



Dear parents/guardians,

On behalf of my staff, I would like to wish all our families celebrating Chinese New Year a joyful and flourishing Year of the Dragon. May the New Year usher in good health and abundant success for everyone!

We hope that the 'First Days of School' (FDOS) programme carried out during the first week of Term 1 has helped your child settle well in school and get them ready for learning in 2024. We look forward to a fulfilling start with your child/ward.

### 1. Safety of Our Pupils in School

Safety and well-being of our pupils, staff and school community are our school's top priority. The school takes a vigilant and proactive approach to educate our pupils on the importance of safety. A safety talk has been carried out during Assembly in January where the pupils learn about the importance of Road Safety and safe play in school. Pupils walking to school are reminded that jaywalking is a traffic offence and they must use the signalised road crossings (traffic lights) or zebra crossings to reach the school. Pupils are also reminded not to cross along Gate A (main vehicular gate) during arrival and dismissal times for their safety.

For parents/guardians who are driving your child into the school, a gentle reminder to have your child be prepared with his/her bag and belongings on approaching the school porch. Please allow your child to safely alight independently. Do refrain from getting off the car to help them with their bags as it will delay the traffic flow. For dismissal, please note that the vehicles will only be allowed to enter the school compound to pick up the pupils 5 min after official school dismissal. Please do not park your vehicle or wait for your child along Pasir Ris Street 11 as this will cause a congestion to the traffic.

Parents/Guardians are reminded to sign in at the Security Post and get a Visitor's Pass if you need to come into the school compound. With the Visitors' Pass, parents/guardians can then proceed to make purchases at the school bookshop or report to the General Office to get assistance on any other matter. Parents/Guardians **are not allowed** to go to the other parts of the school, including the classrooms. Please avoid coming into the school from 1.00 pm to 2.00 pm as we are facilitating dismissal and will not allow entry into the school compound.

Your understanding and cooperation are greatly appreciated to minimise traffic congestion and ensure the safety and well-being of our pupils, staff and the school community.

### 2. School Attire and Safety of Belongings

Every White Sandian is expected to come to school well-groomed and properly dressed in accordance with the school dress code (Please refer to the Pupil Handbook). Do note that pupils are to come in their full school uniform unless they have CCA, PE and Learning Journeys. On such days, they can come in their PE attire. For girls, they are to wear their skirt over their PE attire.

Pupils are strongly discouraged from bringing smart watches and handphones as these devices may distract the pupils from their learning. Should you need your child to bring these devices to school, please remind your child that they need to be responsible for them and not leave them

unattended. The school is not responsible for any loss of electronic devices. The school may confiscate these items if they are deemed to be misused. When such action is taken, the school will arrange for the items to be collected by parents/guardians.

We seek your understanding and support in these areas.

### **3. School Hours on Eve of Chinese New Year, Friday, 9 February 2024**

Please note that on **Friday, 9 February 2024**, the school will be having early dismissal as part of the Chinese New Year celebrations. There will be staggered dismissal timings for the pupils – P1 to P3 pupils will be dismissed at 10.25 am and P4 to P6 pupils will be dismissed at 10.30 am.

Pupils are to report to school as per normal. They are strongly encouraged to be attired in a red coloured top with the school shorts/skirt or in a Chinese traditional costume with school shoes. Pupils may also come to school in their school uniform.

All pupils are to have their breakfast before coming to school as there will not be any recess breaks on that day. However, there will be snack break as part of the programme planned for the day. Please make the necessary transport arrangements for your children. For pupils taking the school bus, the school has informed the bus operator of the change in the school hours that day.

### **4. Total Defence Day 2024 – 40 Years of Total Defence**

Total Defence Day (TDD) 2024 will mark 40 Years of Total Defence (TD40). Based on the theme 'Together We Keep Singapore Strong', White Sands Primary School will be commemorating TDD 2024 in February with TDD activities to engage pupils during curriculum hours.

The focus for TDD 2024 will be on Singaporean's readiness and resilience in the face of crises and disruptions. Total Defence underpins our ability to deal with the ever-evolving threats and challenges to Singapore. Every Singaporean plays a part in our daily lives to ensure that Singapore is prepared for crises and disruption.

Events in recent years, such as the Covid-19 pandemic, geopolitical and geoeconomic developments, and extreme events due to climate change have made it more apparent how Singapore can be susceptible to various disruptions of resources key to our basic needs. As such disruptions become more likely, we need to prepare our pupils to be agile and responsive to disruptions and be a positive influencer.

For pupils to experience the possible effects of such disruptions and consider how they can respond calmly and responsibly, the school will be conducting a TD40 Exercise simulating a food disruption on **Thursday, 15 February 2024** as part of TDD commemoration.

