



DISCOVERY
COLLEGE
智新書院

Year 1 Parent Handbook

2020-2021

Grow 成长

chéng zhǎng

Be passionate about being the best
you can be.

Discover 探索

tàn suǒ

Find wonder in the world around us.

Dream 梦想

mèng xiǎng

Dare to make a difference for yourself,
humanity and our planet.





Welcome to Year 1

Discovery College seeks to provide a stimulating and challenging learning programme for all our students. We aim to develop inquiring, knowledgeable and caring young people who help to create a better and more peaceful world through understanding and respect of others.

We focus on the growth and development of the whole person, emphasising intellectual, personal, emotional and social growth for a life of active, responsible citizenship.

Education is based on developing truly internationally minded people who strive to be **inquirers, thinkers, communicators, courage, knowledgeable, open minded, principled, balanced, caring and reflective**. These Learner Profile attributes are central to the International Baccalaureate Primary Years Programme (PYP) we offer and permeate every aspect of learning in the primary school.

This information booklet is intended to provide parents/guardians with an insight into the learning experiences and wide range of extra curricula activities enjoyed by the students in the primary school. It aims to inform the reader about College policies and day-to-day activities, which comprise our varied school life.

We regard good communication between home and school as essential. We do hope that this booklet will provide you with an understanding of the way in which the College, in particular the primary school, operates and we would welcome the opportunity to discuss any further questions which you may have regarding our College.

We look forward to working with you and your child.

Chris Barr
Head of Primary

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Term Dates for 2020-2021

TERM ONE

Start date for all students	Wednesday 12 August 2020
National Day	Thursday 1 October
Day Following Mid-Autumn Festival	Friday 2 October
ESF CPD Day	Monday 5 October
Mid Term Break	17 - 26 October
End of Term One	Friday 11 December (classes finish 12pm)

TERM TWO

Start of Term Two	Monday 4 January 2021
DC CPD Day	8 - 9 February
Chinese New Year	10 - 21 February
End of Term Two	Friday 26 March (classes finish 12pm)

TERM THREE

Start of Term Three	Monday 12 April
Buddha’s Birthday	Wednesday 19 May
Dragon Boat Festival	Monday 14 June
End of Term Three	Wednesday 30 June (classes finish 12pm)

Please Note:

The academic year allows for 185 teaching days and 5 CPD (Continuous Professional Development) days, the number required of all ESF/ESL schools (barring school closures for weather or other eventualities).

Daily Timetable

Your child's timetable is available on Gateway (the school communication platform) and you will also receive a copy from your class teacher.

The timetable will indicate when your child is attending specialist classes in Music, Drama, Visual Arts, PE and Chinese. At all other times, the children will be in their own classroom or accessing other facilities in the College to support their learning with their class teacher.

- 8:20am** Students must be inside classrooms
- 8.20am-8.25am** Morning welcome and registration check
- 3.15pm** Children dismissed (see dismissal procedures in this booklet for further information)

What to do on the first week of school

(Please note these arrangements are provisional and may be subject to change due to EDB announcements)

Wednesday 12 August

You will be assigned to group A or B.

- Group A will come to school at 8.45am
- Group B will come to school at 12.00pm
- Register & collect name tag from desk at front of school.
- Parents will wait in foyer of the school for teachers to come out and collect the children.
- Children will be met by their class teacher and taken to class.
- Parents will be invited to attend a Parent Information session and coffee morning in the School Theatre.
- At the end of the session parents will collect students from the classroom.

Thursday 13 August (1/2 Day) Group A

Friday 14 August (1/2 Day) Group B

- Students from each class will attend from 8:20 am - 12 noon.
- Accompanied by an adult, students will come directly to the classroom prior to 8:25.
- For this session students will need to bring a small snack to school.
- During this time parents are invited to attend a *Coffee Drop-In Question and Answer Session* with the Primary Leadership Team (PLT).
- At the end of the session parents will collect students from the foyer to practice regular dismissal procedures.



Supporting your child on their first few days at school

Say goodbye to your child so that they know you are leaving. Leave the classroom cheerfully and quickly, reassuring your child you will see them later in the day. Teachers will also direct you when it may be helpful for all parents to leave so we can settle into the day.

