



inter-community school zurich

EST. 1960

The Inter-Community School is committed to providing a supportive and enabling learning environment in which all members of the community are challenged to achieve their individual potential, encouraged to pursue their passions, and expected to fulfil their responsibilities.









Mission & Vision

At ICS we are committed to providing a supportive and enabling learning environment in which all members of the community are challenged to achieve their individual potential, encouraged to pursue their passions, and expected to fulfil their responsibilities.

Our Vision

Supportive & Enabling Learning Environment

- Differentiated programmes appropriate to a broad spectrum of learning styles and aptitudes consistent with a non-selective admissions policy are offered:
- Diverse student population, with programmes to support and enhance that diversity;
- The principles of understanding and respect between individuals, communities, cultures and nations are promoted and, in particular, reflect those principles in our relationship with our host community;
- Language proficiency is fundamental to international understanding, and therefore support to second-language acquisition and to mother-tongue development is recognised.

Challenge to Achieve Individual Potential

- Expectation that students will strive to use their talents to the fullest;
- Provision of out-of-class programmes of outdoor and expedition education;
- Commitment that ICS staff should continue to be recognised as leaders in the field of international education;
- Development of programmes of online education and extra-curricular classes to extend learning beyond the classroom and beyond the ICS student community.

Pursuit of passion will require the school to

- Support and nurture talent and interest, and accommodate the many forms in which they arise;
- Celebrate excellence and commitment;
- Encourage the idea that individuals can and should make a difference.

Fulfilment of responsibility will be accomplished through

- An explicit and active commitment to human rights;
- Outreach and community action programmes that involve all of the school's constituencies: – students, teachers and parents;
- Environmentally responsible operational policies and procedures that embody the environmental awareness of the curriculum;
- Programmes that ensure the full engagement of ICS students with local and global issues.







Philosophy

The Inter-Community School Zurich seeks teachers who are committed to teaching as a career, and who wish to develop their professional skills to the highest possible level.

In return for this commitment, ICS endeavours to provide an environment in which professionalism is valued and recognised and every possible support is given to teachers to develop and apply their skills.

All teaching staff must be fully qualified and certified by a recognised accredited organisation.

All teaching staff must be fluent in English.

All staff at ICS must share an unequivocal commitment to the Mission and Vision of the school.

A high value is placed on previous successful experience in the classroom and, in particular, prior experience with the IB programme.

ICS strives to ensure that the total employment package is amongst the best available to international school teachers anywhere and is sufficient to attract and retain the best possible teachers.

ICS will recruit, without discrimination, the best possible practitioners for each position. Nationality is only an issue if it affects the availability of work permits.



General Information:

The School

The Inter-Community School Zurich (ICS) is the longest established international school in the Zurich area. A private, not for profit, co-educational day school, ICS first opened its doors in 1960 and today provides a world-class international education to a diverse community of approximately 800 students from ages 3 to 18 years, representing almost 50 nationalities. The ICS Nursery welcomes children from 18 months to 3 years and offers an exceptional opportunity to build foundational skills and a love for learning which will help them grow as inquisitive learners.

Set on a modern campus, enjoying innovative learning spaces, the school is located in the picturesque residential area of Zumikon, 15 minutes by tram from the centre of Zurich. Zurich is Switzerland's largest city and is in the German-speaking area of Switzerland. It is an increasingly multinational city: almost one third of the city's population is non-Swiss.

ICS is the only school in Zurich offering the three main programmes of the International Baccalaureate and is proud of its reputation as an IB enhanced school which attests to the School's exceptional programme delivery. The fact that ICS encourages and enables all students to undertake the full IB Diploma Programme is a testament to its commitment to inclusivity and its belief that all students can achieve individual success within the Programme. ICS students continue to excel in the IB Diploma exams in large part due to the highly experienced IB and international teachers at ICS. Faculty and staff represent approximately 25 nationalities.

