

# GIST

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## Get the GIST?

The GIST is emailed to all parents and staff. Should you change your email address, please inform us to ensure you continue to receive the GIST. The GIST is also accessible directly from the school website under School Calendar & News.

## Questions / Feedback

Please email [communications@gsis.edu.hk](mailto:communications@gsis.edu.hk) with any feedback or questions you have regarding this newsletter.

## Principal's Column

When our daughter puts our grandson to bed, she reads a book to him. Her favourite one is called *Friedlich schlafen kleine Drachen* (*Sleep Peacefully Little Dragons*). The book shows that it is not only little children that have to go to bed. The small pig, the birds, the sheep and the little dragon also go to sleep, and when our daughter gets to the little dragon with its big, hippopotamus-like head and its protruding tooth, she tells Max. "This is Mummy's favourite page because the dragon is so cuddly, and his Mummy is looking after him. Just as I look after you."

The dragon in our grandson's book is cute, and it is typical of children's literature today. Modern dragons are kind, and they wouldn't dream of hurting anyone. If a children's book illustrator today dares to show a dragon breathing fire, he or she is told that it goes against health and safety. Children are unpredictable you know. They might act out the story and get hurt, and their parents might sue the publishers. If you don't believe this is true, google *Who Wants a Dragon* and its illustrator, Lindsey Gardiner.



When I was a kid, things were different. Dragons were evil, scary looking beasts with big, nasty claws, long forked tongues and poisonous breath, and they had to be killed or outwitted. As a child, your imagination was running wild when you read or were read a story about dragons that guarded treasures, kidnapped princesses, grabbed people and carried them through the air, and you were not surprised to learn that the dragon was no other than the Devil.

I grew up in Germany, and I know, of course, that Chinese dragons are different. The Chinese have traditionally considered themselves descendants of the dragon. They have treated him with respect, and he plays an important part in the Chinese zodiac. In China, the dragon is benevolent, and he represents wisdom, strength, wealth, and power.

You probably know the legend of how the Chinese zodiac came about but let me remind you:

*A long time ago in China, the Jade Emperor decided that there should be a way for measuring time. On the day of his birthday, he told all the animals that there was going to be a swimming race. The first twelve animals to finish the race across the fast flowing river would receive medals, and would have a year of the zodiac named after them.*

*The first four animals to reach the shore were the tricky rat, the strong ox, the tiger, and the rabbit. When the Emperor asked how the rabbit got to the other shore so fast, the rabbit answered that he had hopped on all the rocks, and then held on to a log that carried him all the way to the river bank. The surprised Emperor handed him a medal, and included him in the zodiac. Just then, the dragon swooped down to take fifth place.*

*“Why didn’t you win the race?” the Emperor asked. “You have an excellent ability to fly and swim. You could easily have won.”*

*The dragon explained that some of the animals and people were thirsty, and so he had stopped to make rain for them, and that on his way to the finish line, he had seen a rabbit struggling on a log in the water, and that he had blown a puff of wind so that the log would float in the direction of the finish line. The Emperor gave the dragon a medal, and a spot in the Chinese zodiac.*

Now, here are some dragon lessons for all of us as we enter the new Chinese year. We all need stories and symbols to express our hopes and fears, and as symbols like the dragon may mean different things to different people, we need to share our stories. And we should not forget to stop to make rain for those who are thirsty and blow a puff of wind to help those who are struggling on a log in the water. Kung Hei Fat Choi, and a very happy and successful Year of the kind Dragon.



**Dr Jens-Peter Green**  
PRINCIPAL

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## Mothers' Committee Continues Festive Celebration Funding

### **Chinese New Year**

For the Chinese New Year, the Mothers' Committee sponsored three Lion Dances. The first two performances were held during the Assembly on Thursday, 19 January at the Pok Fu Lam campus for Kindergarten and Y01-Y02/DVOR-K01 and on Friday, 20 January in the IB Hall at the Peak Campus for Years 3-6. The third performance will take place on Thursday, 2 February, in the Courtyard at the Peak Campus for the Secondary school.

### **Fasching**

The Mothers' Committee will sponsor jelly donuts for Fasching again this year for the entire school at both the Peak and the Pok Fu Lam campuses.

### **Spring Market**

This year, the Mothers' Committee will be holding the annual Spring Market on Saturday, 17 March. The highlight here is Easter foods and decorations, along with commercial tables whereby for a small donation to the school, businesses

can sell or promote their goods and services in the Old Gym or the Courtyard at the Peak campus on the day.

