



THE **A** SPIRANT

AISS'S OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER

**"THE NEWSLETTER OF THE STUDENTS,
BY THE STUDENTS, FOR THE STUDENTS"**



AISS GOES M.A.D!
Learn how *you* can make a
difference in AISS!

APRIL 2021

EDITOR'S NOTE



Ayesha Hafidz,
Editor of The
Aspirant

This month has definitely been different from what I'm used to, as many things have changed during the past month, and this includes the changing of the leadership of **The Aspirant**.

We would like to welcome our new Co-Editor-In-Chief, **Choo Jing Yahh**.

We hope to have more people joining the editorial team in the near future.

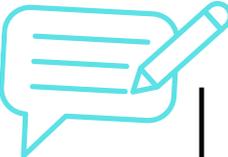
Firstly, I would like to thank everyone who was involved in making this month's edition of The Aspirant, for your hard work and effort, especially my Co-Editor, Jing Yahh, for helping me out during these trying times.

On behalf of all on the editorial team, we hope that everyone enjoys the April Edition of The Aspirant and have a great Term 3!

MESSAGE FROM THE NEW CO-EDITOR



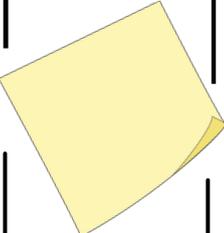
Choo Jing Yahh,
Co-Editor of The
Aspirant



Hey people, I'm **Jing Yahh** from Year 9 Strength! I feel very honoured to be the Co-editor-in-chief for the AISS newsletter. I will try my best to bring more exciting content to you, so I hope you guys enjoy it!



As this is my first time being part of The Aspirant, it might be hard for me to pull off the job. But I will give my best! I will ask the teachers and also the main editor if I have any questions.



This is the first newsletter that I'm taking part in, and I learnt a lot already! I'm looking forward to improving The Aspirant!



MESSAGE FROM THE MANAGEMENT

SCHOOL OF THE FUTURE



**Ms Frauline,
Head Teacher
of AISS**

The title, 'School of the Future' may misleadingly conjure up images of robot teachers in minimalistic paperless environments supposedly delivering lessons at par excellence levels no living teachers can contest. However, this is a scene promulgated in the late 90s, which is better suited for an overindulgent science fiction movie.

The 'future' as it is called, gives one a feeling that it is somewhat far and on its way but has not arrived. However, where education is concerned, it is just around the corner. In fact, one can be so bold as to say that it is happening now - especially in urban areas where technology has permeated even the most mundane aspects of our daily lives - and especially amid a global pandemic as we have experienced in AISS.

In order to continue its existence, schools like AISS need to be relevant. That is, by definition of relevant, they have to be appropriate to the current time, period or circumstances; of contemporary interest (Lexico Dictionaries - Powered by Oxford, 2019).

Given that most of our present-day endeavours are already highly dependent on technology, this will be even more so in the future.

Therefore, the school of the future must be well-equipped with the know-how of various technological tools that can aid in delivering the best learning experience to its students with the support of teachers who are well-trained in the pedagogical utilisation of ICT integrated into teaching and learning.

Vying for students' attention when they are overly hooked to their various digital devices where everything is constantly fast-paced and rapidly evolving by merely sticking to obsolete teaching methods may be nothing less than futile.

Here in AISS, teachers are encouraged to carry on using technological tools that have aided in online teaching and learning even when classes are onsite.

Twenty-first-century skills like communication, collaboration, critical thinking and creativity need to be given importance in teaching and learning.



Former Minister of Education, Dr Maszlee Malik, pointed out how the traditional educational model is obsolete now given the fact that the current technology era is disrupting traditional business models and causing job loss, further saying that 21st-century challenges should be faced with 21st-century thinking (Aziz, 2018).

Therefore, teaching and learning in the school of the future should be more student-centred instead of traditionally teacher-driven. Students should be given the opportunity to make decisions about how and what to learn.

Students' perspectives should be taken into consideration, and teachers should encourage feedback and open discussions in order to better facilitate teaching and learning. Besides this, students should be allowed to assess their own work.

