

What's UP?

STFA LKKE English Newspaper

It's the special issue of What's Up! Many things have happened during this academic year, still our team has prepared some interviews with the teachers and of course, our principal Mr. Tai! Without further ado, let's get started!

A Few Words from Our Principal

5D Linda Chik, 5D Erin Wong

We all know that our beloved principal, Mr. Tai, is leaving this year. Before he leaves, we interviewed him one last time. Here are his plans, his views on the virus and hopes for the future.

T: Mr. Tai, S: Student

S: First of all, thank you for doing this interview with us. What do you plan to do when you retire?



T: I don't have a very detailed plan for my retirement. At this moment, I'm still focused on doing my job. As you see, for these few years, I've been focusing on renovating our school. This year, we renovated the office, the medical room and the social workers' office. We are quite successful, thanks to the support of the parents, the alumni and the government. My plan after retirement is to slow down and take a good long rest. I want to read more. I didn't have the time to read all the books I wanted to read. At my age, there are a lot of small problems with my health. I'd like to do more exercise to get fit. After I retire, maybe I'd like to take up some voluntary teaching jobs. I may also come back and help our students.

S: Why have you decided to retire this year?

T: Under the education ordinance, every teacher has to retire when he or she reaches sixty. I decided to retire one year earlier. Honestly, during these last few years, there has been a lot of pressure in the education system and also to our school. It is a bit stressful. I am longing for a life without great pressure. I can see a very good trend. As you see, we have many new, energetic teachers joining us. Some of them are alumni, like Mr. Chou Cheuk Fung. I think he is a very good teacher. I am very happy that he joined LKKE again. He is just an example. I think all teachers will strive for the best for all of the students here. I think my mission is coming to an end.

T: Mr. Ying will be my successor. I think he will be an excellent principal and he will lead LKKC to new heights. I think it is a good time for me to leave.

S: May we ask what has been done to protect our school against the virus?

T: We have prepared a lot of materials, like hand sanitizer. We asked all of you to wear masks all the time. There is an antiseptic layer and an antimicrobial coating sprayed over the school premises. This protection lasts a few weeks' time and kills the virus instantly. Under these circumstances, I think we are not at a great risk. Now we are safe because we do not allow foreigners to enter Hong Kong directly. They have to stay under 14 days of quarantine. When the Hong Kong government relaxes the restrictions, there lies the problem. All the cases within the week are coming from the outside. Therefore, we should be on high alert when that happens.

S: What is the most memorable part of your years of service to the school?

T: Teaching is not just a job or a task. It is an art. A question posted by one of our alumni made a deep impression on me. She asked, 'Mr. Tai, you have taught at a secondary school for so many years—have you ever felt bored?' The syllabus does not have not changed. I was puzzled because I had never felt bored. Why? What I like to do most is teaching. I meet new students every year. It is challenging to teach different students of different abilities, with different characteristics and different styles.

S: What hopes do you have for our teachers and students?

T: I treasure my experience in this school. This is the only school I have taught and I have served for thirty-four years. I treat this as my second home. I am proud of the achievements of all my students, the LKKC students of the past, the present, and the future. I hope all the LKKC teachers and students strive for the best. Don't stop being excellent. Keep searching for excellence.

Student Interview

5C Zoi Lau

As someone who enjoys many different types of art, Zoi spent her free time exploring the world of art—even when confined to her apartment. Thanks to the Internet, she 'visited' The Louvre during class suspension. We are now able to travel to many famous museums in different nations. Without stepping out of our homes, this function allows us to see significant artworks like sculptures and paintings while lying comfortably on our beds, without needing to walk until our legs ache. She also found out that some popular musicals were provided to everyone free of charge online. She enjoyed the *Phantom of the Opera* in her house instead of an actual opera house.

I think we all agree that snacks are essential for watching shows/operas/videos. But popcorn and sodas every day seem to be quite a burden to our health. This prompted Zoi into the kitchen, getting her hands on all kinds of food and utensils, to practice creating dishes.