It is normal for some children to experience some separation anxiety and be reluctant to let their parent leave. This is where the teachers' expertise is important and they will know when it is the right time for parents to leave.

Once you have said goodbye it is best to leave without changing your mind. Taking another few minutes to leave can be confusing and upsetting for your child in some instances.

If your child is upset, there will be staff available to assist. Please know that we will not leave your child crying and distressed. We will contact you if a child is unduly distressed.

Week 2 onwards

Come and join us in the mornings until our morning routines begin at 8.25am. Check in with the teacher if you have concerns.

Getting to know your child: Student/Teacher Days

There is **no school** for **Year 1 students** on the following **Wednesdays**:

Wednesday 19 August

Wednesday 26 August

Wednesday 2 September

Wednesday 9 September

Full weeks begin: Monday 14 September.

You will receive an email prior to the start of school indicating which Wednesday and the time your child will meet with their class teacher one to one. Also, to coincide with this session you will be scheduled to attend a 10-20 minute Parent 'Getting to Know Each Other' face-to-face or Zoom meeting with Jason Boon (Lower Primary Vice-Principal) and Tracey Chitty (Primary Counsellor). After the conclusion of this session, you are welcome to have a drink in the cafeteria while you wait for your child.

When your child is not attending a meeting with their class teacher we strongly suggest that students have a quiet day where they can rest and recharge as they adjust to the demands of full days at school.

Purpose of the meetings: The purpose of these student/teacher meetings is for the class teacher to meet with your child individually to begin to get to know your child, as well as gather information on your child's early literacy and numeracy development.

What to bring: A favourite toy or a book to share with the teacher at this time.

Duration of Meeting: Approximately 50 minutes. Parents may wait for their child in the school cafeteria or foyer.

Supporting your child's transition

During the Summer Holidays:

- Let your child practise dressing for school including doing laces on shoes, using a lunchbox and drink bottle and packing a school bag.
- Adopt a low-key approach to the big day, initiating casual conversations about this new step and sharing positive stories. Avoid the big countdown such as 'it's only 10 sleeps until you start school.' This can sometimes actually lead to additional and undue anxiety for some children.
- Establish family routines linked to the school year, such as organising themselves for outings, being responsible for their belongings and having a structured bedtime routine.
- Encourage the efforts your child makes in doing things for themselves and others.

You know your child best. It may be that you observe signs of anxiety in your child. It is important to talk about how they are feeling, to listen and to acknowledge their concerns. This will help to build their confidence and lessen the stress they may be experiencing.

The beginning of the school year:

- Encourage your child to organise clean clothes and pack their lunch and drink bottle the night before.
- Establish a consistent routine for bedtime to ensure your child is well rested.
- Encourage your child to dress themselves so they can manage taking jumpers and shoes on and off at school.
- Be sure your child has a balanced breakfast. Protein and good fats are building blocks for brain development and learning.
- Pack a healthy lunch and snack and explain when they should be eaten. Healthier food types are encouraged. Discovery College is a **PEANUT FREE** school and next year our Lower Primary will be operating with further product restrictions based on student need. More details regarding these will be sent to parents before the start of the school year.
- Make sure your child can manage opening containers and food wrapping.
- Ensure that your child is independent in toileting.



Parent - Teacher Communication

As partners in your child's learning journey, communication is a key element of ensuring we work together to provide optimal learning opportunities and experiences to meet your child's individual learning needs. This ongoing dialogue between parents, teachers and students occurs in different ways. This includes:

- Brief information on a daily basis: Please use diaries or email. These are checked daily.
- For brief conversations: Please see teachers before or after school.
- For longer conversations: Please arrange a mutual time with the teacher.
- Parent Teacher Conferences – This occurs in September.
- Three-Way Conferences – This occurs in January.
- Student-Led Conferences – This occurs in May.
- Ongoing Online Reports – Available 3 times per year – December, March & June.
- Weekly Explorer – The online newsletter provides a myriad of information about the learning programme. This can be accessed at <http://explorer.discovery.edu.hk>.
- The College website also contains updated information in relation to many aspects of the school.
- Seesaw – Online portfolio for capturing individual student work - ongoing

In addition to these there are also a class assembly and regular parent information sessions and workshops.