The language of instruction is English and all students learn German, the language of the host country. Many students study a third language through to Grade 12. ICS supports students with limited English through its 'English as an Additional Language' (EAL) programme.

ICS is equally proud of its commitment to the holistic development of its students. Its "culture of care" permeates all aspects of the community. The mission encompasses the cultivation of a positive learning environment, building relationships among all of its constituents, emphasizing character development and promoting wellness.

ICS offers collaborative and innovative extra-curricular activities to inspire and engage students. At ICS, students have the chance to develop leadership skills, mentor younger students, serve their communities, and pursue their passion for the Visual and Performing Arts. ICS has a strong Sports programme and students are offered the chance to participate in International Schools Theatre (ISTA) Festivals. Grade 11 and 12 students can also complete a British certificate in Sports leadership.

As a Round Square member school, ICS offers students opportunities to take part in international conferences and service-learning projects. ICS also has a strong partnership with Shree Mangal Dvip School in Kathmandu, Nepal and the Arogya Agam clinic in southern India.

Field trips are an integral part of learning at ICS, giving students the chance to apply their learning, broaden their horizons and develop leadership and independence. In Grade 10, students can participate in helping design a global expedition with World Challenge.

ICS - A TEACHER'S LIFE





General Information:

"Switzerland, is the nexus of the diverse physical and cultural geography of western Europe, renowned for both its natural beauty and its way of life. A country where German, French, Italian, and Romansh languages all enjoy national status, and English is spoken widely.

Swiss cuisine has traditionally been marked by important cultural and regional variations. Cheese dishes are typical of the Alpine regions. The national dish, fondue neuchâteloise (a mixture of melted Emmentaler and Gruyère cheeses and wine into which bread cubes are dipped), and raclette (cheese melted over a fire and scraped over potatoes or bread) are also popular in much of the world. The Swiss chocolate industry, which originally grew out of the need to utilize the abundant milk produced in the pre-Alpine dairying regions, is world famous.

Zürich's famed Bahnhofstrasse is home to both fine shops and leading banks. Along the Bahnhofstrasse, shoppers can find Switzerland's famous timepieces, local handicrafts, and books as well as dine in elegant cafés. Each city and town of any size has a similar venue, and some have more than one shopping district; for example, just across the Limmat River from the Bahnhofstrasse lies Zürich's youth-oriented Niederdorfstrasse, which features bistros, shops, and ethnic restaurants.

In general, the habits of city dwellers mirror those of urbanites in other parts of the world. Typical Swiss folk culture (yodelling and playing the alphorn) is still practiced in some rural areas. Early autumn's annual Alpabzug, in which cattle are driven from Alpine pastures to lower elevations, is the occasion for rural fairs and auctions, and many cities and larger towns host farmers' markets.

The arts are championed by renowned museums not only in cities such as Basel, Zürich, and Geneva but also in small towns such as Winterthur and Schaffhausen, which are cultural bastions far beyond the usual provincial standards.

Sports are an integral part of Switzerland's national life. Hiking, swimming, cycling, mountaineering, and roller-blading are all popular pastimes and well provided for, alongside a variety of clubs and centres for tennis, squash, golf, soccer, handball and hockey enthusiasts.

Fittingly for a country made up largely of tall mountains, Switzerland abounds in venues for winter sports, as well as fishing in the lakes and rivers. The country boasts dozens of major ski resorts and has an extensive system of marked cross-country ski trails."

Egli, Emil , Wachter, Daniel , Diem, Aubrey and Maissen, Thomas. "Switzerland". Encyclopedia Britannica, 14 Mar. 2021, https://www.britannica.com/place/Switzerland Accessed 16 March 2021.



What our teachers

are saying

We asked teachers currently employed at ICS to give us their opinion about Living in Zurich and Teaching at ICS to share with you.

Living in Zurich

How do you find the community in Zurich?