Self-assessment helps students keep track of their progress and gives them a sense of accountability when they identify the gaps in their learning. They know where to direct their focus and can then set realistic targets. AISS is currently exploring a student-centred approach to teaching and learning by preparing to offer the International Baccalaureate (IB) programme in the near future.

It can be said that a combination of well-thought-out ICT integrated lessons along with the student-centred approach that touches on 21st-century skills can aid students in the school of the future - which AISS definitely plans to be - to confidently meet challenges brought on by the 4th industrial revolution (IR 4.0) that will change the education landscape.



MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT



Isabel Lai,
Student Council President,
2020-2021

Hello! My name's Isabel, and I am currently the President of the Student Council. In September 2020, I was elected as Secretary of the Student Council. I was exceptionally thrilled and grateful for it. Initially, I was extremely anxious about being in a position on the Student Council. Conversely, the members were extremely supportive and motivating. We came out with many entertaining and exciting event ideas, and I genuinely relish those moments with the members and fellow AISS students.

I was then given the role of President. Our former President, Sophie, stepped down, and I was offered the opportunity. It means a lot to me that I became the president because I see it as a portal to get to know everyone better and develop communication and leadership skills.

With those skills, I am going to establish a welcoming, healthy and supportive learning atmosphere for everyone together with the student council. Ideally, we envision a school that is adequate academically, physically and is outstandingly nurturing. The student council will organise events and sports training sessions to bring the student body and especially students and the teachers together!

I am truly grateful to be given this opportunity. I would like to thank those who've supported and motivated me throughout my time being on the Student Council and becoming the President! On a personal note, I'm always here to listen to everyone's issues and concerns. Please do not hesitate to come up to me or scream at me if you need help!

AISS GOES M.A.D.



**Mr Daniel Arendzen,
AISS Teacher**

Pause and stop for a moment and think about 'what is school, really'?

Is a school an institution where you sit hours in a row on a chair listening to your teachers who teach you what you need to know to pass an exam once you are in Year 11? Or is school more than that?

Is a school a place where we are getting educated, face and overcome challenges?

A place where we have a positive culture? A place where we do something extra that is worth remembering when we are old and wise? Is it a place we also contribute to?

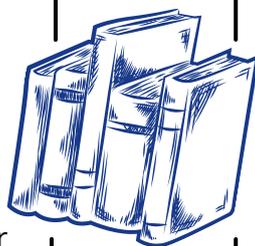
We see each other at least six hours a day for five days a week! That is a lot of time in which we also can do so much more than only being occupied with academic issues.

As a school, we expect you to create a fantastic new culture in which you are taking part in creating the best school ever! Our motto is "Towards Better Things" after all!

So we will get MAD.

Making A Difference

You can be MAD in these exciting opportunities:



The Student Council

It is a privilege being a part of the student council! It means that the school has trust in your abilities to be the student body's voice and make things happen. Think about the communication between students and management, being a spokesperson, creating events, taking part in school-wide discussions, etc.

It also means that the student body has trust in you that you can do it! This can be very exciting and most respected when you seek future careers or education. The experience you will get from here stays with you for life, and you truly are MAD at AISS!

The Aspirant

The Aspirant is the school's newsletter. It needs to reflect and dive into deeper discussions about what is going on in and around the school. The Aspirant must be investigative, seeking a deeper understanding, getting to know what is alive and propose solutions to the issues we are facing every month.

The foundation is set in stone, but it is far from a finished project! You can contribute by proposing things to make it better, to contribute with articles, stories, experiences, basically anything you want to share.

This contribution teaches you more about the primary research part of GP and investigative journalism. It enhances your peoples' skills and English as well! It is a much-sought credit when you apply for your next tertiary school after AISS. It certainly will make a difference between you and other candidates!

MADDER

Even crazier! Making A Difference 2.0! This is for you who wants to show or develop leadership skills! Take the lead by starting something new or finish something unfinished. Like, how do we get an awesome library? It's pretty empty still... Or, should we have societies within AISS? Is there a CCA that badly needs to be there?

Do we need to extend the Sports Houses into a daily routine? Take one of these topics or develop your own in which you feel comfortable to shine and inspire others! The people skills you are developing stay with you forever, which certainly puts you ahead of others who are just passive followers.

