



# THE **A** SPIRANT

**AISS'S OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER**

**“THE NEWSLETTER OF THE STUDENTS,  
BY THE STUDENTS, FOR THE STUDENTS”**

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## **HEAD OF THE EDITORIAL TEAM**

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**DECEMBER 2020**

# A MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN

Welcome to the second and last newsletter of 2020! I was only a young boy when Vision 2020 was introduced by the then Prime Minister of Malaysia, Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad, describing an ideal Malaysia. With great pride, we established AISS at the precipice of 2019 overlooking 2020. Not in anyone's wildest imagination could we have guessed what was in store for the entire planet in 2020! Nevertheless, in this season of thanksgiving, Christmas and the New Year, we have many things to be thankful for. Here in this newsletter, I would like to thank the people making up AISS.

Firstly to the students. Thank you for cooperating with the school throughout this pandemic and various movement control orders. Remember that you are putting up with what no student in any timeline has experienced before. We saw many of you participating meaningfully not only in the regular classes, but also in the many online activities we organised. Remember that though we are subject to our circumstances, we must never fall victim to them. The School has shown you this by example - we moved our classes and most of our activities online. Never sit down with arms folded and complain but be resilient and find a way to move with the times.

To the teachers, no management can ask for a better teaching faculty. Thank you for submitting to our new instructions, guidelines and advice during the transition to online learning. It was a steep learning curve for everyone and you were nimble and managed to adapt. Your passion for teaching and interest in the students' learning overcame the limitations placed by the pandemic. It is the heart that matters the most and your dedication is evident even through the screens - managing to keep the learning plan this year going for students throughout the closure of schools.

I also want to say a special word of thanks to the unsung heroes - our administrative and support team. This team does more than just the clerical, book-keeping and mundane tasks. AISS is run very differently from other schools in that the teachers are left very much to their teaching-related duties and this team comes in to fill the large administrative/academic gap. This way, the teachers can focus on teaching and this team works synergistically alongside the faculty and the result is what you find in AISS - a largely trouble-free teaching experience and top-notch administrative support.

Finally, a big thank you to the parents for staying with us all along the way. Thank you for your understanding and support throughout this turbulent year. Your wise and gentle words of advice helped us to meander through this sticky patch and fine-tune our online learning system to what it is now. The parents of AISS is the most supportive group any school could ask for, helping to steer the school Towards Better Things!

Thank you and let's look forward to a better 2021.



- EU JIN OON,  
CHAIRMAN OF AISS

# MESSAGES FROM THE CURRENT STUDENT COUNCIL (2020-2021)

As the Student Council, we will strive to make improvements in the school for every student, we vow to put an end to all your homework. Just kidding, we can't do that. However, all your troubles and worries will be ours. If there's an issue that needs to be solved, we won't quit until we figure out a solution. We will work hard to achieve worthwhile things to make our school a better place.

Wazzap, I'm **Sophie, your president from Year 10** ;). If you have interests in comics and zombies come to talk to me!! Now stuck at home all we do is study; hop on to Discord and we can chat and have fun. I will do my best to encourage and implement all your ideas! If you have any problems, ANYTHING, hit me up on our Discord server and we'll solve this!

Hey, I'm **Isabel, the student council secretary**. Being in quarantine sucks and it's really boring but hey, my dm's are always open for y'all to talk to me! :D I know how challenging online classes can be and how much food you're craving right now but we'll get through this together. Thank you for electing me as your secretary, it's such a huge opportunity for me. Alas, it's almost the holiday season, thus giving time for us to relax and enjoy our winter holidays! Till then, keep your heads up as we'll get through this together :)! 2020 is coming to an end and I'm extremely excited about what 2021 has in store for us!

Hola, I'm **Celine, the Year 7 class rep**. Being stuck at home is hard, not just for me but also for some of you, but we can't do anything about it sadly. We'll just have to wait for this Covid-19 or lockdown to end. But hey, we could talk to each other or even play games with each other. I'm online on any of my social media accounts and on my gaming profiles. Hope you have a great day and never give up! <3

Hi, I'm **Jarrod Leow the Year 8 class rep**. I think that everyone should enjoy studying at AISS, and we should not misbehave. We should listen to our teachers in class, and we should help each other out.

Hi, I'm **Ayesha, the Year 9 class rep**. We all know that being stuck at home isn't that fun, which is why the student council has created a Discord Server to keep in touch with your friends, and we play games with each other to cure the boredom. And if any of the Year 9 students need to talk, or bring something up with me, please feel free to.