- · Friendly and welcoming, mixed cultures.
- I love living here! I feel a big part of our ZH community, going to markets, garden centers, meet at local cafes, going to the same shoe repair, sandwich shops etc.
- Fantastic! Can feel isolating at times when you first move but once settled, there is a nice community spirit and feel.

What is it like living in and around Zurich?

- Zurich is a beautiful city. It is quite international and offers many things to do and see. The city in itself is relatively small, however, it has everything you may need such as very nice cafes, restaurants, stores, museums, entertainment options and a beautiful lake.
- The outskirts provide a a wide range of outdoor options such as public baths by the lake and promenade to stroll or bike. Nature is certainly a high plus of this place.
- The city is safe, clean and offers a high quality standard of living.

How did you find getting around in Zurich?

- Moving around Zurich is easy as it is small.
 It is lovely to walk around.
- Easy. The transport system is second to none.
- The city offers an incredibly well organized and reliable public transportation system. Having a car is useful, however it is not a must!

How is the cost of living in Zurich?

- The cost of living in Zurich is higher compared to a lot of places but if you shop around it is comparable to places like inner city London for example.
- It's expensive at times but the high quality of food and drink is worth it when we do go out.

Teaching at ICS

How would you describe your colleagues at ICS?

- Supportive, friendly, knowledgeable and caring.
- · Professional, friendly and diverse.
- Brilliant.
- The biggest asset of ICS is its strong sense of community and the kindness of the staff.
- Very multicultural and friendly, open, helpful, easy to get along with.

What are the students at ICS like?

- Charismatic, friendly, thoughtful, independent and responsible.
- Fun, polite, friendly and enthusiastic.
- · Open-Minded, kind, clever and fun.
- Independent, hard working and respectful.
- Most students are very friendly. They are computer/ phone/ social media savvy. They are inquisitive and eager to do their best. Many languages are spoken.

How do you find the parents at ICS?

- Most of the parents are very supportive and friendly.
- There is a strong sense of community among parents too.
- They have high expectations of students and the school, but most of them are quite accessible and open to dialogue.
- Like in any other International school, they care about their children's education.

What professional development opportunities have you had at ICS?

- Professional Development is always accepted at this school.
- I have had Professional Development to develop and keep informed within my subject area. I have also been able to develop by attending courses to develop other skills such as coaching for leadership.
- We are given an allowance each year to pursue professional development of our choice pending approval.

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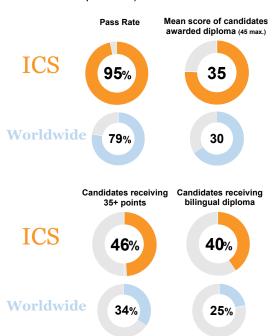
Following another year of strong IB Diploma results, ICS is looking at how we can support students' academic ambitions still further.

The Class of 2020 demonstrated remarkable resilience, exemplary character, and sheer determination as they coped with conditions such as the transition to learning@home, the cancellation of the final IB examinations and other situations that were well beyond their control. We are extremely proud of them and their unfailing resolve as IB learners despite these exceptional circumstances and challenges. Their collective results significantly exceeded the worldwide average. As the only fully inclusive international IB school in Zurich, our results continue to represent high calibre learning which reflects the dedication of our highly qualified teachers and specialists, as well as the hard work of our students and the wholehearted support of their families. We remain firmly committed to our belief that all students can achieve individual success in the IB Diploma Programme.

IB Diploma Results

The Grade 12 students who graduated this year had high aspirations and the IB Diploma results reflect that. The pass rate at ICS was 95 per cent (compared with the worldwide average pass rate of 79 per cent). The mean

average score was 35 points, considerably higher than the worldwide mean average of 30 points. (The worldwide averages are calculated by the International Baccalaureate and the ICS figures are calculated in the same way, to give a like-for-like comparison.)