Now you have the opportunity to become the person you want to be! Make a developed proposal, send it to the management, and once it is good, we will do it! This is also super beneficial for future applications and will look great on your CV!

Sports Houses

Although this election is yearly, it is not to be underestimated! Good results come from good leadership! Within your house, put yourself in the spotlight! Through your actions and participation, you will be able to gain the trust of your house, and they will follow your example to lift the results to higher levels!

It certainly is giving the right example by being proactive, competitive and encouraging everyone to win! Maybe that will make you the next Captain (or Vice-Captain)?

If sports isn't your best thing, you can surely give the best support possible and maybe think of different kinds of events we can do to have a healthy competition within and across the houses! It certainly will look awesome to see your accomplishments on your certificates, and it certainly will make a difference!

The AISS Supportive Parents group

This group already exist, but we sincerely invite more parents to be a part of it. Reach out to us to strengthen the AISS Supportive Parents group, in which we foster healthy relationships.

How to proceed?

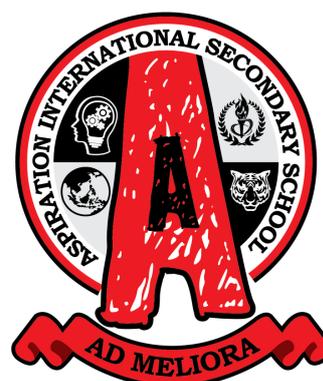
Write an email to studenthelpdesk@aspirationis.edu.my and include what you would like to do, and then we will contact you.

What else?

Even though you have the option to initiate one of the above opportunities, for sure you will be asked to participate by the groups. It is expected that everyone is MAD in their own way - either in the lead or simply by being a part of the student body and the school as such.

Whatever you choose, it is a serious commitment, and you will only get the certificate or testimonial once you have fulfilled the set expectations at the start. *Quitting is NOT an option.* We are in it together to overcome any difficulty, as that is the only way to learn and move forward.

TOWARDS BETTER THINGS!



QINGMING DURING MCO



**Janelle Wong,
Year 7**

The Qingming this year is super different from how we would usually spend it. We would normally go to the final resting place of our ancestors to pay our respects there and meet up with all my cousins, aunties and uncles. Qingming means a lot to me because I feel like it's a very special opportunity to visit my ancestors. Because of this recent COVID-19 pandemic and "MCO", we could not do so.

I feel unfortunate that I could not go to the final resting place of my ancestors and see my relatives. Even some of my friends are also observing Qingming by praying at home and offering their ancestors' favourite food and fruits.

This year, Qingming could look something like this. On the day that marks the Qingming festival, I got up early to follow my parents to the market to buy some food and fruits for the traditional offerings.

When we got home, we started to unpack and prepare what we bought as offerings such as roasted chicken, a variety of *kuihs*, flowers and so on. We placed the offerings on a table in front of the ancestor's altar and started our prayers.

The experience of this change compared to going to the burial ground is very different to me because I don't feel the same connection.

The Qingming Festival, also known as the tomb-sweeping day, is a festival where we show respect and affection towards a Chinese ancestor or departed family member as a ritual in ancestral worship.

The Qingming festival has become a public holiday in mainland China since the year 2008. This festival has been observed by the Chinese worldwide for over 2500 years, although the tradition has changed a little throughout the years.

I hope that the Qingming next year will return to the usual because I get to see my relatives again and get to go to the resting place of my ancestors.



RAMADAN



Ayesha Hafidz,
Editor of The
Aspirant

Like many other religious events or celebrations, Ramadan was considerably different this year. Many actions are restricted, and we aren't allowed to break our fasts at our relatives' houses, and everything becomes very distant.

In the case that you don't know, Ramadan happens during the ninth Islamic month, and it goes on for 30 days each year. During the month, Muslims have to abstain from drinking and eating from sunrise to sunset.

We have a pre-dawn meal, called 'Suhoor' and another time after sunset called 'Iftar' when we break the fast, usually with friends and family. All adult Muslims are required to fast, except those who are ill, menstruating or pregnant, and the elderly.