Hi-ya, I'm **Claire, the Year 10 class rep**. Online school is tough, isn't it? If you have any worries or concerns about our class don't be afraid to drop me a message ya. Also, If any of you Year 10 peeps need someone to talk to or ask anything about homework and stuff, feel free to drop me a message!

Hi, I'm **Jaishree, the Year 11 class rep**. I know it's hard to be doing classes online but we gotta keep pushing through. If you guys need anyone to talk to, I'm here to listen!! You're all doing really well, keep it up :)



## STARTING THE GREETING CULTURE IN AISS

School is a community. Each person has a different school they belong to, and each school has a different culture. That being said, our own school culture plays a big role in the person we will come to be. For instance, greeting is a practice that is a “norm” in almost every school, however, it is lacking in our school.

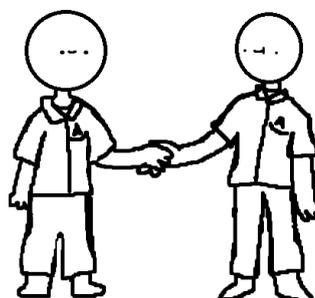
As of September, I have officially begun my last year of high school at AISS. On my first day, the environment was pleasant and the people were amiable. However, as soon as the class began, I was a little baffled. We did not need to stand up and greet the teachers, a routine I was accustomed to. This did not leave the best first impression for me. In every class, I felt I should be greeting the teachers but I couldn't do it by myself. This made me feel awkward, and more so at the corridors, where I greeted teachers that I encountered and generally got no response. Over time, I also stopped greeting as it felt out of place.

So, how can we start the greeting culture? How will it change our days in school? It starts with you! A cheesy line, I know, but if all of us make the first move, we can start this together. When greetings come in, a warm and even familial learning environment develops. Greetings also act as ice breakers and lead to brief conversations with teachers that certainly brighten their mood. That means the lesson will probably be more effective as well!

In addition, I believe this simple action will further kickstart other good practices. As we introduce greetings into our daily lives, we will eventually find it easier to practise on a regular basis. Thus, integrating this effortless gesture may inspire us to introduce other moral practices into our lives. Though you may disfavour having to greet repeatedly, it will be worthwhile.

Starting your day or class with a simple greeting initiates positivity. What you do determines your mood for the rest of the school day. It's a small step, but it matters. It makes a difference. A simple “good morning” can change your whole day. Just try and see!

- GISELLE CHEAH (YEAR 11)



# TEACHING ONLINE - A TEACHER'S PERSPECTIVE

In the previous issue of The Aspirant, we've interviewed several AISS students of various Years and ages on their thoughts about attending school online. For this December issue, I wanted to spice things up, so I interviewed 3 teachers of AISS to understand their personal thoughts about what's like to teach online.

## What are your thoughts about teaching online? What are the pros and cons of it?

**Ms Qysha:** "It was an ordeal to get used to at first but we've come to realise that teaching online has its perks. There are countless tools available for us to include in the online lessons that go beyond just physical textbooks and worksheets."

**Ms Ain:** "From my point of view, teaching online is one of the ways that we can benefit from the use of technology. I love how we discover new alternatives to make learning fun and enjoyable. On the positive side, online learning makes the communication between both teachers and students smooth and excellent. But on the other hand, it's hard to identify if the students are giving their full attention during the whole lesson."

**Mr Daniel:** "Teaching online can be a great alternative to going to school. The advantages, in the pandemic context, are that we stay safe and still have education. The cons are that not everyone is up to it, nor having the determination to pay attention without being distracted."

## Have your teaching styles and methods changed while online? If so, in what ways?

**Ms Qysha:** "Definitely! Since lessons were conducted through a screen, I try to incorporate more group work and encourage discussions in hopes that these interactions can help overcome the sense of loneliness students may feel as a result of being confined in their homes. I also try to have varied activities to keep my students engaged."

**Ms Ain:** "I learned a lot during the past few months. I used to be a strict type a teacher who always gives out notes and homework. Students used to copy all my notes and answer all exam questions and quizzes. But the MCO made me realise that learning is not all about memorising notes and answering exam questions.

It's all about the experience and enjoying lessons. I did activities to help them revise such as digital notebooks, revision videos, and Kahoot! From their effort and work, I can say that AISS students are all talented and creative! I hope that my students earned something from those activities."