Commercial tables first made an appearance last year, much to the delight of the GSIS community as commercial vendors brought us chocolates, handmade silver jewellery, leather handbags, German food goods, American candy, Chinese books, home linens and other exciting products. Anyone interested in taking a commercial table should contact the Mothers' Committee at [2012springmarket@hotmail.com](mailto:2012springmarket@hotmail.com).

And of course, we will have another Game Alley of sorts at the Spring Market.

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## English Primary Department

Dear Parents

We celebrated the start of Chinese New Year with a whole school assembly at Pok Fu Lam on Thursday; the highlight being the Lion Dance performance. The performance took place on the playground and the performers were very impressive with their agility and movement. The majority of the students watched from the safety of the Sports Hall! Some of the older children did venture out to the playground with their teachers.

This was followed by the Chinese New Year assembly at the Peak on Friday. The Y05 students entertained us with a selection of Chinese songs. The Lion Dancers then burst on to the stage, drums banging and lions rising, to the delight of the students. They put on a great show and every student was fully engrossed for the duration. The Lion Dance has become a bit of a tradition for us in the Primary and I would like to thank the Mothers' Committee for assisting us in maintaining this tradition by organising the performances at both campuses this year.

So many children supported the [Esther Benjamin Fund](#) with their donation of a Lai See packet at both assemblies. We hope to get a representative to attend a later assembly on the Peak to present the cheque in person and to tell us personally what the money will be used for. Thank you very much for supporting this.

I could not believe our luck with the weather at Sports Day on Friday, 20 January. What a beautiful, sunny day it proved to be. I am always very proud of how our students conduct themselves at events like this. They moved effortlessly from event to event with a minimum of fuss. This day always fills me with pride and a sense of community, as parents, teachers and students alike come together to participate in a morning of athletics. A big thank you to all parents who helped out; it could not have happened without you. Don't forget we have the Y01-Y03 Sports Day to look forward to on Thursday April 19.

### Reports

All students at the Peak received their reports before they left for Chinese New Year on 20 January. If your child was absent on the last day of school, the reports may be collected from the Primary office on the first day back after the holiday. Please be reminded that the secretary will not hand out reports to anybody other than the child or parents unless we have written permission from you to do otherwise.

These reports reflect the progress of your child in the first half year. Our academic standards are high at GSIS and our reporting reflects this. If your child

is progressing at the expected level in the year group, he or she will have received a 'Satisfactory' on the report card and grades above or below this reflect his or her position in relation to this. Please bear in mind also that, as children move up a year level, there may be a qualitative change in curriculum expectations and this too may be reflected in a grade difference from the previous year. If you have any concerns about your child's report please be reminded that each classroom teacher has a weekly consultation time. In addition, there will be parent conferences in March.



**Mary Bourke**  
HEAD OF ENGLISH PRIMARY DEPARTMENT

## UK Principals to Visit GSIS

A group of 22 school principals from the UK will be visiting the GSIS Peak Campus on the morning of February 7th as part of their study visit to Hong Kong. They are interested in learning about the education provided by International Schools and the challenges we face, as well as learning about how we use technology to support teaching and learning – all their schools have a strong technology background. They are all members of the Independent Academies Association (IAA) which supports innovative practice in UK government schools.



**Peter Woodhead**  
HEAD OF LEARNING & TEACHING TECHNOLOGIES

## Business College

### Study trip to Bielefeld

In December trainees from the Business College embarked on the fourth annual study trip to Germany. The theme of the one-week programme was 'Marketing and Brand Management'.

The annual study trip is the result of successful collaboration between the Business College and the University of Applied Sciences Bielefeld; there the person in charge of the programme is the Dean of the Department of Economics, Prof Dr Uwe Rössler.



The students and their teacher Wei Zhang enjoyed an interesting and varied programme. As well as visiting companies of regional and



international importance such as Arvato, Dr Oetker and the logistics centre of the retailer Thomas Philipp, trainees attended lectures and courses at the University of Applied Sciences. They were thus able to gain an idea of potential career paths available at universities or in German

companies.

### **Business College welcomes practising professionals**

Practical orientation is an important part of training at the Business College. This is why we regularly welcome experts from training companies to the classroom. In December, Patrick Festl, a former trainee and now Manager of Business Development & Logistics Services with Senator International Logistics Ltd, came and gave a talk on current developments in the logistics sector in Hong Kong, China and Asia. In mid-December, Hanns-E. Mahncke, Managing Director of Rhenus Logistics Asia-Pacific Ltd, one of our training companies, came and presented processes in and around the warehouse as seen by a professional on the job. Not only do we welcome such professionals to the Business College, we also visit them on the job. On 1 February, the second-year logistics trainees will visit Hartmut Looschen, Vice President of Strategic Customer Development with Kühne & Nagel to learn more about marketing and visit the warehouse.

