

SHANGHAI COMMUNITY INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL

FALL 2023

communitas



Knowledge is
Opportunity

PAFA NEWS

SCIS has parent organizations called the Parents and Friends Association (PAFA) on each campus. PAFA serves as a way that parents can communicate ideas for the betterment of the school to the administration and Board. SCIS is proud of the high level of parent participation in their schools and value their partnership with the parent community. PAFA conducts various activities, from community events to charity fundraisers to volunteer support for teachers and students. Each campus has a PAFA board who works closely with each campus' administrations to plan events that help to make SCIS Campuses a unique experience for families, faculty, and students alike. We are always welcoming new members!

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Do you have a story to tell, a project to share, or art to be displayed? Let Communitas be a platform for your voice.

Communitas is about community and we rely on contributions from the SCIS community.

Should you have any comments, observations, wish to submit articles, or inquire as to ways to collaborate, feel free to send all inquiries or correspondence to the Communitas editor via email at etan@scis-china.org.

Communitas is published three times per year for the SCIS community, our friends, and the larger Shanghai community.

We are social! Feel free to visit us on the web at www.scis-china.org and follow us!



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Knowledge is
Opportunity

“Human behaviour flows from three main sources: desire, emotion, and knowledge.”

- Plato

Knowledge is defined as the awareness or familiarity gained by experience of a fact or situation. That awareness starts from one's desire to learn about a certain topic, event, and/or even an individual. This desire to gain knowledge leads to our connection with each other through the sharing of ideas and facts, thus delving deeper into the research of the matter and ultimately leading us to our connection with human progress.

Why is knowledge an opportunity?

To answer this, we must tackle further the importance of human progress. Human progress immensely shapes us as a society. However, to progress as a society, we must examine our development as individuals.

Acquiring knowledge is the first step to discovery and learning. When we find ourselves in the stages of discovery and learning, we inch our way closer to understanding – approaching an issue and understanding it from different angles.

At Shanghai Community International School (SCIS), we firmly recognize the role we play as educators in igniting their curiosity and perhaps, the emotion of excitement in learning within our students.

We believe that knowledge starts with education, both inside and outside the classroom. Not only do we acknowledge our responsibility, but we do take wholehearted pride in our role in creating circumstances for our students to gain knowledge, and fully assimilate themselves in the practice of curiosity and problem-solving, thus creating opportunities for themselves.

Our program of learning at SCIS ensures that we curate activities that encourage students to work with each other and cooperate with each other through discussions in class that provide them with the opportunity to discover ideas, consume facts, and deliberate notions that pave the way for new and better outcomes for them.

We extend our students' learning experience beyond the classroom to allow for further exploration of ideas that are exciting and engaging with practical methods applicable to their day-to-day lives. This allows for flexible yet realistic collaboration amongst peers.

As any Dragon would know by now, SCIS' well-rounded approach to education through the International Baccalaureate (IB)

programme empowers each of them to think critically, solve problems, and adapt to a rapidly changing world. Being able to think critically fosters innovation that will assist tremendously in tackling complex challenges and drive advancements in various fields.

Our aim is to foster lifelong learners as we develop our students through dynamic cycles of inquiry, action and reflection. This will not only prove helpful to our students academically, but of equal importance in their personal success. Our educators set goals for our students and identify resources to aid in their learning. In the IB programme, learning a language is a requirement and taking on that task is an added layer of learning and application of effort.

Our duty as educators is to expose our students to varying avenues of opportunity and provide them with the skills to self-manage and remain goal-oriented so they can choose the path that will lead to their success. A success that they will define for themselves and will design for themselves.

Knowledge is the steppingstone to transforming you. What you do with that knowledge propels you.

Knowledge is an opportunity, but only when you decide to use it as such.



By Daniel Eschtruth,
Director of Schools
at SCIS





Breaking Boundaries: The Power of Risk-Taking in Education

The concept of risk-taking in education has emerged as a powerful catalyst for innovation, both for educators and students alike. At Shanghai Community International School (SCIS), the willingness to step beyond the familiar and embrace the unknown holds tremendous potential for students and staff, as we seek to cultivate dynamic learning environments.

The Benefits of Educational Risk-Taking:

Educational risk-taking is the key to unlocking innovation and fostering continuous improvement. For SCIS, the benefits are easy to see. It cultivates a culture of adaptability, preparing students for a rapidly changing world. It encourages faculty to explore and implement cutting-edge teaching methods, ensuring that education remains relevant and engaging. Moreover, risk-taking fosters a sense of collaboration and shared responsibility, breaking down the silos that can often impede progress in schools. Most importantly, risk-taking can only successfully take place in an environment where we feel safe and valued. As educators, when we make ourselves vulnerable and model risk-taking, it gives permission for our students to do the same.

Challenges in Embracing Risk:

While the benefits of educational risk-taking are clear, there are common barriers that schools face in fully embracing this mindset. Fear of failure, resistance to change, and a lack of a supportive environment are among the common hurdles. Overcoming these challenges requires a concerted effort to create a safe space where educators and students feel empowered to take risks without fear of judgment.

Faculty Exemplars: A Collaborative Approach to Risk-Taking:

A recent example of our commitment to risk-taking is exemplified in the collaborative efforts of faculty and literacy consultant, Justine Otte during her visit to all three SCIS campuses in November. The introduction of lab sites, where teachers teach in front of their peers and receive constructive peer feedback represents a departure from traditional isolationist teaching methods. This intentional sharing of practices not only fosters a sense of collective responsibility but also serves as a powerful mechanism for professional development.

Our goal is to take this risk-sharing ethos a step further as SCIS teachers leverage digital platforms to share teaching practices. Online videos of lessons become a bridge, connecting educators and helping us learn from each other.

Student Empowerment Through Risk-Taking:

The commitment to risk-taking extends

seamlessly into the student experience at SCIS as well, particularly in the International Baccalaureate (IB) Primary Years Programme (PYP) and Middle Years Programme (MYP). In the PYP Exhibition in Grade 5, students delve into real-world problems, applying their learning to propose innovative solutions. This personalized approach empowers students to take ownership of their learning journey, fostering critical thinking and creativity as they share their personal solution to a broader audience.

In the MYP, the Personal Project becomes a platform for students to explore their passions and propose solutions to authentic challenges. Educators guide students in this process, nurturing a mindset of risk-taking as they encourage creative thinking and innovative solutions. By showcasing these projects to the public, educators not only validate student efforts but also emphasize the importance of sharing solutions and embracing risk as a necessary part of the learning process.

The common element in both faculty and student examples is that risk-taking involves sharing a bit of ourselves - our beliefs, practices, and solutions. By breaking away from traditional isolationist practices, SCIS is not only fostering a culture of continuous improvement but also creating an environment where risk-taking is celebrated as the driving force behind meaningful educational experiences for both educators and students. In doing so, risk-taking becomes a powerful tool for shaping the future of who we are.



By Derek Luebke, Head of School at SCIS Pudong



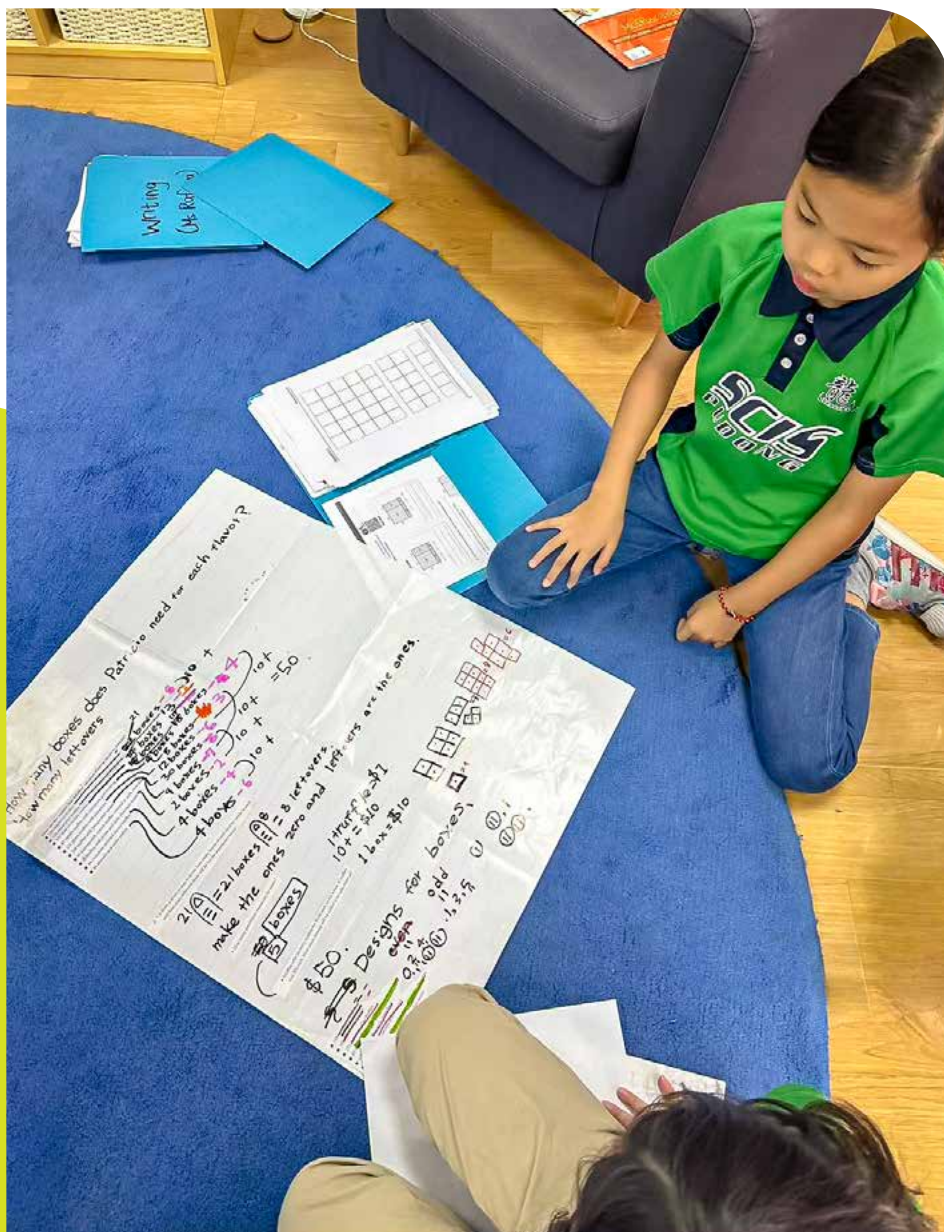
Developing Research Skills

through Authentic Inquiry

The Primary Years Programme (PYP) is known for its holistic approach to education, focusing on developing well-rounded learners who are inquirers, thinkers, and communicators. Central to this philosophy is the concept of "authentic inquiry," which encourages students to explore the world around them through open-ended, meaningful investigations.