**Mr Daniel:** "I am who I am and I have my way of teaching, just like the other teachers have theirs. So, my style stayed the same I think. The methods are very different. Teaching from home requires laptops, Zoom, online platforms such as Google Classroom and Kahoot. In class at school, I can walk around in the classroom making sure that students are doing what is expected. Online, that is rather difficult. So I'm seeing students picking up what is taught and students who pick up less."

## Because of online tools like Google Classroom, Kahoot!, and others, would you say that your students' quality of work has improved as it is being done digitally instead of physically?

**Ms Qysha:** "It has gone both ways. Most of the students who were already self-motivated and driven to begin with have excelled in the transition online. On the other end of the spectrum, you have students who struggle to keep up, and sometimes it's not a fault of their own. Some are plagued with connectivity issues, some lack proper hardware or even a proper space to complete the work they've been assigned therefore the quality of their work has subsequently declined."

**Ms Ain:** "In terms of quality, I can say that it has improved a lot compared during our first MCO. I believe that lots of practice will help the students to improve their quality of work and their exam grades."

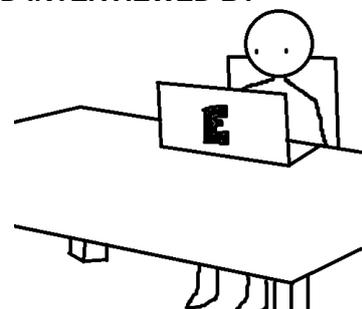
**Mr Daniel:** "The quality of work is not necessarily depending on the online resources. I also can't tell if the quality of work has improved online compared to physical work. The quality of work is depending on the effort a student puts into his/her own learning. That pays off, not the medium as such."

## TEACHERS INTERVIEWED

- MS QYSHA, MS AIN, MR DANIEL

## WRITTEN AND INTERVIEWED BY

- EVAN



# NEW TO AISS - A NEW STUDENT'S PERSPECTIVE

On the 24th of August 2020, the new academic year started for the students of AISS. It was that time of the year again to meet old friends and make new ones. I interviewed two new students from Lower Secondary. Hayley Yeong, from Year 7, and Rania Yasmin, from Year 9, to hear their first impression and experience at AISS.

## How did you get to know of AISS?

**Rania** "Initially my mom found out about the home-schooling centre from a friend. Once my mom had considered placing me in the school, it had become an international school."

## What was your first day like?

**Rania** "I felt nervous on my first day in AISS because I had to adapt to a different surrounding and a new environment, but I feel like I settled quickly enough."

**Hayley** "It was a little awkward and scary because my classmates were there 2 days earlier than me."

## How do you find your classmates and other students?

**Rania** "Yes, the staff and students were friendly and approachable, so I felt comfortable asking them for help around the school."

**Hayley** "I find the students here to be nice and friendly."



## What was your first impression of the teachers?

**Rania**: "They were very welcoming towards other new students as well and were very open to students asking questions. Also, they are patient and caring."

**Hayley**: "I was really shy on my first day, and they were all really patient and nice."

## INTERVIEWEES

- HAYLEY (YEAR 7), RANIA (YEAR 9)

## WRITTEN AND INTERVIEWED BY

- AYESHA

## *The Dramatic Occurrences of School Life* - A Cartoon Strip

Concept by **Zhao Ryun**

Illustrated by **Zhao Ryun**



# AN INTERVIEW WITH A COMMONWEALTH ESSAY COMPETITION GOLD AWARD FINALIST



On the 20th of November 2020, the Royal Commonwealth Society held its award ceremony online for the first time due to the Covid-19 pandemic. This year's theme was "*Climate action and the Commonwealth*".

This year, the competition received over 13 thousands entries, which 11 AISS students received Bronze, Silver, and Gold awards for their excellent essays. 1 AISS student's essay was so good that she was awarded a distinguished GOLD FINALIST AWARD. That student is none other than Choo Jing Suen from Year 10! I've interviewed Jing Suen to delve deeper into her writing process, Gold Finalist thoughts, and her advice for all students aspiring to take part in next year's competition.

## What inspired or motivated you to write your essay?

"Well, my English teacher (Mr Daniel) inspired me to write my essay. He encouraged the whole class to write an essay. I really appreciated that motivation because that is what I needed. Besides that, the topic of my essay also inspired me. I have never written an essay about pollution and climate change before, and I thought that the topic might be interesting, so I was pretty excited to write that essay. When I chose my topic (ocean pollution), tons of ideas came to my mind and I'm not even sure if I wrote down all of them. Overall, this is a really fun topic to write and I'm looking forward to writing more about it."