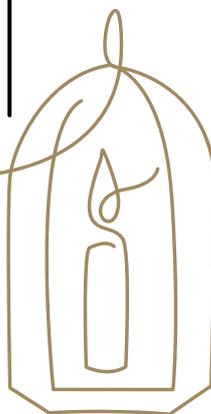
There are multiple reasons why Muslims celebrate Ramadan.

Some people use it as a time for self-improvement and reflection. It helps people take care of their mental health, whilst some believe that it teaches us self-control, discipline and empathy to those who are less fortunate.

Studies show that some benefits of fasting during Ramadan are that it helps prevent health problems such as high cholesterol, heart diseases and, as I mentioned earlier, improves your mental health. Not only that, but by not consuming food, it gives our digestive systems a break, and our bodies can concentrate on removing toxins from our systems.

One of the struggles that Muslims have with Ramadan, which comes from personal experience, is doing sports when fasting. As someone who is quite active, it's difficult to participate in the sessions without any form of hydration, especially during running and cycling.

I hope that once the pandemic is over, we can finally celebrate Ramadan with friends and family, and everything can go back to normal.



WHAT MENTAL STATE ARE YOU IN?

AND IS IT EASY TO TALK ABOUT?



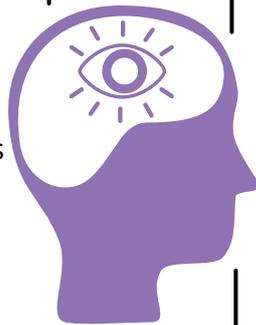
**Mr Daniel Arendzen,
AISS Teacher**

The answer to the second question is a clear no. It is not easy talking about mental health. Mental health often is connected with being weaker than the other or being crazy, or something that doesn't 'meet the norm'. Although, in quite some groups, it is popular talking about 'feeling depressed'.

But in all honesty? The standard answer to the question 'How are you?' is.... 'I'm fine teacher', 'no problems teacher', 'I'm always happy, teacher', 'Don't worry teacher if there is something I will tell you'. Oof.... that might be true, but we also know that quite some of you are not that fine as you'd like it to be, right? Sometimes, there are evading answers in which I can tell there is more than you want to show.

Sometimes, I'm getting handwritten notes or letters. Sometimes I am talking directly to you about things that concern you. There is that space to freely express yourself without any consequences. I am glad to see that it is being used and that it is beneficial.

But, what exactly drives these negative feelings, and what part does the MCO play in this? Before answering these questions, we must acknowledge something else first.



I read an article the other day about the difference between 'parenting' and 'being a parent'. Although I am not a parent, I am involved in the same concepts as parents and teachers share similar aspects.

In 'parenting', the child's future is set according to the parents' expectations or society as such. Parents surely are influenced by their community. Meaning, children have to learn to be according to what is expected from them. In 'being a parent', there is no "fixed outcome", and children have 18 years to explore, learn and experience how they see themselves in a world that will be different from the world of their parents.

In the latter, children have a safe environment built on trust and security, in which it is okay to find your way in a changing situation. Similar for teachers too. Teachers can see students who need to conform to a predefined set of knowledge, behaviour and attitude, or teachers can see students as explorers, challenge their thinking, and reflect on their learning, still having the teacher's trust that making mistakes is okay.

From all the teachers you have had, I think you can tell the difference, right? I'm not saying that one is better than the other - I'm only pointing the difference out.

Now, globally, the majority of us is brought up through the 'parenting' concept. We live in the cultural norms we have, and we have to learn how to fit in.

We are taught that there is regularity, and we know what we can expect. Then we can see whether we manage to follow expectations to do well and if we don't, then we get scolded. Right?

Suddenly we are at home, confined, being scared of the virus, not knowing when it will end, and the opening and closure of AISS to have it open again also doesn't work. Social media is infamous for only showing the 'perfect picture' of life, or it shows us doom scenarios.

In the same breath, parents are either working from home or the office while you are at home. Either you are alone, or maybe you are restricted in your freedom because suddenly everyone asks something from you. Chatting through social media can be a relief, but it isn't a solution either as you still are alone. Or *feel* alone.

