



UNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL

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Dear Parents

Survey Findings & Feedback 2021

Many parents responded to the survey conducted on 19 Oct 21 and gave very positive and favourable feedback about the school.

We are especially proud and heartened by the many complimentary comments of our teachers and append **some verbatim across 6 levels** for your perusal.

- ✓ *Mrs Lim (P1F Form Teacher) and other teachers are truly dedicated and helpful in helping the P1 pupils in current difficult situation, to ensure they can adapt to new school and system in a smooth manner. I would like to show my appreciation for all their hard works throughout the year. The Unity pupils are lucky to have such dedicated teachers. Keep up the good work! 🍀*
- ✓ *I personally would like to thank Mrs Hoe and Mr Lim (P3D), Mdm Huang (3CL3), Mr Jo (PE), Mdm Png, Ms Balqis (P1C), Mdm Liu (1CL5), Mr H, Mr Lim (music) for the love, support, effort and guidance to my kids. Thank you very much, really appreciate it.*
- ✓ *It's been another challenging year. Thanks to all the teachers and staff of Unity Primary. We truly appreciate everyone extra efforts, be it big or small, in making everything and anything work during this period.*
- ✓ *Ms Li of Unity Pri Sch, class 2F is very prompt in answering to parent's requests and queries. Thank you.*
- ✓ *Thank you so much Mr K (P2D) and Ms Tan (P5B) for the love, dedication and guidance. 2021 is a challenging year and you teachers did great.*
- ✓ *Mdm Soo is very nice, caring and always provide regular communications to me.*
- ✓ *Patient and good Teachers in Unity Primary School.*
- ✓ *I wish to compliment Ms Low from class 3E. She has been a very proactive Form Teacher and more than willing to assist in any queries or difficulties faced by my daughter. Is really hard for such a caring and helpful teacher to come by. Communication with her is always very prompt and there's no need to wait till PTC to make sure things are in order. Thanks.*
- ✓ *We are very happy with the school and the Form Teacher Ms Julin. She is the best teacher who takes care of kidz like their own kidz. Many thanks Ms Julin and the school team who work very hard.*
- ✓ *The school Chinese Teachers are very good to help the students.*
- ✓ *The infrastructure and the teaching and non-teaching staff are very helpful.*
- ✓ *Unity Primary has done well. Especially the teachers who communicate well with parents on any updates.*
- ✓ *Please provide more Unity Connect sessions as it is very helpful in supporting children's learning at home. Thank you.*

We are indeed grateful for your recognition, understanding and encouragement of the school's 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

The following are our responses based on the above considerations:

1. School-Home Communication

- a. *Can parents have a platform to communicate directly with the teachers, e.g. through WhatsApp or phone chatgroups? When I email to ask about my child's homework, the teacher does not reply until much later.*

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 Conference. You are encouraged to use the above channels should you wish to contact the teachers.

Communication applications like WhatsApp and iMessage are private and non-MOE platforms. The school respects teachers' privacy particularly after-school hours and cannot enforce or mandate that they release their private contact number to stakeholders. MOE staff are to use MOE authorised channels for official communication.

For urgent matters, you can call the General Office and leave a message for the teachers. Teachers will respond to your messages after their classes or as and when they have the time to. As the teachers are teaching most of the time and not at their desks, do understand that their replies cannot be instantaneous. Teachers have many students under their charge, daily marking, lesson preparation, after-school lessons/activities, duties, meetings, training and so on to juggle. Do understand the demanding role of the teachers and their dynamic schedules during the day.

Managing COVID-19 and Home-Based Learning (HBL) these last 2 years has exacerbated the strains on the teachers but still they persevere and give their best to your children. Let us be considerate, give the teachers reasonable time to get back and not expect them to respond to email or calls at any time of the day and night.

- b. *Can the school provide us with the details about school activities?*

Prior to the commencement of any level/school activities, details and consent forms are sent out to the respective parents via PG. We urge you to 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. We advise you to read these notification/letters carefully so as not to miss out any pertinent or urgent information.

