school provides both in and out of the classrooms. Most significantly, students appreciate these valuable opportunities as they are meaningful, engaging and build interpersonal relationships.

3. School Events and Activities

a. School needs to communicate the calendar early for school events and activities.

The Calendar of Events is on the school website for parents' retrieval and access. Please log on and refer to it. You can also download a copy on your smartphone or other electronic devices.

We observe a 2-week lead-time to send out consent forms prior to the commencement of all after-school activities. Necessary information such as logistical and administrative details once firmed up are communicated as early as possible. We urge parents to respond accordingly so that the school receives parental consent promptly for your children to take part in the relevant activities.

All remedial/supplementary lessons and CCA are conducted on designated days. The information is in the school schedule and communicated in the Letter to Parents end of Term 4 to facilitate your planning for the following year and again at the start of every school year. Do read all Letters to Parents carefully. Also teach your child to exercise their role as responsible students and remember when to turn up for lessons and CCA too.

4. Student Behaviour and Well-Being

a. There is insufficient homework and my child ends up playing computer games the whole day.

Homework can be any meaningful tasks assigned to students by school teachers to reinforce learning and carried out during non-school hours. It should help to develop good study habits and foster independent learning. As the learning is progressive and cumulative, teachers calibrate it against student readiness and task requirements to ensure meaningfulness. Focus on the actual learning and quality vis-à-vis quantity.

Parents can do your part at home to provide a conducive study environment as well as inculcate the responsibility and discipline for self-directed and reinforcement of learning.

b. Are there incidents of bullying and what are the punishment for such behaviour?

School takes a serious approach towards student management and inculcation of sound values to underpin appropriate behaviours. There are structured lessons during Form Teacher Guidance Period (FTGP) to teach students values, social-emotional competencies and desired behaviours. Student expectations are spelt out in the Student Handbook and reinforced during lessons, teachable moments and at appropriate platforms. Any students found to be misbehaving or flouting any rules will face the consequences in accordance with the school discipline guidelines.

School believes in cultivating strength of character and independence in our students. That includes giving them the space to learn from their mistakes and build resilience. Should students encounter any difficulties, they must be taught the discipline and skills to problem-solve so that they apply and hone their self-management skills. As families exerts very powerful influence on your children, we strongly encourage parents not to over-protect your children and deprive them of the opportunities to develop and learn valuable life skills such as taking responsibilities and being accountable for their action, standing up for themselves, and so on.

- c. *My child at P5 is weak and I think he should take the foundation subjects as we are unable to provide the support to guide him at home for standard subjects.*

A strong foundation in literacy and numeracy is important at the primary level. The school carefully considers the subject combinations so that our students do not take the soft option and can transit to higher levels of learning and post-secondary to fulfil their potential. The decision for subject combination is not based on single point data but a trend record of student performance over the years and teachers' professional input.

Students need to strengthen their resilience, study skills and discipline to manage their learning independently and if faced with difficulties, to be able to seek help for themselves. Parents can pick up skills to better support your children at home through the teaching videos in Unity Connects.

- d. *My child lugs a heavy school bag to and from school daily. Is there something the school can do about this?*

Students are to pack their bags according to their daily timetable and avoid bringing all their books, materials and non-essential items to school every day. They can also keep books they do not require in the lockers assigned to them. We seek support from family to ensure your children exercise responsibility and packs their bags daily. You can also alleviate the burden by getting lightweight schoolbag and stationery items for your children.

- e. *The white school shoes get dirty very easily. Can the school shoes be changed to black?*

Students are advised to maintain personal hygiene and ensure a neat and smart appearance. School shoes are part of the school attire. The outfit ensemble is a crucial part of school identity and legacy. Changing the outfit ensemble has to take into consideration many factors such as views from key stakeholders, e.g. School Advisory Committee and Alumni. To help your children maintain a presentable student image, please clean their shoes regularly or purchase those that are easier to upkeep.

- f. *According to my child, the school toilets are dirty most times and poorly maintained.*

The toilets are washed numerous times daily and whenever they are unusually filthy and unsightly. Cleaners are required to meet the standard of cleanliness and audit checks on the toilets are done weekly to maintain sanitation compliance. In school, students are reminded to exercise consideration in view of the high-volume usage. Likewise, we seek your help to guide your children to exercise care and responsible use of all school facilities, especially the toilets.