I believe that everyone is affected somehow. Some more severe than others. Everyone is, and don't let anyone tell you differently. You might feel alone, feel isolated, feel that there is nobody to talk to. You are also right if there is no trust in someone else to show your vulnerability because of bad experiences you have had. Still, you are not alone. There are other people feeling similar as you are feeling, and it takes great courage to speak up.

The world is changing; nothing stays the same. It can take such a tiny thing as a virus that changes our lives in ways we never expected. In the mental health talk AISS organised with HELP University, we talked about resilience and adaptation to a new environment. That is essential to our development; humans are evolved to adapt to change! If we hadn't, none of us would have been here today.

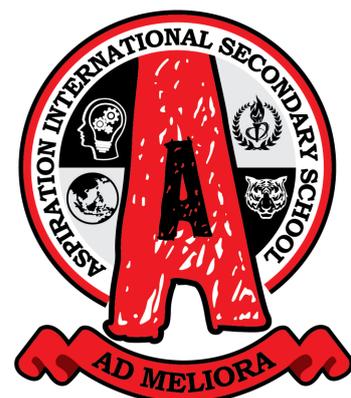
Then the MCO happens, and life, as we know it, completely turns upside down, and suddenly there is the 'new normal' we have to conform to. However, this 'new normal' is not a gradual change; it is very sudden. In addition, it doesn't benefit us at all as it is taking the quality of life away. Of course, we react to it!

The main questions we should ask are, can I pinpoint where the negative feelings are coming from, and what help do I need to cope with them. Once you have answers to both, you grow as a human being who will be resilient and adaptable to 'new norms'.

However, as frustrating as this pandemic is, it is essential to realise that it is not definite; it will pass.

Furthermore, you will live through it and if you feel you can't take it any longer, then talk. Speak up. Find someone you can talk to so you learn to cope, and that will only benefit you. What is there to lose?

So, what mental state are you in? If you feel you need someone to talk to, you know how to find me! Or anyone else you feel comfortable talking to will do too.



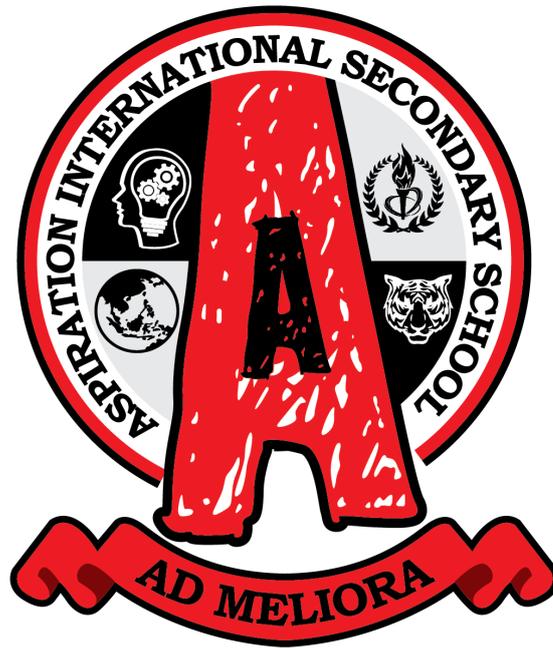


BIRTHDAYS IN MAY!



On behalf of the Editorial Team, we wish all in May a very Happy Birthday!

Ivanna Nehanda Tara	01-May
Ashley Wong Zheng Yi	05-May
Ian Ng Yong Yao	06-May
Isabel Lai Shu Huei	08-May
Rania Yasmin Binti Ahmad Fairouz	08-May
Liew Yu Lynn	10-May
Yuvan A/L Letchumanan	12-May
Giselle Cheah Wei Yuean	29-May
Gene Chong	30-May



EDITORIAL TEAM & MONTHLY CONTRIBUTORS



Ayesha Hafidz (Year 9)
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF



Choo Jing Yahh (Year 9)
CO-EDITOR-IN-CHIEF



Isabel Lai (Year 9)
'MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT'



Janelle Wong (Year 7)
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Ms. Frauline Fernando
'SCHOOL OF THE FUTURE'

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