Benchmarking Performance

The school feels that this demonstrates the rigour with which ICS prepares students for the IB Diploma. "Considering that we are a non-selective school, both for admission and for the IB Diploma, our results are impressive," says Head of School Mary-Lyn Campbell. "Benchmarked against other non-selective international schools that offer programmes like ours, for both our pass rate and our mean average score we are very competitively placed.

An Inclusive Approach

It is important to emphasise that we are non-selective when it comes to the IB Diploma. We start with the assumption that all our students can do the Diploma and every year, we only have one or two students who take other options. We support Grade 11 and 12 students through the Diploma programme and we are increasing that academic support. And that means not just learning support and English language support, but also our support for students aspiring for very high grades – 38 points and above."

Systematic Support

This is something that ICS has always done, but it's becoming more systematic, purposeful and structured. We have looked at feedback and we are refining our processes. For example, we have introduced a more rigorous course selection process for Grade 10 students going into Grade 11. We discuss with students and parents whether the types of courses they are choosing are best suited to the students or the universities they want to go to, and if students are selecting the best courses for them to get the best grades.

A Team Approach

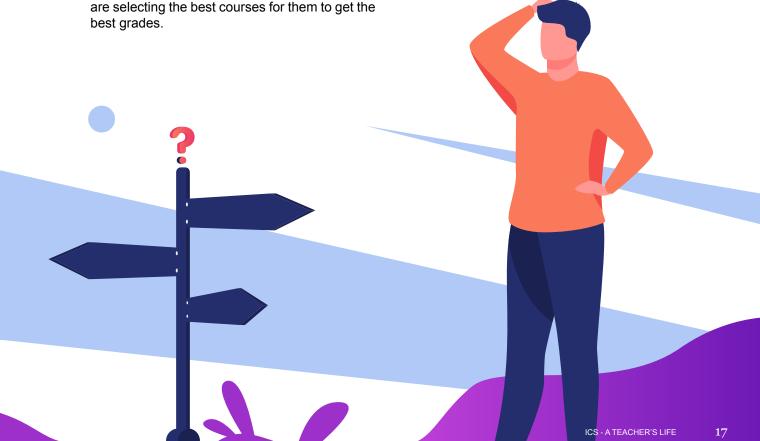
As the students move into Grades 11 and 12, more people are supporting students and monitoring their progress. It's not just the University Counsellor, the IB Coordinator and Secondary Principal who know which universities our students aspire to get into, and what grades they need. We know that a collaborative approach is important. So we also share that information with tutors so they can have supportive conversations with students and keep tabs on their academic performance across subjects and whether they match the grades they hope to achieve. That support continues when the IB results come in. If a student has not quite reached the points they need, we will support them.