Please be assured that in any instance where the class teacher has anything specific to your child to share, they will communicate this to you through the diary, email or in person.

Parent Helpers and Volunteers

Parents are valued as an integral part of our College. There are numerous roles that parents/guardians can be involved in to support the school in its core operation of improving learning outcomes for students. These may include attending field trips, information evenings, sharing your expertise through the inquiry units of learning and so on.

We also encourage parents/guardians to participate in the classrooms by assisting in the learning programmes. Class teachers will communicate ways you can assist early in Term One.



College Life & Operations

Dismissal

At **3.10pm** on regular school days parents/guardians are asked to wait on the ground floor and teachers will bring the children to you.

Children will **only** be released into the care of a parent/guardian or helper. Alternative arrangements need to be communicated clearly to the teacher via email or diary.

For students that catch the bus, bus mothers will also need to be informed of any changes to the usual bus use.

Homework/Home Reading Programme

Students are encouraged to focus their home activities on reading. From time to time other homework tasks, including reinforcement activities, will be sent home.

Independence and Responsibility

There are many ways we can work together to develop independence and responsibility from the children. Encourage your children to:

- Carry their own school bag.
- Be responsible for delivering and alerting the teacher of notes in their diary.
- Enter the school and unpack their bag on their own.
- Inform teachers if they are unwell.
- Be responsible for their belongings.

Lunch and Snack

Snack is important for your child to keep their energy and concentration levels up during the morning.

- Ensure that your child knows which is their snack and lunch.
- Snack should be kept to a minimum, such as a piece of fruit or a small healthy treat.
- **We discourage packaged snacks that are high in sugar and preservatives.**
- Drink bottles are also required. Only fill with water –no fruit juice or sports drinks.

Parents of Year 1 students will be able to purchase lunch orders from **Chartwell's** cafeteria.

Cafeteria lunches will not be available until Week 3, starting on 24 August.

Spend time with your child choosing appropriate and familiar foods.



Uniform

For the 2020-2021 school year, Discovery College is moving to an online ordering system for school uniform. Orders placed online will be delivered to your home.

Discovery College uniform can be ordered online from Monday, 1 June 2020 at: www.schooluniform.hk

Please ensure you label all clothing (first/last name and class) as well as hats, lunch boxes and drink bottles.

Health

Good health is essential to your child's well-being and ability to learn. Please advise us of anything important that may hinder your child's learning as well as any medical history such as epilepsy, vision or hearing problems, allergies, asthma and learning difficulties.

Children who are ill or 'off colour' should not have to cope with the demands of school. If you are in doubt, please keep your child at home and contact the school office and class teacher to confirm absence.

If your child has an infectious disease or a serious illness and may be away from school for an extended period of time, a phone call to the College or classroom teacher would be appreciated.

The College employs a nurse to help with any serious medical cases. She also supports other needs of the College by conducting promotional and educational sessions for staff, students and parents.

Please note students with temperatures above 37.5 must be kept at home for 48 hours to ensure the temperature subsides.

Medication /Emergency Information

Prescribed medication by a doctor can only be brought to school and administered to a child by the College nurse with WRITTEN authority from the parent.

Peanut Free School and Further Product Restrictions due to Severe Allergies

Within the Discovery College Community we have several individuals with severe allergies. These allergies may lead to anaphylaxis. This is a rapidly progressive allergic reaction that is potentially life threatening. Common allergens in school aged students are often nuts, sesame products and shellfish.

As a result the College operates as a complete PEANUT free area. In addition, next year the Lower Primary section of the school and spaces used by these students will operate with further restrictions on products based on the medical needs of adults and students. Further details and information regarding this will be sent to you prior to the start of school. Your support is greatly appreciated with this as it will assist us in ensuring we have minimised the risk to the students of concern.

Lost Property

Items that are not claimed are stored in the cupboard near the PTA office on the ground floor.