Interview with Ms. Ho Wing Yan

5D Raymond Li, 5D Terence Tng

During months of quarantine, besides having online lessons, many of us found staying at home boring. In order to kill time, we did all sorts of things. Some of us played games, while others chose to binge-watch an entire TV series. I'm sure everyone had their own way to spend their time meaningfully. However, have you ever thought about what teachers did during the quarantine? To answer this question, we were lucky enough to have Ms. Ho talk to us about how her quarantine had gone.

Raymond: As a teacher, what was your first reaction when you realized that school could be suspended for a month or so?

Ms. Ho: First of all, I believe none of us expected this to happen. Within my experience, such a situation had never occurred. The school suspension was even prolonged multiple times. It isn't surprising that both teachers and students may have felt a bit lost in the beginning. I see this as a chance for teachers and students to learn and adapt to the situation. In order to continue learning and teaching, we tried different e-learning platforms, and they worked pretty well. At first it felt strange, yet I believe we all got used to it soon.

Raymond: You just mentioned E-learning platforms. What do you think of online learning?

Ms. Ho: I know that some teachers might have had difficulties with online teaching but luckily I didn't have to worry about this problem. Thankfully, just before school suspension, during the first term, I happened to attend a few workshops by the EDB on E-learning. I learnt a lot there so I consider myself lucky and quite well-equipped for teaching online. Actually, during the quarantine period, it got me thinking whether e-learning can take over teaching in person. I don't think that online platforms can replace a physical school. The most valuable thing when it comes to teaching is the interaction with students and I just don't feel it when teaching online. Nevertheless, using technology to make learning more accessible is a step in the right direction. I don't know whether the E-learning trend will go on forever or not, but I think it may be a good idea to integrate this into normal schooldays. For example, if there happens to be a rainstorm or typhoon, it may be a good idea to learn online instead of taking a day off :)

Terence: Did you have a good time with your family, especially with your kids? Were there any difficulties?

Ms. Ho: Yes, definitely! I have two daughters, whom I had to supervise during that period. One is 5 years old and the other is 7. As they couldn't go down to the park and be with their friends, my whole family was basically sharing the same space the whole time. This was where things started to turn upside down. No matter how much patience you have, it's inevitable to feel a bit frustrated when seeing the kids making the same mistakes repeatedly and endlessly. Obviously, having to teach the younger one in a kindergarten level, the older one in a primary level and my students in a secondary level, it had been an exhausting time. Nevertheless, I got to know more about time management and I started thinking perhaps it might be a great time to train my kids on developing their social skills and hidden talents. We spent time on building LEGO castles and cooking.

Ms. Ho: I don't think life is not about how much textbook knowledge they have learnt but how practical they are in life.

Terence: You like cooking? Can you tell us more about how you spend your time cooking?

Ms. Ho: To be honest, it's never been one of my interests before. But, I don't doubt the enjoyment I find when holding a frying pan. You know, for me being a mother of two daughters, I genuinely never have the vitality and time to prepare a lovely dinner for them. But now, not only have I cooked meals, my two daughters were as well involved in the cooking process. In these 4 months, we tried out over 150 dishes and most of them came out successful and tasty, thankfully! Though some were hideous and awful to eat, they were still counted as an experience! Frankly, it's quite interesting and special because you will never know when you will have a second opportunity. Interestingly, some of my students loved cooking and actually shared some of their recipes with me and my daughters to try. It's a great way to stay in touch with my students during the school suspension. I think the pandemic is a blessing in disguise. It did affect our daily routine and lifestyle, but that's how we hence explore and experience things which we wanted to do and enhance the relationships between our family members. I took some photos of the cuisines I had made through this period of time. I'm happy to share some of the moments with you!!!



Again a big thanks to Ms. Ho for attending the short interview. Hopefully, all of you know her better from now on.

Student Interview

5A Jeanny Lam

Knowing well that I would not be able to sit in front of my desk and work all day, I chose to get moving. Originally, I had online handball physical training. Sometimes I would go jogging along the promenade or in the parks. As much as I wanted to stay in my soft bed and relax for the whole day, I decided that it would only help add fat surrounding my belly and thighs. My intention was to lose some weight and burn fat. I succeeded but regained it almost immediately as I could not resist junk food.

One of the best things class suspension brought is that I have gained motivation to do something I wished to accomplish, but did not have the time. Staying at home for a long time enabled me to pick up reading again.