Inquiry is At the Heart of the PYP

It involves students actively engaging in the learning process by posing questions, seeking answers, and reflecting on their discoveries. Unlike traditional research, which often follows a prescribed path, authentic inquiry allows students to explore topics of personal interest, fostering a genuine love for learning.



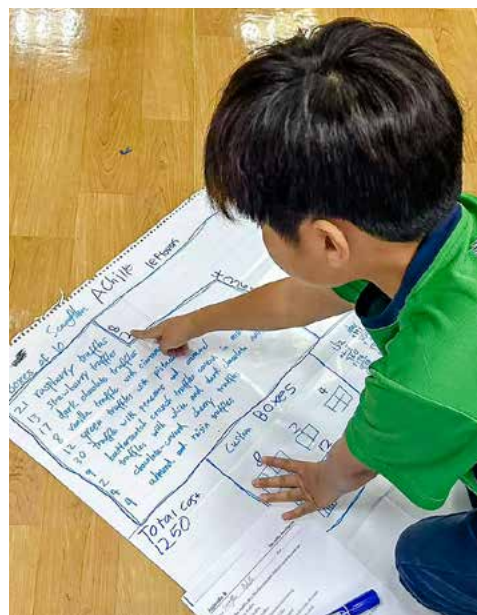
One of the foundational steps in inquiry is the development of research questions. In the PYP, students are encouraged to generate their own questions based on their curiosities and interests. This process not only builds critical thinking skills but also hones their research skills, as they learn to frame inquiries and seek answers through various sources.

Authentic inquiry prompts students to explore a wide range of resources, from books and websites to interviews and field trips. This practice ensures that students develop research skills that go beyond mere internet searches and encourages them to evaluate the credibility of sources, a vital skill in today's information-rich world.

In the PYP, inquiry often extends beyond individual subjects, promoting transdisciplinary learning. Students learn to connect ideas, concepts, and information from multiple subjects and content areas, honing their research skills to find relevance and relationships between different topics.

Another critical aspect of authentic inquiry is data collection and analysis. Whether through surveys, experiments, or observations, students learn how to gather and interpret data. This skill empowers them to make informed decisions and draw meaningful conclusions, fostering the development of research skills that are essential throughout their educational journey.





Authentic inquiry in the PYP emphasizes effective communication of findings. Students develop skills in presenting their research through various mediums, such as reports, presentations, and visual representations. This aspect not only enhances their research skills but also helps them become effective communicators, a core competency of the PYP.

Benefits of Authentic Inquiry in the PYP

Lifelong Learning: Inquiry fosters a deep sense of curiosity and a love for learning. By empowering students to explore topics they are passionate about, the PYP cultivates a lifelong habit of seeking knowledge and understanding.

Critical Thinking: Inquiry encourages students to think critically, ask meaningful

questions, and evaluate information rigorously. These skills are crucial in an era of abundant information and misinformation.

Empowerment: The PYP's approach to inquiry empowers students to take ownership of their learning journey. This sense of agency instills self-confidence and a belief in their ability to tackle complex challenges.

International Mindedness: By exploring diverse topics through authentic inquiry, PYP students develop a deep understanding of global issues and perspectives. This not only broadens their horizons but also equips them with the research skills needed to address complex, multifaceted challenges in an interconnected world.

The concept of authentic inquiry is central to nurturing well-rounded, inquisitive learners. Students not only develop research skills but also cultivate a passion for lifelong learning, critical thinking, and international mindedness. By embracing the principles of authentic inquiry, the PYP lays a strong foundation for students to become *inquiring, knowledgeable, and caring learners who contribute positivity to their communities.*



*By Malika Meidinger,
PYP Coordinator
at SCIS Pudong*



How an IB Education Empowers Students to Make Change

All members of the Shanghai Community International School (SCIS) community want the best for our students' education, aiming to provide them with opportunities that will help them thrive academically and personally. In today's rapidly changing world, it's crucial that students not only receive a strong academic foundation but also develop the skills and mindset necessary to make a positive impact on society. This is where the International Baccalaureate (IB) programme shines. In this article, we will explore how an IB education empowers students to make changes, with a particular

focus on the IB CAS (Creativity, Activity, Service) program and the attributes of the IB Learner Profile.

The IB CAS Program: Fostering Well-Rounded Individuals

At the heart of the IB lies the CAS program, an essential component that encourages students to engage in a variety of activities that promote personal growth and community service. CAS challenges students to step out of their comfort zones, explore new interests, and develop a sense of responsibility toward the world around them.

Creativity: In CAS, students are encouraged to pursue creative endeavors such as arts, music, writing, and more. This emphasis on creativity helps them become innovative thinkers who can approach challenges with fresh perspectives, a crucial skill for making positive changes in the world.

Activity: Physical well-being is equally important, and the activity component of CAS encourages students to lead a balanced lifestyle. Engaging in sports and physical activities not only promotes health but also instills discipline, teamwork, and

perseverance – qualities essential for effecting change.

Service: Service is at the core of CAS. Through volunteering and community involvement, students learn the value of giving back. They develop empathy, a sense of social responsibility, and an understanding of how their actions can make a difference in the lives of others.

Attributes of the IB Learner Profile: Shaping Future Change-Makers

The IB Learner Profile comprises ten attributes that are woven into the fabric of an IB education. These attributes are not just words; they are guiding principles that help shape students into well-rounded individuals ready to tackle the challenges of the world:

- **Inquirers:** IB students are naturally curious, always eager to learn and explore. This attribute empowers them to seek out information, question the status quo, and drive positive change through a thirst for knowledge.
- **Knowledgeable:** An IB education provides students with a strong academic foundation, ensuring they have the expertise needed to make informed decisions and address complex global issues.
- **Thinkers:** IB students are critical thinkers who can analyze problems, evaluate solutions, and make sound judgments, making them effective agents of change.
- **Communicators:** Effective communication is key to influencing change. IB students learn to express themselves confidently and listen actively, ensuring their voices are heard.
- **Principled:** Ethical behavior and integrity are paramount in the IB community. Students develop a strong moral compass, which guides their actions as they work towards positive change.
- **Open-Minded:** In an increasingly interconnected world, being open to different perspectives and cultures is essential. IB students embrace diversity, fostering global understanding and cooperation.
- **Caring:** The IB programme encourages empathy and compassion, motivating students to take action to make the world a better place.



- **Risk-Takers:** Change often requires stepping into the unknown. IB students are willing to take calculated risks, showing courage and resilience in the face of adversity.
- **Balanced:** A balanced lifestyle promotes mental and physical well-being, ensuring that students have the stamina and clarity of mind needed to drive change.
- **Reflective:** Self-awareness and self-assessment are encouraged in the IB programme. This attribute helps students learn from their experiences and continuously improve as they work towards positive change.

An IB education is not just about academic excellence; it's about empowering students to be compassionate, knowledgeable, and engaged global citizens. Through the CAS program and the attributes of the IB Learner Profile, students are equipped with the skills, mindset, and values needed to make meaningful change in the world. The SCIS Community can take pride in knowing that an IB education prepares our students to become the change-makers of tomorrow, ready to tackle the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead.



*By Ken Kitchens,
Upper School Principal
at SCIS Pudong*

English Language Acquisition:

What Do Our Students Have to Say?



Recently, I spoke with some of our language learners about their early experiences acquiring English. I wanted to improve my own practice and see how their experience aligned with established language acquisition theory.

How did you feel when you first began learning in an English environment?

"I felt anxious and scared. But after some time, I got a little more relaxed because the teachers at this school make students feel comfortable with their level of English. There were also students in my grade who came and were like, 'hey, how are you?' and even though I didn't understand anything they still tried to communicate with me." - Beliz

"When I lived in Korea, I learned English through Korean, so everything was easier. But when I entered an English environment, it was really hard in all my subject classes. At first, it felt like there was a big wall in front of me that I couldn't get over." - Hangyel

Students require safe learning spaces for language acquisition to occur. This is referred to as the affective filter. The less comfortable a learner feels, the higher their affective filter. In a highly affective filter environment, students are afraid to make mistakes and are unlikely to process new language skills.

One way that SCIS fosters safe learning spaces is by celebrating the multilingual and multicultural nature of our community. We recognize home languages as an asset and encourage our learners to use their multilingual skills.

At home, you can support your child by modeling a positive attitude toward language acquisition. Languages should be seen as powerful tools for experiencing new cultures, stories, and opportunities. You can also encourage your child to read at home in whichever language excites them. Literacy skills are transferable and promote good habits that will enable success in all classes.

How do you feel about how we learn English at SCIS?

"At my old school, when we learned English, we only learned basic terms. But when we learn in classes like I&S, it makes me realize





that 'wow' there's a lot more words than just these basic terms." - Beliz

Learning and acquiring a language are very different things. We learn a language by memorizing rules, patterns, and vocabulary. However, this does not lead to natural speech. We acquire a language when we immerse ourselves in authentic experiences and use language to accomplish meaningful tasks.

At SCIS, we support language acquisition by giving opportunities for students to use language in meaningful contexts. Math, PHE, I&S, Design, and Science each requires us to use English in unique, context-specific ways.

You can support your child at home by encouraging authentic use of English. While there may be a time and place for memorization and textbooks, experiences like reading a book for pleasure are more likely to lead to language acquisition.

What helped you when you first began learning English?