On the day of exercise, the school canteen will not serve any form of meat (e.g. chicken, fish, pork, beef, mutton and seafood) in their menu. The objectives of this exercise are to:

- a) Prepare pupils for potential disruptions to our food supply (e.g. due to climate change, protectionism, geopolitical tensions), given Singapore's reliance on food imports.
- b) Simulate a food supply chain disruption which results in a shortage of meat, a popular source of protein in our diet. In such an event, only eggs, vegetables and starches (e.g. rice, noodles, pasta, bread) are available.
- c) Encourage pupils to be flexible in food choices by being open to consider protein alternatives in the event of such disruptions (e.g. soy-based products, beans, nuts).

In addition, we have also engaged our pupils on the importance of vigilance to upkeep the safety and security of Singapore. One aspect of Total Defence involves safeguarding youth from exposure to radical information, including in the cyberspace. To know more about how to safeguard your child, you are encouraged to read the pamphlet "Protecting our Youth from Radicalisation and Extremism" on the Parents' Gateway Parenting Resources Repository (Cyber Wellness category).

Thank you for partnering us to safeguard Singapore and our way of life. Let us continue to stay alert (vigilance), stay united (cohesion) and stay strong (resilience)!

## 5. National Schools Games (NSG)

The National School Games (NSG) is the largest annual inter-school competition in Singapore. The NSG offers more than 400 championship titles, for more than 55,000 student athletes across all schools (primary, secondary, junior college and centralized institution) in Singapore.

The Motto of the NSG is **Character in Sporting Excellence**, in recognition of the important role sports participation and competitions play in the character development of our pupils, even as they pursue sporting excellence.

We are proud to share that White Sands Primary School will have pupil representatives participating in various events (Netball, Football Girls & Boys, and Table Tennis) starting with the Senior Teams in Semester 1 and the Junior Teams in Semester 2. We wish all our sports athletes the best in their competitions!

## 6. Healthy Living

As we start the school year, our school would like to promote a culture of active and healthy living among the pupils. We encourage parents/guardians to reinforce healthy habits such as healthy eating, sleep hygiene and regular physical activity.

Parents/Guardians play an important role in setting a good foundation for their children's dietary habits. Here are some practical tips for healthy eating for you to reduce overweight risks in children. To stay fit and healthy, teach your child to choose healthy food and be active from an early age. Adopting a healthy lifestyle helps your child to feel fitter, look better and concentrate better in his studies.

### Tip 1: Use My Healthy Plate

Use My Healthy Plate as a guide to the types and quantities of food your child should eat each day.

### Tip 2: Develop Healthy Eating Habits

Encourage your child to:

- Eat a variety of food and to always eat all food in moderation.
- Eat at regular mealtimes and not to skip meals.
- Make whole grains a part of your child's diet. For example: wholemeal bread, brown rice, wholegrain cereal. Choose grain products which are lower in fat, sugar and salt.
- Avoid sweetened drinks. Satisfy your child's thirst with water. Your child needs six to eight glasses of water every day. If your child is very active, it is important to encourage him/her to drink more water.

### Tip 3: Nurture Healthy Eating Habits in Your Child

- Avoid arguments during mealtimes. Mealtimes should be relaxing, pleasant and fun experiences for your child.
- Be there with your child. Having meals as a family creates opportunities for you to model healthy eating habits to your child.
- Create a routine for your child. This means setting a time for breakfast, lunch, dinner and snack times. Once you have a routine, mealtimes become more relaxing for your child.

### Tip 4: Get Plenty of Physical Activity

An inactive lifestyle and sedentary behaviours are risk factors of obesity in children. For example, the average child spends about 2.5 hours each day on screens. With the rising popularity of computer and video games – many of which can also be played on smartphones, it is likely that more and more children will have more screen time instead of active playtime. You can encourage your child to increase his/her activity levels by engaging in more sports or exercises.

You may refer to the below web links for further reading:

<https://www.healthhub.sg/programmes/nutrition-hub/eat-more#home>

<https://www.activesgcircle.gov.sg/read>

## **7. Growth Mindset Nuggets 1: Help Children Build Positive Relationship**

We know that children thrive on healthy, positive connections with others. Early connections to caring adults and peers mean higher self-worth and achievement.

When adults intentionally role-model the values that we hope to see in the children, they will readily absorb and internalize these values.

### **These are 5 ways you can help children build positive relationships:**

1. **Role Model Respect** by listening, caring and remain calm when upset.
2. **Practice Mindful speech.**
3. **Disagree Respectfully** and model peaceful communication.
4. **Embrace Diversity** by appreciating other cultures.
5. **Teach Empathy** through taking another perspective.



As we continue to provide positive school experiences, partnership with parents is crucial to reinforce what is taught in school and how parents can support children's growing up.

You may refer to the below web links for further reading:

<https://www.schoolbag.edu.sg/story/facing-new-and-unfamiliar-situations>

<https://www.schoolbag.edu.sg/story/why-relationships-matter>

<https://www.schoolbag.edu.sg/story/bouncing-back-from-setbacks>

Thank you for your kind attention to the above information.

Your partner-in-education,

Ms Audrey Wong  
Principal