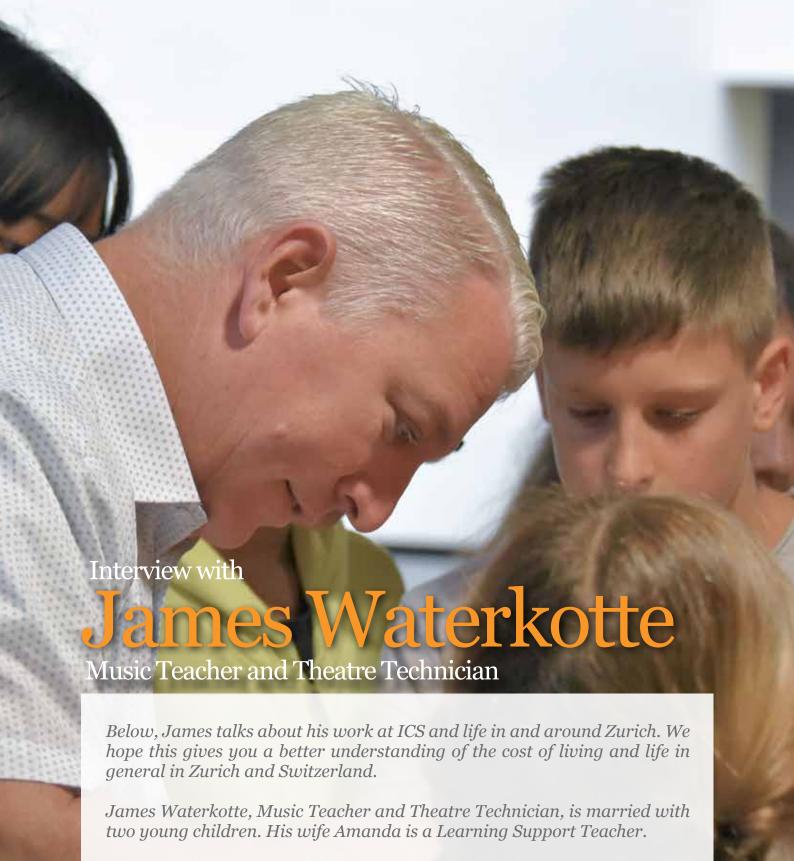
Building Partnerships

We advocate for students with universities by providing universities with more specific scores or calling university admissions offices where, for example, a student had just missed the number of points required. Students' pass rates and scores will fluctuate depending on the make-up of a particular year group. But we are always reflecting on what we can do better to help students.

Read the full school profile:

https://issuu.com/inter-community-school-zurich/docs/ics_profile_2020-2021/4





Switzerland

We moved to Zurich from Asunción, Paraguay. Since my school days, I had always thought that I'd love to live in Switzerland. I played trumpet with a high school band that toured Europe every summer and we would always come to Switzerland. That was my favourite stop on the tour: I just loved the open green farmland and very natural beauty here. I enjoyed my job in Paraguay; learning about building theatre sets and working with sound and lighting systems was a great experience. But then some friends of ours moved to ICS and we found ourselves getting jealous of their Facebook photos and stories about their weekend adventures. So, then we started looking into schools in Switzerland.

When we saw there were job openings at ICS, and started looking at the Mission Statement and reading the website, it felt like this was the school for us. Everything we believed in was in the Mission Statement and the school seemed such a good fit.

The School

After we had both been offered jobs here, we found out that Amanda was pregnant. So we then had to call up and break the news. But ICS made the leap of faith and still hired us - even when they found out Amanda would be eight months pregnant when we moved and wouldn't be able to start teaching here before giving birth. They really accommodated her. What was really nice was that we came here as newcomers to the school and our baby daughter arrived very shortly after we moved. Nonetheless, the feeling of support we got was great: there is a real sense of community here. So we knew we were in the right place.

Life here at school is good. I love the sense of community and the collaboration that the teachers have with each other. I have never been in a school that had the level of collaboration and communication that this one has. You end up exploring so many new ideas and having people to bounce thoughts off, even when they may not be in the same field or specialism as you. For example, one of my colleagues is a dance teacher but he has a lot of experience making movies. He gave me a lot of help when I was working with the Middle Years students on a film they were writing and producing. In every other school I have been in, specialist teachers tend to stay within their own area and don't mix so much, whereas here, every department is part of the community. I also feel valued: I know it sounds corny, but I really feel that people appreciate what I am doing.

School is keeping me busy and the downside is that I don't get to see as much of my kids as I would like. As I coach some of the music groups, I am often working after school and so the days can be long. However, I really like the students. I teach Grades 7 through 12 and many of the students are really caring: when I sent them out a photo of my new baby, I got such a cool response, they all emailed back congratulations.

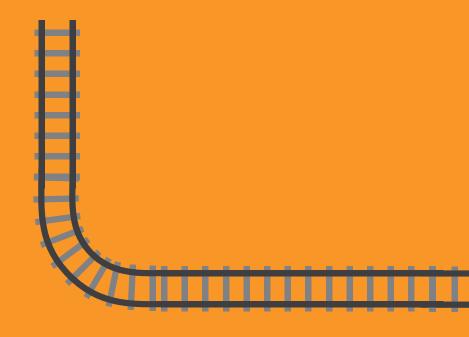
Zurich

I would say that so far, Zurich is exceeding my expectations. I thought it would be just another big city but there are many spots you can go within Zurich - down by the waterfront, in the parks like the China Garden – that make you feel you are out in the country.