## How long did it take for you to write your essay?

"It took me approximately 2-3 weeks to write my essay. It's pretty long, but it's totally worth it :D"

## How does it feel to have been awarded a Gold Finalist Award?

"Honestly, it feels unreal. I would never expect myself to get a Gold Finalist Award in a million years! When my teacher told me I got that award, I felt that I was dreaming and I never want to wake up! I really appreciated everyone who helped me and encouraged me (especially my beloved English teacher :P) and I will strive to do better next year!"

## What advice would you give to the aspiring AISS students who wish to participate in the Commonwealth Essay Competition 2021?

"My advice is to just go for it, and write whatever comes to your mind. Don't be afraid to participate because you wouldn't know what outcome you would get (just like me!). Also, don't think of the writing process as suffering; think of it as an opportunity to learn something that can help you in the future and I can guarantee you, the outcome will be so much better!"

## INTERVIEWEE

- JING SUEN CHOO (YEAR 10)

## WRITTEN AND INTERVIEWED BY

- EVAN AND BALRAJ



## TOKYO 2020 OLYMPICS EBL

2020 isn't what many would call a great year, with everything going on such as distraught and worldwide panic. As a student, the cancellation of the Tokyo 2020 Olympics would be the least of your worries. However, AISS brought us together in a 4.5-hour Event-Based Learning (EBL) presenting insight and awareness towards the cancellation of the Tokyo 2020 Olympics.

Instead of teaching subjects independently, there were subjects like English, Mathematics, Science, Business, Global Perspectives, History Geography, Music and Physical Education, and how each of them related to the postponed Tokyo 2020 Olympics.

The Tokyo Olympics EBL was an interesting event. Many AISS teachers had put in their time and effort to help organise this event.

WRITTEN BY  
- COLIN



## SPELLING BEE 2020 RESULTS

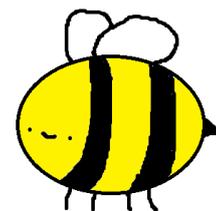
AISS held the latest online spelling bee competition, and was held on the 6th of December 2020! There were 4 categories;

- U-11** was won by **Seth Hamid Keough**
- U-13** was won by **Russell Tan - Year 9**
- U-15** was won by **Alexandre Cane - Year 9**
- U-17** was won by **Liew Zi Xian**

AISS would like to say congratulations to the winners and a thank you to all the students who registered and participated in the spelling bee!



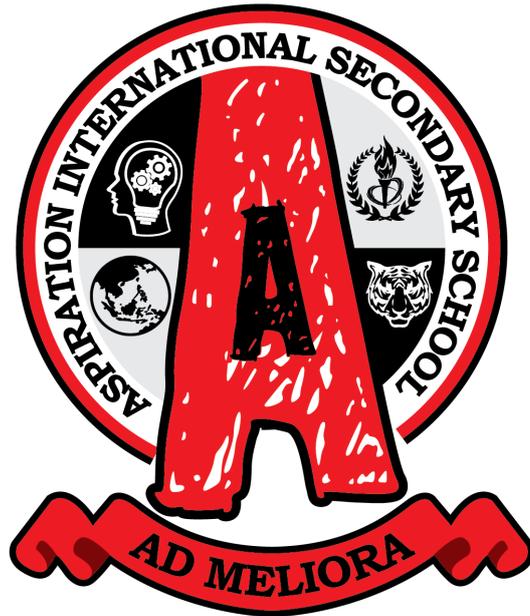
WRITTEN BY  
- EVAN



## A CHRISTMAS GREETING FROM THE EDITORIAL TEAM!

It's finally the holidays and even though it's been a tough year, with online learning and loads of assignments, 2020 is soon finally coming to an end. The Aspirant's Editorial Team wishes you a Merry Christmas and a hopefully very productive and happy new year!





# Aspiration International PRESS CLUB

## THIS MONTH'S CONTRIBUTORS



**Choo Jing Suen (Year 10)**  
GOLD WINNER FINALIST



**Rania Yasmin (Year 9)**  
'NEW TO AISS - A NEW  
STUDENT'S PERSPECTIVE '



**Hayley Yeong (Year 7)**  
'NEW TO AISS - A NEW  
STUDENT'S PERSPECTIVE '

## MEET THE EDITORIAL TEAM



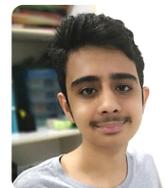
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