"My family encouraged me. Also videos with English subtitles. The purpose of watching videos should not be to learn English. We should watch videos that interest us so that

we have fun. During the entertainment we can learn English. - Hangyell

"Reading helped me, but it should be a topic or genre you're interested in. You shouldn't get bored while reading. You should feel interested and be thinking 'oh what's going to happen next?'" - Beliz

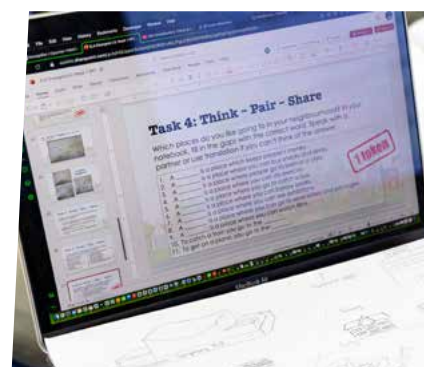
"I love reading Chinese books, and when I started learning English, my mom bought me lots of English books. She said that I should also read English books every day." - Jasmine

Children are more likely to acquire language if they enjoy the content. In short, our learners don't need to read and watch strictly academic material to practice their English. Here are some suggestions for selecting things to read and watch.

It should be:

- Easy enough to effortlessly comprehend
- Self-selected
- Chosen for interest and enjoyment

What stood out to me while talking to these students is how important it is to have a safe learning environment and feel invested in what we are learning. I'm pleased to see that we're making that happen at home and at school in our SCIS community!



By Richard Benade,
English Language
Acquisition Teacher
at SCIS Hongqiao



Translanguaging and Language Learning: Exploring the Pros and Cons

An essential aspect of an SCIS education is becoming a confident speaker of multiple languages. As a language acquisition educator, it is a rewarding and challenging task to support our language learners as they navigate the rigorous academic subjects in English while also continuing to maintain and develop their home language. That's where the concept of translanguaging comes in!

Translanguaging is defined simply as "the use of different languages together" (ealjournal.org). Within the classroom, this concept can take many forms, such as students creating bilingual word banks for a humanities unit or a science teacher providing a research article in multiple languages. Translanguaging allows students to use their home language to strengthen the learning and understanding of their target language.

Translanguaging has many benefits. When students use their home language to grasp new concepts, they are able to improve their comprehension of that subject. Simultaneously, motivation is increased. The language demands of a text to appear less daunting when the student feels confident in their understanding of the concept itself. Joel Wilson, Head of the Humanities Department at SCIS Pudong, agrees: "When I allow students to begin their research in their native language, it gives kids a place to start instead of being overwhelmed by the process. They are able to begin the process of investigation with confidence."

Students also develop effective code-switching skills, or the ability to switch between languages in an effective way. "Where a child has lived an experience in one language, and has technical vocabulary from that experience, code-switching allows them to continue communicating about that experience in any environment," Robert Staples, MYP Coordinator at SCIS Pudong, noted. Code-switching is an essential asset in any multilingual environment, from university to the workplace.

But, as with many things in life, there is always too much of a good thing. Language fluency requires constant exposure and interaction, and an overreliance on translanguaging





strategies can impact both of these. Students can become too reliant on their home language, missing opportunities to see and use academic vocabulary in context. As students grapple with the demands of the IB diploma, writing complexity is an essential skill that requires intentional and consistent growth, and reduced exposure to complexity in language can negatively impact that development.

So, how do students find a balance? Well, it starts with the kids! Students first need to understand that language develops primarily through interaction and immersion, and need to be empowered to make decisions that promote developing in their academic journey at SCIS. Teachers provide the language tools here, along with lots of enthusiastic cheerleading.

Outside of class, SCIS offers an abundance of social and physical after-school activities that provide students with rich opportunities to use conversational English. Upper School Principal at SCIS Pudong, Ken Kitchens adds, “Students need English for academic purposes, but they also need English for ‘real life’ as well. With 44 nationalities and English as the lingua franca, SCIS fulfills both needs.”

The final puzzle piece happens at home! Language development is like a bicycle: both tires need to be inflated to move forward. Parents and caregivers can continue to develop and support student home language by providing students with opportunities to read, write, and speak about complex topics in their home language. At the same time, parents can encourage their kids to participate in English immersion social and athletic activities, engage together in English text and media, even have your kids teach you a lesson in English! Xiating Fang adds a unique perspective as both a mother of two successful SCIS students and as the SCIS Pudong Mandarin Language Acquisition Teacher, “Parents’ willingness to encourage input and output of English will also motivate students to use the school language both inside and outside school.”

When we empower students to take on the arduous task of an SCIS IB education using their toolbox of language strengths, not only do we develop critical reading and writing skills across languages, but we create confident and empowered risk takers ready to take their education beyond the walls of the classroom!



*By Jessie Doster, English
Language Acquisition
Teacher at SCIS Pudong*

How the Role of **Social-Emotional Learning** at SCIS Supports **Bullying Prevention**



Victims of school bullying are impacted in detrimental ways that affect students' emotional wellbeing, peer/family relationships, and academic achievements. There are many statistics worldwide that merit the seriousness of bullying in schools, which may continue to leave a lasting imprint into adulthood. In one recent study conducted in the United States where 1,011 parents were surveyed on their children's experiences, respondents reported that 82.8% of bullying happened at school (*comparitech*, 2022). Schools cannot prevent incidents of bullying from ever happening, but as a community, they can implement anti-bullying measures to try and create a secure school environment, as research has shown that effective bullying prevention is possible by utilizing social emotional learning practices at a school-wide level.

At Shanghai Community International School (SCIS), one of our approaches to instill a safe and supportive learning environment is to bring an awareness and educate our students by integrating social-emotional learning (SEL) across the school curriculum. The daily 30-minute advisory lessons for students in Grades 6-10, and pastoral lessons offered once every eight days in Grades 11 and 12 are driven by topics from the CASEL (Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning) framework, includes: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision making. The Upper School teaching faculty have also been trained to deliver community building sharing circles as they can be used to build a sense of belonging and trusting relationships, strengthen communication skills and support equity of voice,

introduce new content and close a topic learned in class, or to process events that have occurred.

Additionally, our subject teachers incorporate a culture of respect and instill SEL practices in the classrooms. Examples include practicing mindfulness before a major assessment; encouraging expression through art; having a quiet and comfortable space in the classroom to re-ground; and writing anonymous notes of kindness to classmates. These opportunities for students to practice and apply their interpersonal skills are not only demonstrated in the classrooms, but also extend in partnerships with the families and community, in which these SEL practices are disseminated across all these settings.



Our teachers also receive ongoing professional development in SEL, as this year, we introduced a bullying prevention policy created by the systemwide social emotional support team, which was first initiated by parents and students. In alignment with the Chinese Ministry of Education's Anti-Bullying Law, SCIS's bullying prevention policy is separated into four parts:

Part 1: Defines what bullying is, identifies the different types of bullying, and highlights the importance of bullying prevention;

Part 2: Describes the short and long-term effects of bullying on victims and perpetrators, and how they impact our school community;

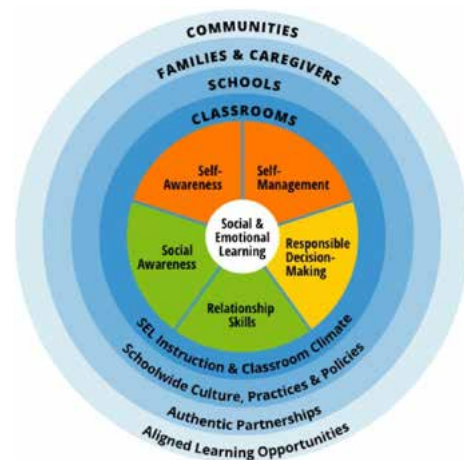
Part 3: Explains how SCIS faculty should address and respond to bullying behavior; and how students who have been identified as targets and perpetrators of bullying be supported;

Part 4: Addresses preventative and reactive practices in place at SCIS to ensure that all students, faculty, and staff feel safe and secure within the school community.

Thus, at SCIS, our goal is to promote a climate of healthy social and emotional wellbeing of all our students and to provide an opportunity for them to work to their academic potential without any barriers. By promoting resiliency and reducing risk factors at a whole school approach with opportunities to practice SEL skills not only in a structured environment, but also in a variety of day-to-day and unprompted interactions, which can help foster the confidence students need to intervene in bullying situations.



*By Sophia Kim,
Upper School Counselor
at SCIS Hongqiao*



Building Resilience in Children: A Crucial Guide for Parents



In today's rapidly changing world, resilience is a vital trait that can help children thrive despite challenges and unexpected events. Resilience is the ability to bounce back from adversity, learn from experiences, and adapt to new situations. As teachers and parents, fostering resilience in our children is one of the most valuable gifts we can offer. This article will explore why resilience is important and provide practical tips on how to help kids build this essential life skill.

Why is it Important?

All humans face stress and anxiety, not only in their childhood but also in their adult years. Resilience equips them with the tools to manage stress effectively, leading to better mental health and emotional well-being. Resilience teaches children that failure is not the end but rather a stepping stone towards success. It encourages them to take risks, learn from their mistakes, and persevere through setbacks, ultimately boosting their confidence, fostering their capacity to adapt to different social situations.

Practical Tips to Foster Resilience in Children

1. Encourage a Growth Mindset

Teach your children that their abilities are not fixed but can grow with effort and learning. This mindset shift can make them more open to challenges and less afraid of failure. Teachers at SCIS put a lot of emphasis on the growth mindset and put it into practice every day in the classrooms. Teaching your child about how the brain is able to change over time with different life experiences and practices will further reinforce their understanding of the power of a growth mindset.





2. Let Them Face Challenges

Don't rush to solve every problem for your child. Allow them to face challenges, even if it means they might fail or struggle. These experiences are valuable for building resilience. Often, natural and logical consequences that are not harmful can be valuable lessons for children to acquire important life skills.

3. Provide Emotional Support

Offer a safe and supportive environment where your child can express their feelings and fears without judgment. Let them know you are there to listen and help when needed.

4. Teach Problem-Solving

Guide your child through problem-solving processes. Encourage them to identify the issue, brainstorm solutions, and evaluate the outcomes. This empowers them to take control of their challenges. Involving your child in problem-solving processes will not only make them feel more in control of a situation that might seem to be beyond their control but will lead them to feel more engaged and willing to think critically.

5. Set Realistic Expectations

Help your child set realistic goals and expectations. This prevents unnecessary stress and frustration, as they will better understand what is achievable.