We live in a village in countryside a short drive from school as you head towards the mountains: sometimes I have to pull off to the side of road and pinch myself because I can't believe I live in such a beautiful place!



JUN. 2020





A behind-the-scenes look at how ICS approached school 'closure,' remote learning and returning safely to our campus.

The concept of 'being tested' is something that all of our young people will encounter at some point in their educational journeys. We ask them to 'step up' and demonstrate what they can do – often very inventively and under great pressure. This idea of facing a 'test' is, however, not something that we would normally expect to extend to an entire educational community.

Yet the events of the last few months, unprecedented in the lifetimes of any of us reading these words, have served as the ultimate test of many schools around the world in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic. We at ICS have been no different in having to 'stand up' to this challenge, but we have come through it. In truth, we have more than 'come through it' — we have flourished, learned incredible lessons from moments of particular trial, and have seen remarkable responses from every different group within our community. So, what has been done - from an organisational level to the efforts of individual households - to see us through this incredible period of time?

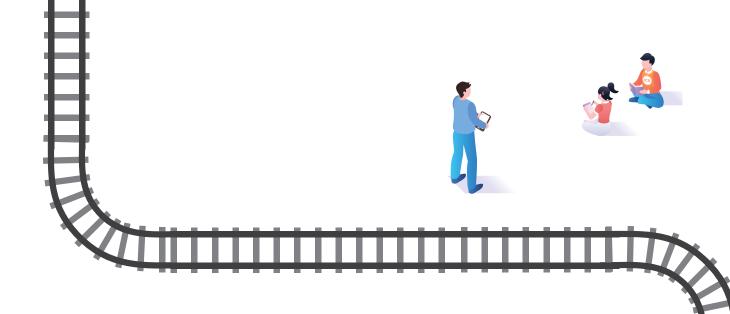
Preparation – Cultural and Educational

To claim total foresight of events of this magnitude would be overstretching the facts, but it is unquestionably true that ICS has long considered the management of a significant 'crisis' to be a very worthwhile theoretical exercise. As the news of the spread of COVID-19 became more prevalent during November and December of last year, we took the decision to be on 'alert' – and by January the formulation of a response to a similar situation as was being seen in China (i.e. school 'closures' and other significant social impacts) was being crafted. To be forewarned is to be forearmed, but this was

not as simple as 'seeing it coming'; there were very important decisions to be made. "All of this was a platform," the Senior Leadership Team notes, "that allowed us to move forward rather than stand still and wait."

The idea of 'distance learning' is not entirely novel, of course, but not necessarily in these circumstances. As with all elements of education, however, there are polarities of opinions in how things should be done. We are fortunate to be a globally connected school, and could canvas opinions and ideas from settings all over the world to help us formulate our response. Moreover, times of such significant social impact will also - inevitably - develop a political dimension as certain matters are discussed from a national level down to the hive of opinions found online. It was important that our decision-making was not dragged down or clouded by such debate; a challenge easier said than done.

With all of these factors in play, it can be hard to know where to start, but the robustness of our organisational mission and values gave us the firm ground that was so desperately needed. Ultimately, everything we do is about learning, and no matter the circumstances that must continue; and must continue at the same level – not as a diluted version of itself. 'Learning happens everywhere' – a maxim in which we have always believed. Further elements already inherent in our culture would also prove to be sound pillars on which to build a strategy.



First, our school is one that has always looked to embrace technology and the 'nimbleness' that digital solutions can provide when applied appropriately. Secondly, our attitude to communications has always been very thorough and transparent – and keeping our community fully informed in such a disorientating period of time was going to be vital.