It keeps my mind open and have vivid imagination and ideas while being cooped up in a small space. It really brought up the traveler in me as I really want to visit other countries. I even started making plans for my future trips.

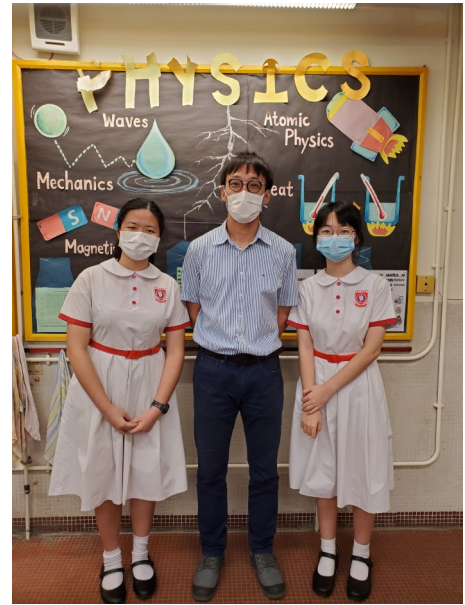
We absolutely don't like the virus, but we have to be versatile and welcome all kinds of challenges while making good use of the advantages it brought us.

Interview with Mr. Ho Ka Lok

5C Karis Tung, 5D Erin Wong

Erin: How did you spend your time during quarantine? Is there anything that was remarkable to you?

Mr. Ho: Of course I went out less regularly and stayed at home most of my time. For example, I would buy frozen food and cook at home to avoid eating outside. Despite my eating habit, I could not go running as much as before too, that I had to find a place with few people to do so. During this period of social-distancing, without as much freedom to go out like before, in order to avoid crowds, it was really upsetting and unforgettable. Throughout so many years, I seldom experienced something like this. Compared with the last time when SARS struck Hong Kong, though people were also obliged to stay home, the coronavirus took up a much longer time of quarantine and made me more blue.



Erin: Do you think online teaching is easier to manage or do you find yourself busier than before?

Mr. Ho: If you mean the preparation of teaching package, it is more time-consuming to digitalize the materials. For normal lessons, with the aid of the visualizer or blackboard, students can read the notes I just jotted down, which is simple and clear. However, to prepare online video lessons, I had to first learn how to shoot, record and edit videos, and learn to add experimental demonstrations into the videos. If the background was noisy or if I found myself stuttering sometimes, I would delete that part from the video and re-film it, until the video was perfect. Therefore, taking videos for online teaching used up more time unexpectedly. Choosing such a way of teaching, I hope students can learn more freely as they can rewatch again whenever they find something difficult to understand. Also, it was hard to know students' learning efficiency. For Zoom lessons, though I could have a more scheduled time to engage with students, it was still a bit distant. I could not see my students face-to-face and I could not know whether they really understood what I taught. If there were some students away from the keyboard and did not concentrate in class, I would not teach those parts again particularly for them after the school resumed, and that was a bit worrying.

Erin: I think it is the first attempt of online teaching for all of us. When you were told to teach online, did you have any concerns?

Mr. Ho: Oh, actually I did not worry about that, as I did not worry about using IT for teaching. Even though I had to teach myself how to run the teaching software, as long as I could handle these tasks, it was not tough. Of course, in order to adapt to this change, it took some time for me to learn and investigate, so for the first few weeks of the school suspension, I hadn't started online teaching.

Karis: Were there any challenges or unforgettable moments that happened during online teaching?

Mr. Ho: There were actually some funny moments during our lessons, which I'm not sure if you know, but my cat would always come to me and brush against my hand telling me to pet it. There was also another time when the postman came to deliver a package for me and I had to pause the lesson for a second, to run out to the door to receive the mail. The moments were a bit hilarious but it wasn't a big problem. My students were very accepting and understanding.

Karis: Now that classes have resumed, how do you feel about it?