6. Be a Role Model

Children learn by example. Demonstrate resilience in your own life by handling challenges with a positive attitude and persistence. Modeling mistakes and accidents as well as the way you cope with them afterwards can have a lifelong impact on your children. For example, taking a moment to express disappointment but quickly moving on with your day after you've accidentally spilled your cup of coffee is a great way to allow your child to relate to similar experiences when they spill milk or drop food on the floor.

In summary, building resilience in children is an ongoing process that requires patience and dedication. However, the benefits are immeasurable. Resilient children are better equipped to handle life's challenges, grow into well-rounded individuals, and maintain strong mental and emotional health in the long run. As parents and educators, our role in fostering resilience is instrumental in helping our children thrive in an ever-changing world.



*By JJ Wu, Early Childhood Education
Counselor at SCIS Hongqiao*

The *Joy* of Learning Mandarin Through *Play*





What are the words that come to your mind when you connect play with learning? I know mine and they are definitely spontaneity and creativity. How is this possible in a Mandarin class? Vocabulary is a must-have. Sentence structure is an important element to teach. Grammar seems to drive learning even far away from play. However, there is a hidden treasure trove of learning moments that only exist in the world of play-based education. In those moments, activities like drawing, acting, games, and hands-on experiences open up a world of linguistic wonders to everyone that is involved. Yes, everyone. Students, teachers, everyone.

A secret key to unlocking conceptual understanding

When children shape a character with play dough, or use their fingers to try out the writing in shaving foam, the sophisticated words that they are learning become alive. As worldly famous, Mandarin characters consist of phonograms, which consist 90% of the frequently used words. This trait by itself is a conceptual understanding, especially when teachers introduce a new word to students for the first time. Why does the character for water look like this? How to teach it? How to connect this concept to the actual world around us? If anyone ever wonders these questions, it is worth a try to let kids guide this inquiry experience through the hands-on activities. Feeling the flow of water in the foam will eventually explain why the radical has water drops in it. Spreading the sand into a horizontal stroke will help kids understand why the word for balance and equity has to have a straight horizontal line in it. Through these little activities, students therefore enter a realm of enchantment where learning becomes an adventure into not just language but more into the concept, the culture, and even beyond. It's in this enchanting realm that students embrace the Mandarin language not as a subject, but as a key to unlocking a world of endless possibilities.

A powerful tool to harness ATL skills

Imagine a classroom with a straightforward learning goal for today and the goal is to learn how to bargain in Mandarin. It is always safe to provide students with a stack of paper where they can read the text materials and collect language blocks. Then what to do with these blocks? Yes, they can be powerful in reading comprehension tests and also useful for oral tasks. But what if we throw the kids into a real everyday challenge for buying and selling? How soon will they discover that the words they remember and sentences they dictate need to be rearranged or nuanced to suit the changing needs of the current transaction? Pretty much right away! How, as a consequence, should they manage their logical reasoning and resume communication in order to successfully close a deal? We shall find out only after we present these opportunities in class or out of classrooms. These playful moments are way more complicated than simple paper exams and can activate the ATL skills right away for our learners.

In the world of education, we often hear that the journey is just as important as the destination. When it comes to teaching Mandarin through play, this sentiment holds true. The learning moments created in the enchanting world of drawing, acting, games, and hands-on activities are more than lessons; they are lifelong memories. They're the beauty of Mandarin, not just as a language but as a doorway to the rich tapestry of Chinese culture. These are the moments that remind us why we fell in love with learning in the first place.



By Yan Yan, PYP Mandarin Coordinator at SCIS



The Power of Process

It must not be forgotten that the basic law of children's creativity is that its value lies not in its results, not in the product of creation, but in the process itself. It is not important what children create, but that they do create, that they exercise and implement their creative imagination.

- Lev Vygotsky

In the early years of a child's life, every experience becomes an opportunity for growth and learning. While the result often receives the most attention, it is the process of exploration, discovery, and problem-solving that truly lays the foundation for future success. Understanding and embracing the importance of process in early years can profoundly impact a child's development and set them on a path towards lifelong learning.

From the moment children are born, they possess an innate sense of curiosity about the world around them. By emphasizing the process rather than solely focusing on outcomes, parents and educators can encourage children to explore, inquire, and experiment. This curiosity-driven approach allows children to develop critical thinking skills, creativity, and a love of learning.

The process of learning does not always follow a linear path but rather involves setbacks, failures, and challenges. By helping children understand that setbacks are a normal part of learning, we can teach them resilience and perseverance. Instead of rushing to fix problems for them, allow children to face and overcome obstacles independently. This builds their self-management skills, determination, and confidence.

Focusing on the process rather than the product nurtures children's creativity. When children are given the freedom to

explore and experiment, they develop the ability to generate unique ideas, solve problems, and adapt to new situations. Engage children in activities that promote imaginative play, art, music, writing, and storytelling. Encourage them to express their ideas and think critically, taking risks along the way.

The process of learning involves collaboration, communication, and social interaction. Engaging children in group activities and projects fosters their social and communication skills as they learn to listen to others, share ideas, negotiate, and work together towards a common goal. These early experiences provide the foundation for healthy relationships, empathy, and effective communication skills.

In the early years, the process of learning is far more important than the final product. By embracing the importance of

process over product, adults provide an environment that supports curiosity, resilience, creativity, and social development. Encouraging children to explore, make mistakes, and learn from them allows them to develop crucial skills and mindsets that will serve them throughout their lives. So, let's celebrate the process and nurture the joy of learning, for it is through this process that they will blossom into lifelong learners and confident individuals.



*By Heather Knight, Early Childhood
Principal at SCIS Hongqiao*



IB Programmes at SCIS:

The Values of Inquiry, Reflection, and Focusing on Student Interest



The International Baccalaureate (IB) education has gained recognition worldwide for its holistic approach to education and its comprehensive approach to student learning. With an emphasis on inquiry and reflection and a focus on appealing to student interests, the IB programme inspires and prepares students for their university and beyond.

Reflection: Students engage in many reflective practices that help support their personal growth. In each of their classes, there are opportunities for students to reflect on the work that they do. In a recent Grade 8 Theatre unit, students created and regularly reflected in learning journals. These journals allowed them to think about both their understanding of what they learned and their ability to apply that understanding to the scenes they were writing and performing about Greek Theatre. This introspection nurtures personal growth and encourages students to explore their own thinking. These opportunities allow students to improve their process for the future and allow teachers to provide meaningful feedback on the process.

Inquiry: In IB, there is a focus on nurturing curiosity and problem-solving skills. The Middle Year Programme (MYP) and the Diploma Programme (DP) places great value on fostering an inquisitive mindset by encouraging students to question, investigate, and critically analyze information. Students ask questions about their learning and explore how their unit of study relates to their knowledge, their





interests, and the applications of their learning. Students are encouraged to have ownership of their academic journeys. A recent Grade 9 Individuals and Societies unit included an exploration of leadership. In this unit, students ask questions about what makes a good leader spend time determining how different cultures value, memorialize, and celebrate influential leaders or important members of their society. Students then draw meaningful connections across time and space. Students review the characteristics of both exemplary and weak leaders and then were set on a task to explore leaders through time. Prepared with these and other questions, students can dive deep into the topic, develop their

own theories about leadership, and apply them to present-day leaders. One of the most dynamic questions: Should leaders consider their own legacy? By engaging in open-ended inquiries, students develop problem-solving abilities that extend beyond the classroom, preparing them for the challenges of the future.

Student Interest: The IB programme recognizes the importance of student interest and discovery in the learning process. By incorporating student choice and flexibility in the curriculum, learners can explore topics and subjects that genuinely ignite their curiosity. By planning for student interest, faculty can foster intrinsic motivation, student ownership over their learning, and agency, all of which lead to deeper engagement and, ultimately, higher levels of achievement. Throughout the MYP and DP programmes there are many opportunities to build on their interests and discover where their interest might lead them. The Grade 10 Personal Project, where student topics range from investigating how builds are designed to withstand the force of an earthquake to create an app for students to be

connected to service agencies so they can provide support, is a clear example of these opportunities for exploring student individual interests.

At SCIS, we know that an IB education stands out due to the focus on reflection, inquiry, and focusing on student interest. By incorporating these key elements, the IB empowers students to become invested in their education, leading to lifelong learning.



*By Dr. Amy Valerio,
Upper School Principal
at SCIS Hongqiao*



Life Lessons Learned from TOK

A visitor to the remote Melanesian Island of Tanna in the aftermath of World War II and in the decades beyond would likely have been intrigued by some of the religious traditions and beliefs of the inhabitants. Our visitor would no doubt have been equally fascinated by the buildings, structures, and institutions set up by those inhabitants to facilitate the rituals required by their religious beliefs.

He (or she) would have seen few if any churches, mosques, temples, or other religious buildings of the like. Instead, the visitor would have noted that much of the devotional practices of the community revolved around the paraphernalia of the airstrip. People would gather to worship at improvised air strips, complete

with radar antennae, radio systems, and passenger terminals- all built out of wood, straw, and other such materials, and all built to achieve a religious rather than aeronautical function.

These people were (and some still are) members of one or other of the Cargo Cults that had proliferated on these islands for decades before the second World War, but which gained in number and intensity of belief during that conflict. The isolation of Tanna meant that many of the islanders had never experienced foreigners or outsiders, let alone the type of material goods that they would later come to associate with these outsiders. That all changed suddenly and dramatically after the outbreak of hostilities in the Pacific.

Now, far from being remote and isolated, the islands of Melanesia were center stage in the struggle of the great regional powers for control and dominance. It was the Japanese who first swooped from the heavens in their colossal flying machines bringing with them goods and material (cargo) which, to the islanders, seemed, literally, out of this world. Later, as the tides of war turned against the Japanese, Tanna became a center of operations for the U.S. Air Force. Even more, cargo descended from the skies accompanied by American military personnel.

The impact on the island was immense, and the impact on the islanders' conception of themselves in relation to their gods was even more transformational.





The islanders looked upon this sudden and utterly unprecedented arrival of previously unknown material goods and, logically for them, linked it to the divine. They had little or no conception of the world beyond their homes, and their communities; they did, however, have a deeply ingrained conception of the spiritual realm as one that would provide for them, look after their needs. And, not unreasonably in the context of their lives and experiences, they saw the cargo-laden planes as literal deliveries from the heavens. When the war ended, the soldiers departed, and the cargo deliveries halted, islanders set about transforming the aeronautical rituals of the Japanese and the Allies into their own devotional rituals in the hope of appeasing the gods and bringing about further divine dispatches of material goods, of cargo.