Thirdly, and perhaps most interestingly, the inherent adaptability, flexibility and independence that is taught through the IB philosophy has ingrained itself in our culture from our Senior Leadership through to our youngest learner. This capacity for self-agency – especially in our students – was to be the fuel of our success. No amount of detailed planning or research could have been seen through without a genuine embracement of its aims and intentions by our student body. More than anyone else, the boys and girls of ICS have seen our school through this time.

To Close or To Continue?

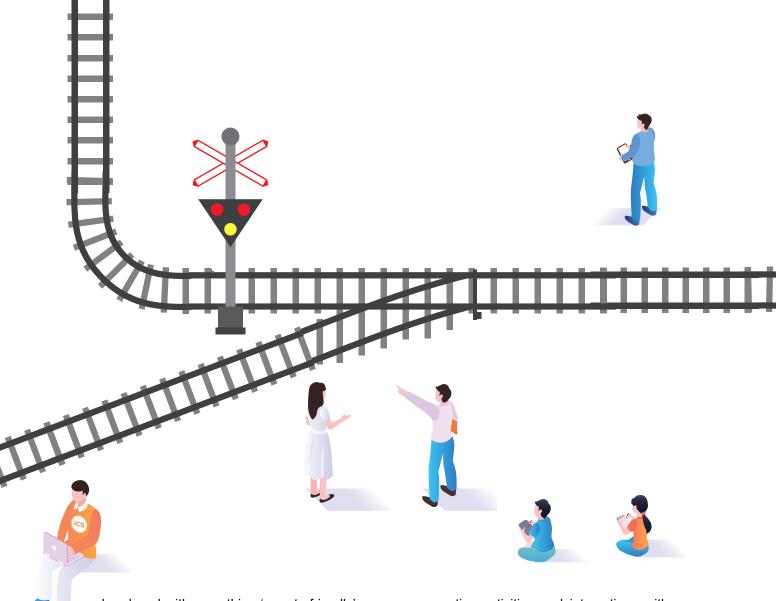
Across global media, particularly heightened in some countries, we read of mass school 'closures'. Schools were shutting down, and only then – and only in certain cases – were provisions being made for some attempt to drag children through the remains of a curriculum. It is a fundamental point of philosophy that ICS did not close during the Coronavirus pandemic. As our Senior Leadership Team points out, "Schools that thought time stood still lost out on a chance to re-invent themselves." Our train did not stop at a siding and wait – it simply switched line and continued in the same direction, and at the same speed. We transitioned from a

Learning@Campus to a Learning@Home model – but 'learning' remained fundamental and uncompromised; 'different' didn't have to mean 'less good.'

It would be very easy, even with this underpinning philosophy, to treat the switch into Learning@Home as a purely logistical one. How do we teach a lesson? How do we assess work? How do we keep young people engaged? All of these questions are and were vital, but they could cloud an equally vital consideration - the human impact of this process. This was a human test, not a practical one. In reality, we have faced many forms of the pandemic in recent weeks - COVID-19 is one of them, but so is a pandemic of fear, and we have also seen 'pandemics' of loving response and, of course, learning. With this commitment to addressing the human impact of this process cemented, we took the decision - much like one would when managing an illness - to constantly monitor and to 'take the temperature' of the community. In its simplest form this manifested as two questions - "How are you doing?" and "How are we doing?". The answers to both had to influence how we continued to adapt as the days and weeks passed.

Learning@Home was to be a continuation of our learning, but with obvious factors taken into account at all times. The disruption of these recent events has been immense – and often markedly different from one family to the next. It must follow, then, that the Learning@ Home programme could not be the same for everyone. Nevertheless, our starting point was to provide familiarity even in unfamiliar circumstances. Units of work were not stopped





and replaced with something 'remote-friendly' – they were adapted to allow positive continuation. Initially, this primarily sat with the guided agency of our own students – and successfully so – but in time it became clear (as we continued to listen to feedback) that adaptations were needed. Period lengths were changed and increased 'face to face' time was introduced to tackle a sense of 'isolation.' Nevertheless, as the Senior Leadership Team notes, "The flexibility of the students has been a role model to us all."