### **National University of Dublin**

In January, the Business College organised an information event about Kaplan Higher Education. In cooperation with the National University of Dublin, Kaplan offers an 18-month course of part-time studies in Hong Kong, leading to the degree Bachelor of Business Studies. Our graduates meet the admission requirements for this course of study, which gives them the opportunity to gain professional and academic qualifications in a total of three and a half years. In the past a number of graduates have taken up this very attractive option. Meanwhile, the first Bachelor graduates have already started on a further course of study leading to a Master's degree.



**Stefan Pauli**  
HEAD OF BUSINESS COLLEGE

## **Development & Alumni Affairs**

Happy New Year and best wishes to everyone!

The Development team has continued to work with individual parents, gathering support for the [Campus Development Plan 2012-2016](#). In the months of December and January, the well wishes and festive mood of "giving" led to a few donations for the Plan. Anyone wishing to lend a hand in helping the school actualize the remaining phases of the Campus Development Plan, please contact the Development Team at [development@gsis.edu.hk](mailto:development@gsis.edu.hk). We welcome all kinds of ideas and support.

### **Alumni Christmas Party**

The GSIS Alumni Association held their annual Christmas Party on Boxing Day,

26th December at the Halo Club in Central. Close to 170 alumni showed up and it was fantastic to see so many GSIS Alumni meet again this festive season. The Alumni Association offered a great party, which started at 10pm with many people staying till late. Everybody was happy to see GSIS friends again and also to meet classmates they haven't seen in years. Cheers to the GSIS Alumni Association for the great party and don't forget to come to the next GSIS Alumni event and Christmas Party in 2012!

### **Alumni Calendar 2012**

In December the GSIS Alumni Calendar 2012 was produced with photos collected from GSIS alumni events in 2011 as well as photos taken by current students. The calendar is free and only limited of stock is left. Place your order via the alumni office at [alumni@gsis.edu.hk](mailto:alumni@gsis.edu.hk) if you also like to get a calendar.

### **Basketball**

The GSIS Alumni Association will resume their basketball matches at the Sports Hall of GSIS every other Saturday. The next dates in February are the 11th and the 25th. Please contact the alumni office at [alumni@gsis.edu.hk](mailto:alumni@gsis.edu.hk) for more details.



**Angela Hui**

**DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT AND ALUMNI AFFAIRS**

## **Personnel Matters**

### **Baby news**

Congratulations go to Alice Silva Matias and her husband on the birth of their baby girl Alícia Silva Matias on 12 November 2011. Alícia was born at 3.490 kg and 46.5 cm in length.



### **New staff**

A very warm welcome to our new colleague, Renate Schoeb. Renate will be working as the new Afternoon Activities Coordinator and is the successor to Kerstin Schirmmacher.

### **Change of position**

Allison Stekelenburg, currently Deputy Head of the English Primary Department, will succeed Mary Bourke as Head of the English Primary Department as of 1 April 2012.

The German Secondary Department sees the appointment of Gisella Golla in the newly created position of Deputy Head as of 1 August 2012. This new position aligns the GSD with the other departments.

Komal Balani, former Primary Secretary, will take up the post of Admissions Assistant. From 15 January 2012 onwards Komal will assist Merve Zefer in administrative and technical matters within Admissions.

We wish all of you all the best in your new roles.

### **Leaving staff**

Mary Bourke, Head of English Primary Department will be leaving our school at the end of March 2012. Mary has worked at GSIS for almost five years and is heading back to Australia with her family. We thank her for her hard work and contribution to the school as well as her friendship, and wish her all the best in her future endeavours.

John Barker, Deputy Head of the English Secondary Department will be leaving our school on 2 March. In his five and a half years as Deputy Head of the ESD, Mr Barker has done much to strengthen the Department, particularly in terms of discipline and pastoral care. Mr Barker leaves GSIS to take up a very well-deserved Headship at an international school in Denmark. We are very grateful to Mr Barker for all his work at GSIS and wish him every success in his new role.

James Gibbs, Head of Mathematics, will be leaving at the end of January. Mr Gibbs moves with his family to Lima, Peru where he will take up the role of Theory of Knowledge Coordinator at Markham College. We thank James for his excellent teaching and for his many and varied contributions to life at GSIS.