Too often, when stories of these Cargo Cults appear in the media, the reporting and commentary are tinged with a sense of snide amusement. 'How could people believe in such things?' seems to be a common trope. Yet, every single person alive today, every single society or culture existing today or at any point throughout history has shaped their

knowledge of the world around them and their understanding of themselves within it through the context of their lived lives, and this, in turn, is shaped by the framework provided by history and convention, custom and tradition, culture and belief. In this way, the manner in which even the most sophisticated of thinkers derives knowledge from and of the world is founded on much the same interaction with the world as that of the islanders of Tanna and their understanding of their gods of the Cargo Cult.

People unfamiliar with the subject sometimes struggle to grasp the purpose of the Theory of Knowledge. They have a sense that it has something to do with knowledge but are less sure about what exactly it has to do with knowledge. Parents and, initially at first, students conceive of the subject in much of the same way as they do other subjects such as Biology or Business Management, as providing answers in relation to knowledge when, in fact, it is much the other way around. Theory of Knowledge is not so much about providing answers as asking questions of knowledge- What is knowledge? How does one arrive at

knowledge? How is knowledge created? How does one determine the utility of one's knowledge? Theory of Knowledge not only helps students become aware of how they produce and acquire knowledge but does so in part by shaping an understanding and appreciation of how others arrive at knowledge. If our hypothetical visitor to Tanna was a Theory of Knowledge student, he or she would not have found the vestiges of the Cargo Cults; they would not have found such rituals and practices interesting but other. Instead, they would recognize, in the knowledge derived from the islanders from their interaction with the world and others in it, a familiar, indeed shared, paradigm of knowledge production and acquisition.



By Emmet Dunphy, TOK Teacher at SCIS Pudong



Fostering Creativity and Critical Thinking: The Influence of Technology at SCIS





In the ever-evolving landscape of education at Shanghai Community International School (SCIS), keeping pace with technology is paramount. Technology is not just a tool - it is a dynamic catalyst for enhancing creativity and critical thinking among our students. Many of the tools used at SCIS, such as MacBooks, iPads, Microsoft 365, Adobe CS, Padlet, Seesaw, ManageBac, Canva, Flip, Infobase, and Newsela (to name just a few!), play a pivotal role in nurturing the creativity and critical thinking skills required by our students, now and in the future.

Access to Information

Resources like Newsela and Infobase provide a vast reservoir of information for our students. In an age where facts and data are just a few clicks away, students can enrich their research and critical thinking abilities. Teachers encourage students to scrutinize, integrate, and draw conclusions from the wealth of digital knowledge available to them. It is not merely about having answers, but also about teaching students how to locate, validate, and employ information effectively. Students in DP Language and Literature make regular use of Bloom's Literature Online, part of Infobase, to facilitate critical thinking through literary analysis and research.

Digital Creativity Tools

Tools like MacBooks, iPads, Microsoft 365, Adobe Creative Suite and Canva empower students to unleash their creativity. Whether crafting digital art, producing videos, or developing visually captivating presentations, these tools provide an

avenue for students to engage in creative problem-solving and self-expression. These tools not only kindle creativity but also hone critical thinking as students experiment, troubleshoot, and refine their projects. Students in MYP Design class create digital models in OnShape, a cloud-based computer-aided design program and then use tools like 3D printers and laser cutters to prototype and iterate their design. MYP Design students also engage in coding and robotics with LEGO SPIKE Essentials, allowing them to explore and apply fundamental programming concepts in a tangible and engaging way. By building and programming their own robots, students develop essential skills such as creativity and critical thinking as they design, troubleshoot, and iterate on their creations, fostering a deeper understanding of problem-solving and innovation. Interactive tools like Flip, used in MYP Individuals and

Societies, allows students to create and share short video responses, making it an engaging tool for discussions, feedback, and presentations, promoting creativity while also enhancing the way students convey their ideas.

Collaborative Platforms

Collaboration is a cornerstone of contemporary education. Platforms like Padlet, Seesaw, and ManageBac facilitate collaboration among students and between students and educators. These tools foster discussion, idea sharing, and peer evaluations, which in turn stimulate creative thinking and problem-solving. Students in the PYP at SCIS document and reflect on their learning journey in Seesaw, capturing photos and recording videos that enable them to take charge of their learning, while fostering their creativity and critical thinking.

Technology is an invaluable asset in the quest to nurture creativity and critical thinking among students at SCIS. It furnishes access to a vast array of information resources, encourages digital creativity, facilitates collaboration, and offers endless interactive learning opportunities. Embracing these technological tools is imperative to prepare our students for the dynamic, digital world that awaits them. At SCIS we harness the power of technology to empower the next generation of creative, critical thinkers.



**By Paul Pavao,
Technology and
Integration Coordinator
at SCIS**





Building the Future Brick by Brick: Unraveling the Lego Robotics Program at SCIS



Unveiling the dynamic world of robotics education at Shanghai Community International School (SCIS), a recent interview with SCIS Hongqiao Design educators Joel Sutton and David Rempel elucidates the exciting nuances of the LEGO-based robotics curriculum. Diving into its benefits, future implications, and ethical considerations, the conversation provides a captivating insight into the evolving landscape of education and technology.

Hello! Please introduce yourselves.

David: My name is David Rempel and I'm from Canada. This is my fifth year at SCIS Hongqiao. In my career, I have taught English Language & Literature for 13 years, transitioning to Design three years ago. Currently, I am teaching Design to Grades 6-8 and a Grade 7 English as well.

Joel: I'm Joel Sutton. I joined SCIS Hongqiao in 2011, making this my 13th year as a Dragon. Prior to our MYP transition, I taught Digital Media, Graphic Design, and Percussion. Presently, I'm the Head of the Design Department where I teach Grades 8 and 9. Before joining SCIS, I taught math and computer technologies for Tulsa Public Schools in the U.S., and even worked for Apple as a Mac Genius.

What is the robotics program taught at SCIS?

Joel: The robotics curriculum we use at SCIS is standards-based and assembled by LEGO Corporation, marketed under the brand Spike Prime LEGO Robotics.

We like the LEGO robotics curriculum because it teaches problem-solving and independent research. And the curriculum brings to the classroom a series of challenges that fit both the MYP framework as well as providing contextual real-life examples of problems such as product distribution, factory automation, etc. This allows students to be presented with real-life challenges that they must independently or collaboratively overcome through experimentation, giving them a greater extent of problem-solving than most other Design units.

David: For any career that a student goes into, they are going to experience the discomfort of facing problems that are new and they will need to adapt and pivot. This experience is presented in robotics with problem-based learning: problems that seem at first like they will take five minutes to solve, but when the first attempt doesn't work students must go beyond their initial idea and approach the problem from a different perspective. Students have to accept that their first try is not always going to work, so they need to reflect, collaborate, and persevere. Robotics really helps students develop a deeper understanding and appreciation of the effort that goes into making everything around them.

Why is the LEGO robotics unit so special to students?

Joel: LEGO is a globally recognized and beloved brand. Many of our students grew up with LEGOs and those that haven't are

super excited to finally play and learn with them. LEGO has a special ability to engage learners and stimulate their creativity and excitement. Our students also love to work with their friends collaboratively. They get to socialize while they learn and develop their teamwork skills. At the same time, it also gets them up, away from the table and actually off their laptops for a while. They love their computers, but they really love to do other things more when it comes down to it. For the development and construction part, there's a competitive aspect to it where we see who can make the fastest robot or accomplish a certain task the most efficiently.

David: It's the play of it; putting things together, taking them apart, and putting them together in a new way. We sometimes have students who lack confidence at the beginning of the unit, so we begin with something simple with a straightforward goal. Students begin by making a little hopper that is guaranteed to be successful in moving, and yet fun because they can be unpredictable. They race these little creatures against one another and thereby have a first positive, collaborative experience with robotics. We then introduce further challenges, involving a purpose-built map. Playful inquiry and scaffolding are central to our unit, and often keep students struggling through the problems they face.

What are the benefits of having a LEGO-based design curriculum?

David: The LEGO company is well-known

for their emphasis on providing healthy, skill-building experiences. We had a training session at the local LEGO office, opening the kits and doing a few of the lessons ourselves, showing us the ways LEGO applies standards and expectations, and giving us a tour of the facilities. We then adapted what they showed us to the MYP framework and built our units.

Joel: LEGO has been developing this robotics program and supporting it for a couple of decades, probably 25 years or more. SCIS chose to adopt the LEGO Spike Prime Robotics platform because students are already familiar with their systems, the depth of quality resources they bring to the classroom, and the fantastic local support from the LEGO corporation and suppliers.

David: Also, building LEGO is quick, modular, and iterative. Build, deconstruct, build again. Deconstruction is so quick students can swap out parts and change the position of attachments as soon as they have the idea to do so. It's so modular that they can take the entire thing apart and rebuild it in 15 minutes and have another try at completing a mission. It is crucial that students understand the importance of iterative design, constantly reflecting and improving on an initial concept, and this unit is especially good in this regard.

What do you expect from robotics in education in 10 years?

Joel: In 10 years, the coding aspect of any kind of robotics process will be streamlined through some sort of AI support. It's not a fantasy to think students will literally be able to speak to the robot, and the robot will aim to interpret their speech to attempt an action or series of complex instructions. The reality is I don't see classrooms getting that anytime soon though, but I do think that is very much on the horizon. I think the traditional method of keyboard and mouse interactions with computers is going to slowly fade away.

Really, we need to teach a lot more about digital citizenship, such as how to use technology appropriately, as our technology is perpetually becoming easier to use and be more accessible.

David: What we're all good at is the consumption of technology, but not the utilization of technology for improving

our lives or making things better. How can we use technology that exists not to just entertain ourselves but to solve problems? We need to learn how to manage these tools more effectively in our personal and work lives and especially with ethical automation.

Ethics is a huge question. When it comes to the robotics unit, is that something you teach?