- c. *There is a lack of parent engagement. Apart from the videos for Unity Connects and Letters to Parents, we have not heard or seen any of the school leaders to welcome the P1 students.*

School Leaders are mindful that parents have been working from home and have purposefully not layer in additional zoom sessions in order not to deprive the students of

the time with their teachers but ensure that the pertinent ones with the teachers and Year Heads are carried out. School Leaders go from class to class to speak with the students or zoom with them whenever possible so that there are still forms of interaction with the students given that assemblies are not allowed. School Leaders also strategically wait at the Foyer and Void Deck every morning to welcome the students and greet them. The school will resume more face-to-face interaction with parents whenever possible.

2. Assessment Dates

a. Inform Parents about the dates for Formative Assessments.

With the removal of some weighted assessments, 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**.

Please refer to **School Calendar** on the school website for the dates of Weighted Assessments (WA), Mid-Year Examination (MYE), End-of-Year Examination (EYE) and P6 Preliminary Examination. Essential information such as the scope and components to of assessments are found in the Information Booklet for Parents also obtainable on the school website.

3. School Events and Activities

a. I only know of some school events/ enrichment classes and lessons when I receive the consent forms. School needs to communicate the calendar early for school events and activities.

The Calendar of Events is on the school website for parents' easy access at all times and planning. Please log on and refer to it.

We observe a 2-week lead-time to send out consent forms prior to the commencement of all after-school activities. The school provides the necessary information and as early as possible once the logistical and administrative details and schedules are firmed up. We urge you to respond accordingly so that the school receives your consent promptly for your child 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. My child has encountered some incidents with mischievous behaviours and I am concerned about him being 'bullied' in the school.

School takes a serious approach towards student management and inculcates appropriate values to ground their behaviours. There are structured lessons during Form Teacher Guidance Period (FTGP) to teach them 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 to 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 exert very powerful influence on your children, **we strongly encourage you not to over-protect your children and deprive them of the opportunities to develop and learn valuable life skills such as taking responsibilities and be accountable for their action, standing up for themselves, and so on.**

- b. *With so many changes such as performing ART and replying PG immediately with the result, adds workload and burden for parents. Parents also have to coach, monitor, track and solve IT issues! We have to work, do household stuff and do not have time to handle all these ad hoc requests and multiple changes!*

It has certainly been an arduous year for families and everyone in school. The school complies with MOH and MOE guidelines implementing the necessary ringfencing measures and changes for the safety of your children and our staff. Backend, we streamline and simplify processes so that the required actions are not onerous or unnecessary for parents. Everyone needs to do their part to fulfil their duties and social responsibility and adhere to MOH's protocol so that the students can return/study in school safely.

- c. *My child at P5 is weak and I have been requesting for him to take the foundation subjects as we are unable to provide the support to guide him at home for standard subjects. I am still not sure why my request is not acceded.*

A strong foundation in literacy and numeracy is important at the primary level. The school considers carefully 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 founded on single point data** but based on 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's school bag is very heavy. Can something be done?*

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 your help to ensure your child exercises responsibility and packs his/her bag daily. You can also alleviate the burden by getting lightweight schoolbag and stationery items for your child.

- e. *It is difficult to keep white school shoes clean. It will be a great relief if the school shoes can 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 also 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. The toilets can be cleaner and better 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. For the convenience of parents walking our children to school, can the school open the gates at all times?

To ensure the safety and security of the students, all accesses will need to be monitored by security guards. As the school has only 2 security guards, additional personnel will need to be deployed to entrances/exits other than the main gate if these gates are open. In view of the constraint of manpower, these gates can only be opened during specific hours. Please work with the school to ensure that it remains a safe place for your children to study in.

b. Please allow parents to walk our children into the school. Allow parents into the school on rainy days as there is little space to shelter us at the gate or for us to change the children's shoes to slippers.

On rainy days, the school has to activate more teachers 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. The teachers have to focus their time on professional and meaningful work like Teaching and Learning. The school is fully sheltered from the main and back gate. Parents walking their children to school can drop them off at the main or back gate and move off quickly to avoid bottlenecks and maintain social distancing. With your full co-operation, the school is secure and students can safely walk in by themselves.