5. School Safety and Security

- a. *Allow parents to enter the school with our children as they are very young especially during arrival and on rainy days.*

As the school compound is not big, the school faces space and manpower constraints with heavy flow of human traffic in and out of school.

Students are briefed on the safety procedures as well as movements around the school at the start of every school year. The P1 students specifically will be taught self-management skills and dismissal procedures as soon as they join the school. To foster essential independent skills in your child, we encourage parents to partner us to reinforce the skills

at home so that you can start your child on the journey of self-independence from the onset.

On rainy days, more teachers must be activated to augment the necessary security measures and manage the arrival and dismissal of students. We remain cognizant not to unduly tax or deploy our precious manpower unproductively. From the entrances of the main and back gate, the school is fully sheltered. Parents walking their children to school can drop them off at the main or back gate and move off quickly to avoid bottlenecks. With your full co-operation, the school is secure and students can safely walk in by themselves.

Dismissals are staggered by levels to avoid congestion and disorder. On rainy days during dismissals to minimise inconvenience of entering and re-entering the school, you should pick up all your children at one go at the later timing if you have more than one child in the school. We appeal to you for your kind understanding and co-operation so that together, we can continue to ensure the safety and wellbeing of our students, staff and caregivers.

- b. Can the school install a shelter outside the school gate so that we can get some cover from the sun and rain?*

The installation of a shelter outside our school is under the purview of Town Council and Land Transport Authority. The school has put up numerous appeals to the relevant authorities since 2020 and the response thus far has been unfavourable due to the underground drainage structure. The authorities have responded that they will need to explore other feasible and less costly methods.

6. Canteen Food

- a. The school canteen food is not appetizing, lacks varieties and small portions. There seems to be insufficient food for the students after school too.*

Based on Health Promotion Board (HPB) Healthy Meal School Programme (HMSP), vendors can only sell regulated food like brown rice, wholemeal bread, fruits, meat, vegetables, snacks and drinks with healthier choice symbol to ensure that students eat healthily and have a balanced diet. Please note that the vendors need to maintain a good balance between healthy diet and varieties vis-à-vis costs.

Students may inform the stall vendor that they wish to purchase the bigger portion that is available. Canteen vendors usually prepare enough food for the morning recesses and lunch periods. As they do not have catering license, all food sold from the school canteen must be consumed immediately in the canteen and not to be packed and taken home.

7. Co-Curricular Activities (CCA)

- a. The CCA offered are not attractive enough.*

The school provides varied CCA to cater to the different segments, needs and interest of the student population. There are Sports & Games, Visual & Performing Arts, Clubs & Unformed Groups CCA. At the end of each year, the school reviews the CCA offerings to ensure that they are still relevant and appealing to the general population of students.

- b. All CCA should be made competitive so that more children will get the opportunity of good training. Can the school allow the students to change their CCA within the year?*

While school encourages and supports student participation in competitions, it ensures that the participants are set up for success, which means they are ready and can take part at competitive level. The school will not unduly stress the students to perform beyond their capacity and have them unduly disappointed and worse off, withdraw from the CCA altogether.

One of the CCA goals is to build resilience, skills and leadership qualities in the students. It can only be done progressively and over a long period. Hence, it will not be helpful if the students change their CCA within a year.

8. Character Development

- a. Provide more opportunities to develop a quest for excellence in character building, aesthetics appreciation and the academics.*

The school has a 6-year Character Development Plan and Co-Curricular Programme that promote holistic education as well as inculcate important values, social-emotional skills and 21st century competencies. All students go through these planned experiences, e.g. Values-in-Action, Learning Journeys, Camps, Cyber Wellness Programme, Learning for Life Programme, Applied Learning Programme, National Education, Enrichment Lessons, Visual and Performing Arts Experiences and so on. There are many such student-centric programmes that the school reviews regularly to ensure relevance, meaningfulness and age-appropriateness to keep abreast of the educational changes and student needs.

9. Student Care Centre (SCC)

- a. There is difficulty enrolling in the student care. Can the school management increase the capacity of student care within the school premises, especially for below P3 students?*

Funded by MSF, school-based Student Care Centre (SCC), has a stipulated capacity, staff strength and room provision. Priority for admission is given to needy students/ families especially those under Financial Assistance Scheme. Parents can also enrol your children in other nearby SCC.