Joel: Actually, it is. Before we get out the actual robotics kits and start building, we explore a range of issues that AI, robotics and technology present. For example, we watch a series of short videos showcasing Disney audio animatronics, automation at Amazon warehouses, etc. Then, we talk about the concern of robots replacing people in the workforce and how that affects us. Are robots actually taking jobs? Do they make people lazier like in Wall-E? One of the points we try to explore is that while robots have the potential to replace people in some areas, they also have the potential to open entirely new industries and markets that may not have been possible before. They provide us with the opportunity to focus our time on other tasks, hopefully making us more efficient and improving our quality of life.

And lastly, do you think robots will take over the world one day?

Joel: We are on Earth because space is incompatible with our biological needs. As a species, we need food, warmth and air to survive. Robots don't need any of these for survival. I mean, if they're not limited by biological constraints, what is the purpose of staying on Earth? No, I don't subscribe to the line of thought that robots will seek to dominate Earth, despite the

popularity in the movies. If humanity truly develops sentient AI, I suspect it would be more inclined to explore our galaxy than seek world domination against its creators. Let's face it, Earth is big, but space is much bigger and would likely hold a much greater appeal to that kind of lifeform.

David: I agree; I don't think there's any real threat to humans from intelligent robots. Yet there are so many interesting and important topics of conversation regarding the implications of robotics and AI. I think it is crucial that we seek to understand and reflect on this technology as it develops, to ensure we understand the implications. We need to be conscious of the fact that our students are growing up in a time where automation is increasingly working in the background, from screening job applications to processing photos as you take them, so students must develop an awareness of this and reflect on how it impacts our lives, negatively and positively.

In the distant future, I do think it is likely that we will start to integrate or augment ourselves with computers and robotics, though that's probably a long way off. We will start to see more robots present around us and more robots and humans combined. So, by the time we worry that intelligent robots are going to take over, we'll probably be somewhat on par with them anyway. But for now, let's just be sure to play nice with them.



*Interview by Elena Tan,
Digital Communications
Officer at SCIS*





Dedication and Tradition

The 2023-2024 swim team season started smoothly and after two weeks of open swims and tryouts, the team was selected. Add an additional four Fridays of swim clinic and four weeks of Lower School swim lessons, and a 124-member team was formed. With coaches, Carson (since 2015), Seven (2015), Ryan (2021), and I, a newbie at the helm, our goal of forming a team to rival bygone years had begun. It was in 2008 that SCIS dived into competitive swimming. In that time our presence in the region was noteworthy. It's an incredible feeling to represent your school in sports and our swimmers take pride in wearing the Dragon logo. Competitive swimming builds confidence, community, team mindset, dedication, and resilience as it nurtures important lessons like leadership, commitment, time management, camaraderie, risk-taking, and goal setting. As Coach Ryan adds, "Being on the team encourages students to be a positive role model in and out of the pool".

On September 23rd the swim team kicked off with a splash at the Shanghai Oriental Sports Center, the pool that hosted Michael Phelps and the 2011 FINA World Championships. The meet was Fast and Furious by name and by nature with over 1000 swimmers from ages 7 to 19 competing. A total of 43 SCIS Dragons took part and swam their hearts out with all our swimmers obtaining at least one personal best time (PBT), a team performance goal. Placing in the top ten in at least one event were swimmers Bel Chen, Julia and Justin, while Gavin also captured a bronze and a fourth place with our top swimmer Meadow medaling in all her events with a first place and three third place finishes.

After a Golden Week of R&R, 84 swimmers from Grades 3 to 12 competed in the Shanghai Swim League (SSL) Round 1 competition hosted by Shanghai Singapore International School. Swimmers and parents were delighted to access another school campus without restriction and compete face-to-face with 10 other schools. Combining the results of our SSL West division and SSL East division (at Dulwich College Pudong), SCIS Dragons placed ninth out of the 20 teams. For our first large

team performance of the year, the coaches were encouraged by the results, both on an individual basis, and our performance as a team. 87% of our team obtained a PBT in one of their individual events and 47% recorded a personal best time in all three of their events. The top swimmers with a second or third place medal finish were Justin, Bel, Julia, and Sofia. Our team had a solid relay performance with our 11-12 boys and 13-14 boys placing third in both the freestyle relay and medley relay and the 13-14 girls placing third in freestyle and second in medley.

At the end of October, our top 34 swimmers qualified to compete at the annual SAS/ISB Swimvitational, held this year at SAS Puxi. It was an exciting event with 650+ talented swimmers from Beijing and Shanghai competing over three days. Our team had an impressive event performance with PBT at 86%. The top four swimmers were Julia, Yi Qing and Sofia with Justin capturing a second-place finish in the 400 IM and setting a new SCIS record in the event. In the combined team scores, SCIS placed 10th out of 17 scoring teams. The competition was impressive, and we established a benchmark moving forward to greater success in the year.

In our 16-years of Dragon Swim Team existence, over 1,600 SCIS Hongqiao students have been part of our team's success. As current captain Sofie says "I'm honored to be on the team, it has taught me to be patient and good things will come. People come and go but the team is a constant." Clearly being a Dragon Swim Team member is an experience our students benefit from and will remember and celebrate for years to come.



*By Jon Biros, Aquatics Director
at SCIS Hongqiao*



SCIS Hongqiao: Volleyball Recap

Hongqiao Varsity Girls Volleyball 2023

Coach: Melissa Dennie

We began the Varsity Girls Volleyball season rebuilding as many experienced athletes moved on to further studies and faraway places. This year returning players stepped into new roles, positions and rotations, while up-and-coming athletes learned how to further develop their foundations, ready to step in at any moment. The season kicked off hosting our Dragon Cup giving each player plenty of playing time and an opportunity to grow as a team in confidence and communication. Moving through our regular season, the girls worked hard to develop a consistent return, block, tip and play off the net making the team more competitive and unpredictable with each passing game. Our season ended with the team traveling to Hangzhou for ACAMIS where the girls made it into the championship game taking home second place overall in an epic third-set battle where they forced Hangzhou International School, the home team, into a win by two scenarios. Everyone's heart was pounding, an athletic experience and memory no player will soon forget and can look back on with a proud smile. Go Dragons!



Hongqiao Varsity Boys Volleyball 2023

Coach: Derek Janssen

The dedicated team of 14 players grew together throughout the season, focusing on teamwork, communication, and a defense-first mentality. There were plenty of learning opportunities along the journey with close home matches and a difficult split squad experience at the Dragon Cup. Through all the highs and lows of the season, the varsity boys put together an exciting SISAC tournament, losing a close three-set, semifinal battle to SAS Pudong. Five days later, the team traveled to the ACAMIS championship in Hangzhou, where they played seven matches over a three-day span. After winning an epic, semifinal match against HIS they came up short in the final against Discovery College Hong Kong. Congratulations to the team on all your accomplishments this season, and best of luck to our graduating players in their future athletic endeavors.

Hongqiao Junior Varsity Girls Volleyball 2023

Coach: Luke Patterson

The 2023/24 Junior Varsity Girls Volleyball season has come to an end. The girls played well throughout the season and impressively won all eight games, never losing a set. There were several highlights such as comeback wins, "off the net" plays and serving streaks. The team took home the SISAC Western Division Plaque and battled hard to get into the finals with Concordia, the Eastern Division winner. Despite being tired, the team never gave up as they tried to mount their comeback. Although, at the moment, the team was disappointed with a second-place finish, they can hold their heads high and be proud of a great season. With adjustments and hard work, we will come back prepared to win next season.



Hongqiao Junior Varsity Boys Volleyball 2023

Coach: Kirk Thomas

The Junior Varsity Boys Volleyball team, a blend of inexperienced and CISSA-grade players, diligently honed their skills, emphasizing hard work, hustle, communication, and mutual support. In the SCIS Dragon Cup, they showcased resilience, winning one match and narrowly losing two against seasoned senior teams. The SISAC regular season saw slow beginnings but climaxed with a remarkable comeback against YCIS Puxi. Boosted by newfound confidence, the boys went 6-0 before a challenging final match against Suzhou. Despite falling short, they secured the second seed in the SISAC Volleyball Championships. Winning their first two matches, they faced Suzhou again in a highly contested final, ultimately securing the SISAC championship. As varsity players graduate, junior varsity players may transition to the varsity team next year, marking a promising future for SCIS Boys Volleyball.



SCIS Pudong: Volleyball Recap



Pudong Varsity Girls and Boys Volleyball 2023

Coach: Mark Heil, Mindy Lee, Luke Cantrill

The volleyball season kicked off the 2023-2024 sports year at SCIS Pudong. We began with the Dragon Cup, held at SCIS Hongqiao, and our boys' and girls' varsity teams played counterparts from both SCIS Hongqiao and Hangzhou. It should be noted that both teams also fielded players from Grade 8! Over the course of the season, with matches against teams from schools like SAS Pudong, Concordia, and Wellington, several of the biggest and strongest schools in Shanghai with respect to their sports programs, our Dragons developed and went from strength to strength, saving our strongest performances for the end of the season. This resulted in the boys' team playing in the DI Cup, and the girls' team playing in the DI Plate SISAC tournaments. Coach Heil (boys coach) and Coach Lee (girls coach) were both very proud of their teams on the courts in these two final tournaments, commenting on just how much progress the players had made. This progression resulted in two outstanding performances at the ACAMIS season-ending tournament in Shenzhen, held at the beginning of November; our girls' team came fourth

overall, and there were three Grade 8 students in that team, and our boys' team (all Grade 9-12) came first! Not since 2019 has SCIS Pudong taken anything away from an ACAMIS tournament! We are moving on to basketball now at the High School level, with ACAMIS to be held in Beijing at the end of January; let's keep our fingers crossed to see if we can take home first place again!



Written by Harry Brookfield, Athletics, Activities, and Aquatics Director at SCIS Pudong





Pudong Varsity Boys Volleyball 2023

Coach: Mark Heil

The Varsity Boys' Volleyball Team was led by Grade 12 captains Nicolas (setter) and Guilherme (libero). Their experience and passion for the game helped to inspire others. Grade 12 athlete, Charlie, joined the team for the first time and provided a defensive presence with his height as a middle blocker along with Adam. Martee hustled to make good passes and Gunit mastered a killer jump serve by the end of the season. The 9th grade brothers, Lloyd and Phiwa, provided good support on the court for the team while Lucas and Coby showed a lot of improvement throughout the season. Gordon, who was second on the team in kills, had an unfortunate ankle injury at the SISAC tournament but the team rallied back to beat SAS Puxi but lost their last game versus GSS.