Mr. Ho: I feel that I'm happier teaching in class than having online lessons at home. When we're at school, we have the atmosphere of studying and a strong sense of learning. On the other hand, when students are at home studying, the rules are not as strict. I've been a teacher for 20 years and I've never experienced something like this before. Online lessons are like communicating with the computer solely. I don't get any feedback from my students and it feels a bit weird. Whereas during lessons, I get to see your responses to determine whether you understand and I'm interacting with humans instead of technology. As a student, you may feel like it's not a big difference to you if you don't like school, but think of it as a lunch date with your friends. Are you happier having lunch together side by side, face to face or having a Zoom lunch date where you all eat your own meals separately? The environment and atmosphere are different and being back at school brings them all back. I, as a teacher, have the responsibility to teach and maintain this atmosphere for my students. When everyone's at home, I couldn't ensure it. Teaching at school just brings me a lot of pleasure.

Karis: A lot has already happened this year. Is there anything you would like to tell yourself or your students? What hopes do you have for them or even yourself?

Mr. Ho: If I say it in a customary way, it would be wanting students to work harder on their studies. However, with a perspective change, if I'm a student and not a teacher, I feel that after this pandemic, it wasn't only the chance to study that my students have missed. Due to the lack of communication or keeping in touch this half year, you might be able to make more friends at school or go travelling and experience life. These are things that have been lost too. It's a shame that activities that bind us all together were forced to stop. As a Physics teacher, my limits are only within this subject and this room, but the times bygone are not just within this lab or this school, but the chance to form relationships between classmates and friends. I wish that you would all cherish your time here, because time is limited. Use the rest of your school life wisely to build up bonds and unbreakable friendships with each other.

Staying Positive Amid Quarantine Life

5C Sapphire Wong

Waking up at ten and having Zoom lessons on our bed, the suspension of school seemed to be a break for us. But for our teachers, it was not that simple. Today I had an interview with our vice principal, Mr. Ying, and asked him about his experience during quarantine days.

Y: Mr. Ying S: Sapphire

S: Good afternoon, Mr. Ying. It's great to have you here to share with us your life during quarantine.

Y: No problem!

S: So, overall, what were your feelings towards the outbreak of the coronavirus and the suspension of school?



Y: Well, candidly speaking, I had mixed feelings about them, just like the majority of the people in Hong Kong. At first, I was worried when I saw the news that the number of infected people was increasing like almost every day. But then, I started to get myself prepared for the upcoming school administrative work and keep in touch with the EDB (Education Bureau). As a teacher, I had to make sure that our students could still catch up with the schoolwork and keep on learning even when school classes were suspended.

S: I truly understand that. The work during suspension must be very different from the regular one. What do you think about the differences between them?

Y: Just like the rest of you, I still had to catch up with the schoolwork and attend meetings with our staff regularly. The only difference was that the meetings were done online, on Zoom. I also had to focus more on supplementary work as I had to make sure that every student could study in a safe and clean environment when school resumed.

S: That doesn't sound easy! Was there anything you found the most challenging to deal with at that time?

Y: I think it was the uncertainty of what was going to happen next. The fact is we don't know what is going to happen tomorrow. The world and the pandemic are ever-changing. Just at this moment everything is not yet resumed! So at that time we had to fix and re-fix the school schedule continuously. It was a pity that our students were not able to participate in the school carnival this year. I also felt sorry for the F.6 students as their DSE exam had also been an uncertainty. It was a relief to hear that the exam was completed without a hitch.

S: I agree. The quarantine life was really full of uncertainties, but it also gave us a chance to take a break from our packed schedule. Did you have any achievements in this period?

Y: Well, working from home did increase my sleeping time as my work pace was slowed down to some extent. I became more productive in finishing my school administrative work. However, I still regret not having time to do more exercise.

S: That is understandable. The quarantine period was tough but it also let us know more about our own selves. Last but not least, do you have anything to say to our fellow schoolmates?

Y: Surely do! 2020 is really a special year for all of us. I hope everyone can continue to be the best version of themselves even under such a complicated situation. Be ready at all times — this is the key to success. I also hope students can learn to deal with their own emotions and keep a stiff upper lip.

S: We will definitely bear these in mind and do our best. Thank you for sharing with us your meaningful experience in the past few months.

Y: My pleasure.

Thanks to our teachers' efforts, we can now enjoy a safe and sound learning environment in LKKC. Study hard and be humble—these are the best ways to express our gratitude to them.

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