We bid farewell to Kerstin Schirmmacher, Afternoon Activities Coordinator, who is leaving our school at the end of February. We would like to thank her for her work and energy and we wish her all the best.



**Doerthe Kleine-Pollmann**  
HEAD OF HUMAN RESOURCES

## Faces of GSIS



### **Allison Stekelenburg - New Head of the English Primary**

My background includes over fifteen years of teaching and leadership experience in both Australian private and public schools as well as international schools.

Internationally, I have worked at Aiglon College, Villars, Switzerland; Munich International School, Germany; Global Jaya International School, Jakarta; and was a founding staff member of Renaissance College, Hong Kong. I have taught at a range of levels from primary to tertiary level (Maximilian University in Munich, Germany) during this time.

My passion for language was developed at an early age as I was raised to speak both English and German. This dual cultural development, along with my international employment experiences, have enabled me to have a broad respect, empathy and appreciation for various cultures and societies.

The extensive range of educational and leadership opportunities that have been afforded to me have also provided me with a thorough understanding of curriculum development with a strong commitment to relationship management, professional practice and innovation. Since embarking on a career in education, I have had the privilege of being invited to lead over 25 teacher training workshops

in other international schools within the Asia Pacific region. I believe humility, resilience, collaboration, mutual trust and reflection are all key ingredients to a positive, reflective, inspiring, invitational and effective teacher and leader.

I feel very privileged to be working with the highly-dedicated and committed staff at GSIS and look forward to enhancing your child's social, emotional and academic well-being over the next few years.

## Social Activities for Parents



along and meet other parents and join in on the fun.

Connect GSIS's aim is to foster a community spirit within the school, while at the same time bringing parents together to enjoy like-minded activities. We are open to ALL GSIS parents whether English or German streams, Kindergarten, Primary or Secondary. It doesn't matter if you are new to the school or are a long term parent at GSIS, come

To find out about what we have coming up, join our e-mail list. In doing so, you will be sent information of each and every upcoming activity.

To be included on the mailing list go to

<http://mygsis.gsis.edu.hk/people/parents/connect-gsis/>

### New Connect GSIS Team Member

We would like to welcome and introduce Anjali Mittal as a new member of the Connect GSIS Team. Anjali moved to Hong Kong in August 2011 with her husband Rajeev and her two sons Rahul (Y09) and Rohit (Y05), from Guildford, Surrey in England. Anjali is an author, she has had two children's books published and the third one is on the way. Other than writing her books she has also been actively promoting them in the UK and often does book signings at bookstores and workshops for children at schools. Being an avid reader, Anjali has started the Connect GSIS Book Club which now meets monthly. Anjali is delighted to be in Hong Kong and to have joined the Connect GSIS Team and is looking forward to the events for this school year.

### Upcoming Activities

#### Wednesday, 15 February – Bowling and Thai Meal at Aberdeen Marina Club (Evening)

Haven't bowled for years? We're planning a fun evening of Ten Pin Bowling followed by dinner at the Thai Balcony Restaurant in the AMC. Prizes given for the first strike, best score and more! If you're on our mailing list, look out for the flyer giving details coming soon. RSVP essential!

#### Thursday 16 February – Walkie-Talkie at The Peak

We'll meet in Pacific Coffee at The Peak at about 8am for our regular walk around Lugard's Road and have a chat and coffee back there after walking. No need to RSVP, just come along.

#### Thursday 23 February – Dragon's Back, Section 8 Hong Kong Trail 9:00 am – 11:30 am (approx) or later if you wish to stay on for lunch.

This is one of the best walks on Hong Kong Island. It has spectacular sea views on both sides of the path. It is around 9 km long, moderate ability with some steps and will take around 2 -2.5 hrs. We



start on Shek O Rd and finish on Big Wave Bay Beach. For those with time we can have lunch at Shek O. Meeting place and times to be arranged. Car pooling possible.

#### **Friday, 24 February – Spring Dinner**

This year we welcome in the Year of the Dragon at Peking Garden Restaurant, in Alexandra House, Central. This is usually a very popular event so if you're on our mailing list, make sure you look out for the flyer giving details which will be sent very soon. RSVP is essential.



#### **Monday 27 February - Book Club**

Book Club members note the above date for February's meeting. If you are not already a member and are interested in joining, please contact Anjali Mittal at [anjalmittal@btinternet.com](mailto:anjalmittal@btinternet.com) (Note: books are read and discussed in English).

#### **Note:**

Bookings/reservations are essential to all activities except 'walkie-talkies'. Check the [Activities Calendar](#) for details.