The team traveled to Shenzhen for the annual ACAMIS tournament where they played schools from Beijing, Dongguan, Wuxi, and Chengdu. The team had a slow start and lost all of its sets and games on the first day. However, the boys came together, regrouped, and played with a new passion which helped lead them to win both of their games on day 2. On the last day, they beat BIS in the semifinals, whom they had lost to earlier. Eino led the team in kills with his thunderous spikes. The Dragons faced off against SWIS in the championship and played their hearts out in front of a packed gym and upset the top-ranked home team to claim the first ACAMIS Boys' Varsity Silver Division championship!!





From Non-Native Speaker to IB Top Scorer: A Remarkable Journey

Jaeha Namkung's (Class of 2023) exceptional achievement of 44 out of 45 points on his final International Baccalaureate (IB) examination at Shanghai Community International School (SCIS) Pudong underscores the school's commitment to academic excellence. This remarkable result reflects the invaluable resources and unwavering support provided by the institution, which played a pivotal role in fostering his success in the rigorous IB Diploma Programme (DP).

Tell us more about yourself. Where are you from, and what brought you to Shanghai Community International School?

I came to SCIS from South Korea with limited English skills in Grade 7, and their supportive EAL program was instrumental in helping me improve my English, for which I am grateful.

We heard you scored a 44/45 in the IBDP! How did you achieve this outstanding accomplishment? What obstacles did you go through, and how did you overcome them?

My success hinged on maintaining a positive mindset. I shifted the way I thought about

studies, from dislike to building connections between academics and my hobbies like writing poems and lyrics in English. This was instrumental in improving my language skills as I began to enjoy the learning of new concepts enjoyable, ultimately leading to faster and comprehensive learning.

Where are you headed this year, to what major, and why did you choose this major for your next steps?

I've been fortunate enough to have received an acceptance to the National University of Singapore. I am considering deferring the admit though so I can apply to Korean universities as well, considering I am undecided about which country I'd like to study in just yet. While I applied for electrical and electronic engineering, influenced by my dad's work in the semiconductor industry and my strong inclination towards physics, I'm now also considering exploring various other fields like cyber security, artificial intelligence, robotics, and nanotechnology. For now, I'd like to keep my options open.

What are the top three skills you felt you developed during your time at SCIS? How will you apply these skills

as a college student?

The top three skills I learned at SCIS were independence, seeking support, and building friendships regardless of backgrounds and nationalities, which is invaluable in academics and life. Universities offer minimal guidelines, necessitating independent learning, yet seeking help when needed is equally crucial, emphasizing the importance of building relationships with others. These skills will benefit me not only in college but also in life, and I'm grateful to SCIS for imparting them.



Who were some of the teachers or lecturers who provided support and guidance to you during your studies and even contributed to your academic success?

All my teachers were supportive, but Mr. Staples played a pivotal role in my academic success. Despite my struggles in English B, he dedicated his free time to provide one-on-one teaching, offered abundant resources for reading and writing practice, and guided me through writing my Extended Essay with insightful feedback. Thanks to his help, I achieved satisfying scores in both English B and the Extended Essay.

A few warm words from Mr. Robert Staples, EAL and English B Teacher at SCIS Pudong:

In a school as diverse as SCIS, I use a large variety of ways to motivate students, but one theme is getting students to understand that I care about them as individuals, and another is encouraging students to trust themselves to tell me what help they need from me. With a highly motivated student like Jaeha, we spent lots of time getting him to analyze his strengths and weaknesses, so we knew what to work on.

Jaeha is humble and generous. Even as a high-performing student Jaeha was never afraid to admit he didn't know something or to consider the value of a new idea or piece of feedback from either myself or his classmates.



THE ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

Alumni Mission:

The SCIS Alumni Association has been established in order to foster the continued cordial relations of the SCIS community. Its goal was, and continues to be, to link alumni with the School and with each other, and to support and maintain such forged relationships. It strives to provide ample avenues and opportunities to encourage alumni to participate actively in the SCIS community.

Alumni Contact:

Elena Tan
etan@scis-china.org

Alumni Requirements:

1. Graduated from a SCIS Campus

OR

2. Went to school here for at least one year AND be over 18

Social Media



Facebook site:
<https://www.facebook.com/alumniSCIS/>



LinkedIn site:
<https://www.linkedin.com/groups/4757677>



A Dragon's Journey From Alumnus to Parent & Beyond

Delving into an engaging interview with Jeffery Kao, a notable alumnus of Shanghai Community International School (SCIS) Hongqiao, the conversation touches on his educational journey from student to parent, reflecting on the vibrant transformation within SCIS and how it has shaped his experiences and perspectives. From fond memories to discussing the distinctive traits and developments at SCIS, Jeffery shares his personal insights on why he chose SCIS for his daughter, offering valuable recommendations for prospective parents seeking a high-quality international education.

Welcome back, Jeffery! Please introduce yourself.

I am from the SCIS Class of 2011 (the 2nd graduating class of SCIS, I believe)

I actually first attended SCIS briefly in Lower School, for maybe a semester during the first grade (I can't recall clearly now). But moved around until I came back to Shanghai in high school and attended SCIS from the start of 10th grade until graduation.

After graduating from SCIS, I attended the university in Southern California, a liberal arts school – and majored in Global Business with an emphasis in Marketing.

I currently reside in Shanghai with my wife and two kids (Eevie – 2 years old; Eddie – 1 month old) while running a boutique advertising agency and working at VOL group (a F&B group that operates its restaurant brands in Shanghai – Polux, Mr. & Mrs. Bund, Ultraviolet, Charbon, Roodoodoo, etc.).

What is your fondest memory at SCIS?

Every China Trip or sports tournament trip that involves us/groups to travel from city to city. Since it's always very exciting, new, and fun to be able to travel with your friends and classmates and be away from home for some days (teenagers...)

What made SCIS special to you?

I think the international community and environment that makes up the SCIS student body is something that has made a deep impact on me. The relationships and the friendships (among classmates and

faculties whom I've kept in touch with even until now) that were from during my time at SCIS really gave me a broader view of the world when I went off to college and even into my professional career.

What made you decide to enroll your daughter at SCIS?

One of the key deciding factors was how international SCIS is and was able to maintain throughout the years. Since





growing up in an international school myself and first-hand experiencing the impact it had on my life really gave me a clear indication of what type of education and environment, I would want my daughter to be in.

How did your daughter adapt to the SCIS Hongqiao ECE campus? What were the challenges and how did SCIS help your daughter (and you) to adjust her time at SCIS?

So far, the experience and process of enrolling my daughter in the ECE campus has been very smooth and very trustworthy. The focus and dedication of the work at ECE from all faculties have really made an impressive impression on my wife and I (from the classroom teachers, and principal, all the way to the security staff).

How does it feel to return to SCIS, but as an SCIS parent now?

It's a very strange, interesting, yet also very exciting feeling. From the very first return to visit the campus with my daughter, back on to familiar grounds and surroundings,

to the first time having my daughter wear the same SCIS uniform that I once wore was definitely a milestone type of progress for all.

What are the biggest changes in SCIS from 2011 vs 2023?

I think SCIS has definitely made a lot of progress in terms of its content, process, and procedure, and overall improved on its ability to program different curriculums, hardware, and long-term development. For example, aside from the IB programme, I was told that SCIS is also developing different extracurricular programs that would benefit the students in the long run and their future – that is besides the regular activities such as basketball and soccer.

What has stayed the same since 2011?

What I really appreciated, and valued was the fact that SCIS stayed international with its student and faculty demographic since 2011. It's something that I believe is important especially after comparing it with other international schools in Shanghai.



What do you hope for your daughter to achieve during her time at SCIS?

I hope for my daughter to be able to grow up in a diversified community that would allow her to encounter many different cultures, people, and a global view – which was something that I experienced during my time at SCIS.

If you were to recommend SCIS to a fellow parent, what are your top 3 reasons to enroll today?

1) SCIS' faculties and teachers are some of the most caring individuals I've met and are true professionals at what they do.

2) A truly diverse and international community group for your children to study and grow up in.

3) The IB programme and philosophy that SCIS follows is a programme that I believe really helps develop kids to become great thinkers, adaptive learning ability, and a global citizen which is something critical in the real world (for current and future).



PAFA: Our Village

Have you heard of the phrase “it takes a village to raise a child”? This African proverb refers to the fact that no individual should live in isolation. It also conveys the message that when we come together as a community (“village”), we are able to grow, evolve and become the best versions of ourselves.

When reflecting on PAFA as a village, one realizes that this community offers more than just academic support. We zoom into three families, discovering what keeps them connected to SCIS.



The van Lankvelds: Paul, Philippe, Lily, Nina and Inez.

Once a Dragon...

Lily and Paul van Lankveld lived in Shanghai for 14 years. Their children Nina, Philippe and Inez collectively attended SCIS from 2012 to 2022, and Lily was one of the parents who founded the SCIS Cooking Club. The van Lankvelds continue to visit Shanghai and SCIS, even though they are based in the Hague, Netherlands.

How did the idea of the PAFA Cooking Club come about?

The cooking club emerged as a result of the pandemic. Ambassadors were exploring ways of coming together as a community. We missed spending time with other families. Initially, a few parent ambassadors joined hands to share their love of food. Before we knew it, the initiative had gained traction and I guess the rest is history!

“To transform a place into a home, it is best for us to surround ourselves with likeminded people who can still be very different to you.”

– Lily van Lankveld





The Handfords: Ola, Ella, Phil, Oli and Popcorn in the front

Travelers

Meet the Handfords: Ola, Ella, Phil and Oliver (aka Oli). With their British and Polish backgrounds, this flamboyant family was part of the SCIS family for five years; before heading to Dubai in pursuit of new opportunities and adventures. Fast forward to a year later - the Handfords are back in Shanghai and back at SCIS.

What makes SCIS special?

SCIS truly walks the talk, embodying a harmonious blend of family and school connectivity, individualized education, and a true attitude of respect towards one another. This ethos significantly shapes the way children think and approach challenges, nurturing them into reflective and respectful individuals.