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. To foster in your child essential self-discipline and independent skills, we encourage you 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.

In view of the COVID situation, we have to comply with Safe Management Measures (SMM) and MOE guidelines to ensure safety for all. 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.

We appeal to you for your kind understanding and co-operation so that together, we can continue to ensure the safety of our students, staff and caregivers. If you have more than one child in the school, you should pick up your children all at one go at the later timing to minimise inconveniences of entering and re-entering the school during dismissals during rainy days.

- c. *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 put up the request with the relevant authorities earlier in 2020 and the response was that it would not be tenable to build a shelter for congregation in view of the need for SMM.

6. Canteen Food

- a. *I find that the school canteen food is not appetizing and lacks varieties. At times, there is not enough food for the students after school.*

In adherence to the guidelines from MOE, National Environment Agency (NEA) and Health Promotion Board (HPB), the School Canteen Committee comprising the Vice-Principal (Administration), Key Personnel and OM oversees the management of the canteen vendors. Based on HPB's Healthy Meal School Programme (HMSP), vendors can only sell regulated food like brown rice, wholemeal bread, fruits, meat and 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.

In terms of food portion, students may inform the stall vendor that they wish to purchase the bigger portion option 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.

- b. *Use card instead of cash for purchase of canteen food for the students.*

Handling cash instead of digital payment has its merits. It will help the students better understand the concept of money and improve their mental counting and computation skills. Digital payments may diminish such learning opportunities for money transactions.

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 will review 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.*

While school encourages and supports student participation in competitions, it must ensure 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 aims of CCA is to develop leadership qualities and this is

progressively done throughout the 4 years the students are in the CCA. While some students are able to take up leadership roles, others need more time.

8. Character Development

- a. *Where possible, please provide more opportunities for Unity students to develop a quest for excellence in character building, aesthetics appreciation and the academics.*

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

9. Student Care Centre (SCC)

- a. *Please consider communicating and aligning schedules/ programme arrangements between SCC and the school.*

School has monthly meetings with our school-based SCC, Big Heart SCC, to ensure alignment of schedules. Out of norm dismissal times are communicated to SCC so that they can receive the students promptly. Dates for closure of SCC are communicated at the beginning of the year so that parents can plan early. These dates are cleared with the school and they are usually for Staff Training purpose in order that the SCC staff can level up their competencies and be more effective.

10. Home-Based Learning (HBL)

- a. *HBL does require parents' guidance for lower primary. It is tough for working parents during this pandemic.*
- b. *While HBL seems helpful, there were a few occasions that there were logging in problems and caused delays in completing the work. Can we minimize the online work given?*

HBL is another platform for student to foster ownership in one's own learning and development especially when students are away from school. During MOE Workplan Seminar 2020, then Minister Ong Ye Kung announced that blended learning would become a permanent and regular feature to complement physical classroom teaching and that there would be regular HBL days where students could be self-directed and independent learners.

Going forward, e-learning will be the new normal and it will be good to work with teachers to guide the children on HBL where needed. We advised parents to set expectations and parameters for children so that they can learn independently.

The school also ensures that the amount of work given for each subject in HBL can be completed within the stipulated timeframe and students generally are able to complete the work assigned without much difficulty. At home, parents need to guide and instill in their children the discipline not to over-indulge and stray to other undesirable sites to ensure cyber safety.

Should the students encounter any technical issues completing HBL set by the school, they may call the school or approach their Form Teacher for extension of the deadline.

- b. Students physically spend 6 hours in school, but Zoom lessons for HBL is approximately an hour or so. Students do not have the face-face interaction as such I hope more than an hour can be considered for Zoom lessons especially for the lower primary and those who are slow.*

It is difficult to sustain the attention of the students for longer than necessary especially during online lessons. Especially for the lower primary, not more than one hour of zoom lesson at one go is to avoid screen fatigue and offset on-screen and off-screen work for the students.