“The genuine appeal of SCIS lies in its authentic delivery of promised values, something I’ve come to appreciate profoundly especially after time away in a different setting.” – Ola Handford



The Kims: Kyuwon, Owen and Nina

Paying it forward

The Kim family is new to Shanghai. Talk about "go big or go home", Nina immediately raised her hand when asked to join the team and assist wherever she can. She is one of our PAFA Events Representatives and chances are – you’ve seen her on campus (it’s impossible to miss her friendly smile).

Why did you join the PAFA team?

When we moved to Shanghai a year ago, I didn’t know anyone. However, I was able to make many friends and maintain good relationships through the SCIS parent-led clubs. As a PAFA Representative, I’d like to help new parents by extending a warm welcome and connecting them with some sort of familiarity.

In times of crisis or need, we may not have our biological families close by; but there is a sense of comfort knowing that our PAFA community is just a stone's throw away.

It is fair to say that the Shanghai Community International School spirit overflows in all of us. We – all parents and friends of SCIS – are PAFA. There are the obvious, tangible elements that resonate with us, such as the school uniform. Then there are the less obvious elements, those that occur unconsciously and become intertwined in our daily habits. In most instances, we don’t recognize the latter until someone asks us why we do the things that we do. And that... that is the power of community.



*“Community is family”
– Nina Kim*



PAFA Promotes the Culture of Peace

School Mediation in a Multicultural Environment

In any environment where human interaction takes place, it may lead to various types of conflicts. The school environment is not an exception; and when the environment is multicultural, the opportunities for conflict multiply considerably.

The question would be: *how do we teach our students or children to solve their conflicts at school?* It is common that we teach in a traditional way of telling the authority (teacher, counselor, principal, head of school), any complaint or issue they may be facing, involving their peers.

Sometimes, the issues are raised at home and parents get involved in the controversy, understandably backing up for their children; and the conflict, which emerged between students, becomes a complex controversy that may involve students, parents, teachers, school staff members, and school authorities.

A non-traditional but effective dispute resolution method is mediation. It is a peaceful, voluntary, confidential, flexible, equitable procedure, through which a third person outside the conflict and who is known as the mediator, acting at all times honestly,

impartially, and neutrally, facilitates the communication between the parties, so that they themselves generate options for a solution to the situation, and choose the one that best meets their needs and interests.

How to practice mediation at school?

School mediation has proven to be effective because it is performed between peers, since it is the students themselves who are trained to be mediators in the conflicts that arise at school, among their own classmates; then, under proper supervision, they intervene as mediators in the disputes that occur in their school; therefore, when students develop in an environment that fosters peaceful interaction through mediation, they get interested in receiving the training to become mediators, and this training develops in them various skills such as the ability to communicate effectively, active listening, the ability to act impartially, objectively, and neutrally; assertiveness, empathy, management of emotions, tolerance, patience, identification of interests, among others; all these tools lead to the prevention of conflicts and the positive management of disputes at school.

Relevance of school mediation in a multicultural environment.

In a multicultural environment, diversity reigns and this leads to a series of cultural differences that may generate disagreements, misunderstandings, and conflicts; hence, the effectiveness of mediation in these environments is indisputable, due to the principles that govern it, among which are: assertive and respectful communication; neutrality, which involves avoiding prejudices, criticism and unrequested opinions; tolerance for diversity, and empathy.

What additional benefits do we get from school mediation?

Mediation is a method that promotes peace and represents a tool for the prevention of bullying, because of the principles previously mentioned.

In addition to the above, school mediation combats stigma, shaming, victimization and revictimization, stereotypes, labels and racism, because it implies the positive management of conflicts, through peaceful, empathic and respectful dialogue, focused on the generation of agreements to solve arising controversies equitably and satisfactorily.

PAFA Pudong contributes to the construction and strengthening of the culture of peace in our school, through informative pieces such as this one, and our weekly bulletins. Additionally, we organize educational, cultural and social events with the determinant purpose of uniting our community and celebrating the interculturality that defines us.

By Maria Jose Verduzco, PAFA Communications at SCIS Pudong

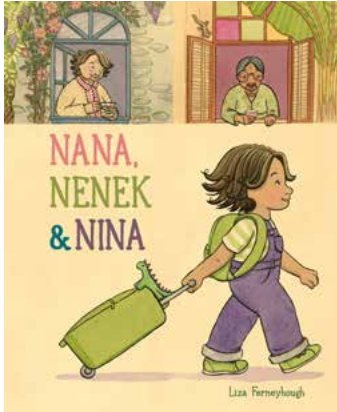
*“Peace cannot
be kept by force;
it can only be
achieved by
understanding”.*
- Albert Einstein



Book Recommendations for All Ages

Books are a handy resource packed with information, insights into a happy life, life lessons, love, fear, and lots of advantageous instruction. Books open doors to a world of ingenuity, creativity, and resourcefulness. And stories are an integral part of our lives. They talk about history, mythology, our beliefs, our inspirations, and possibilities of our future, the list is endless. Read below the book recommendations for all ages from our very own SCIS librarians:

Malia Heil, Librarian at SCIS Pudong



Nana, Nenek & Nina

by Liza Ferneyhough

Ages 4+

Do you have several places that feel like home? Nina lives with her parents in North America, but she loves to visit her two grandmothers: one who lives in Europe and the other in Southeast Asia. This beautifully illustrated book shows her enjoying each place in a side-by-side comparative view. As you spend the day with Nina on her two visits, you'll see how similar and different the experiences are, and you'll feel the love that makes her feel welcomed in each home.



The Surprising Power of a Good Dumpling

by Wai Chim

Ages 13+

The Surprising Power of a Good Dumpling gives an excellent portrayal of how mental illness (bipolar disorder, hallucinations, depression) affects loved ones. The story starts with teenage Anna Chiu taking a lead role in her family as her mother stays in bed day and night, so on top of the usual stresses of high school, Anna helps her dad with their family restaurant and looks after her younger siblings. Then, when her mom gets out of bed and things worsen, the characters' varying reactions show different ways to cope and how to best support someone who is struggling, even when you yourself don't understand. There is tension and confusion, but there is also hope, patience, and devotion. Above all, the strongest "grounding" in this story is family. With its values and advocacy, this book holds important lessons for all about inclusion and grace.

Black Bird, Blue Road

by Sofiya Pasternack

Ages 10+

Go back in time and bend your reality with this historical fantasy novel. Blending myth and history, Pasternack shows two sides of a little-studied culture: the medieval Jewish empire of Khazaria. Likewise, she shows two sides of human resilience -- goodness and justice -- in the twins Ziva and Pesah as they journey to defeat death. Their adventure is thrilling, and you'll quickly be carried along with a narration that moves you with the "hurry hurry wait" pace we all feel in life's emergencies, and as your heart races with the twins, their story will raise in you important, deep questions about purpose, death, spiritual beings, and evil.

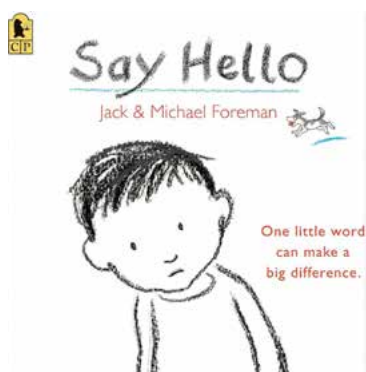


Clair Wain, Early Childhood Librarian at SCIS Hongqiao

Say Hello

By Jack and Michael Foreman

Age 3-6

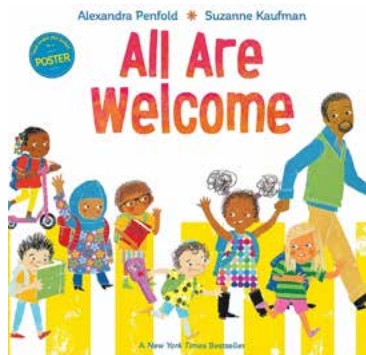


A simple rhyming text and evocative charcoal and pastel line drawings convey a story of longing and acceptance. Written when the author was ten years old, the book tells the story of a dog and a boy who are both lonely until they are included by others. This book is all about the joy and relief of finding a new friend just when you need one most. The simple act of saying hello and inviting someone in can change everything! The story is simple and accessible to very young children. It starts with a lonely dog who yearns for companionship as it wanders through town. Seeing a group of children involved in a ball game, the playful puppy joins in and is quickly accepted. Also watching the happy children from afar is a shy boy. Unsure of why he's left out and uncertain about entering the game, the boy's loneliness grows. Suddenly, with the easy efforts of a slobbery kiss and welcoming smiles, the dog and the children greet the boy and invite him in. It reminds readers that when someone looks lonely and in need of a friend, one little word and simple gestures can make a difference.

All Are Welcome

By Alexandra Penfold

Age 3-6



This is a warm, welcoming picture book that we shared at our UNIDOP ECE assembly, reading it in both Mandarin and English. The book celebrates diversity and gives encouragement and support to all children. Diversity and inclusion are shown beautifully, happily and as part of normal daily life, with simple, repeated words of inclusion and colourful, engaging illustrations. *All Are Welcome* shows children encouraged to be who they are, and celebrates their differences. It follows a group of children through a day in their school, where everyone is welcome with open arms. The inclusive message transcends the classroom by showing the students' families, the variety of foods they bring for lunch, what they wear, and how they get to school. The repetition of "All Are Welcome Here" is a kind and caring mantra. *All Are Welcome* lets young children know that no matter what, they have a place, they have a space, they are welcome in their school. No one is left out, and everyone is valued.

Ashley Simmons, Upper School Librarian at SCIS Hongqiao



Rebel Skies

By Ann Sei Lin

Ages 10+

Himura is a Crafter, which means she has the power to manipulate and work paper with her mind. On The Midori, though, she has to hide her skills and focus on serving the many patrons of the busy skyport. Her memories of her life before are only hazy images of beautiful scenery and the story of how she and her companion, Haru, ended up as orphans working in the kitchens of the Madori. Himura and Haru dream of a future of adventure and exploration, where they can see the skies and where Himura no longer has to hide who she is.

When the Madori is attacked by a giant *shikigami*, one of the feared paper spirits of this world, Himura's life is changed forever. She ends up on a quest that will challenge everything she knows about her closest friend, where she comes from, and her own identity. This book immediately drops readers into the action and never really slows down. Fans of fantasy, adventure, and origami will love this book.

Community Mosaic



Lee, Seoun (Roony) Grade 9



What's *Your* Story?