Quality, Agency and Adaptability

Much as it does when in a Learning@Campus model, the differentiation of learning from our youngest to our eldest also had to be carefully considered during this transition. The basic ingredients always remained the same — an equal importance given to learning and to care for the child, and an emphasis on quality of learning over quantity of content covered. We have not been 'delivering lessons', we've been looking after children as they continue to learn. In Primary School, we worked hard to keep learning 'concrete' and relatable to the world around the child through the use of games,

songs, creative activities and interactions with people or objects in the home. In Secondary School, our use of technology could be more inventive, but the agency was always placed with the student themselves. This even extended as far as peer interventions – 'nudges' – where students were able to 'check-in' on someone who might not be fully contributing to activities and, in an entirely non-judgemental way, could see if any further adaptations might be helpful to an individual.

Our depth of research prior to, and during, this period also equipped us with a sound understanding of the more technical 'nuances' that could often be the difference between successful and unsuccessful remote learning. One area that had significant consideration was the balance between synchronous (i.e. learning that happens in 'real-time') and asynchronous (i.e. where learning happens through online channels but without 'real-time' interactions). For Primary School we saw more need for the former and, in Secondary School, the latter – but the reality was a 'hybrid' of these approaches that adjusted very subtly over time and was

genuinely differentiated for each individual student. Equally, the question of how much learning should take place in front of a screen and how much should be 'non-digital' was also very important. We constantly adapted to find the right balance for each member of our community and their circumstances as best we could.

Despite the complexities of the above, a hugely important feature of our Learning@ Home approach was very simple. We all - children, teachers, parents - needed to understand the purpose of each and every piece of learning we undertook; we needed to understand the outcomes that were intended. With that properly understood, the involvement of families in the learning process could be genuinely effective; rather than parents having to contribute to an abstract activity the context of which they did not know. We have no doubt that the idea of being directly involved in the schooling of their children was intimidating for many parents, but when intentions were clear and flexibility abounded, we quickly saw how well we could all work together.

The Power of Partnerships

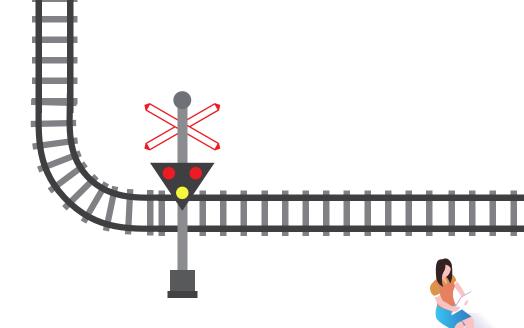
And this, perhaps, is the most joyous 'outcome' of our transition into Learning@ Home - partnership at a level never seen before. "Our relationships with everyone exploded." the Senior Leadership Team comments, "We were communicating on a one-to-one basis with nearly everyone every day." It quickly became evident that families were seeing their children as learners as their teachers do - and this has only served to strengthen the understanding between all parties in this vital relationship. "We know more about our child as a learner than ever before," noted one parent in survey feedback. This, amongst many other outcomes of the Learning@Home transition, can only be seen as a significantly positive result.

As circumstances have changed, of course, we have been tasked with 'switching lines' once again as we gradually return to a Learning@Campus model. There have been obvious and significant considerations given to elements of hygiene, but this is in fact only one small part of our 'Healthy Learning' attitude. Again, the transition is a human test, not a logistical one. At one point in our









surveying, around 80% of staff had concerns about returning to work while around the same percentage of parents wanted their children back on campus. To help reconcile these entirely understandable positions has been about human engagement, not the hasty erection of hand-washing stations or the sewing of face masks.

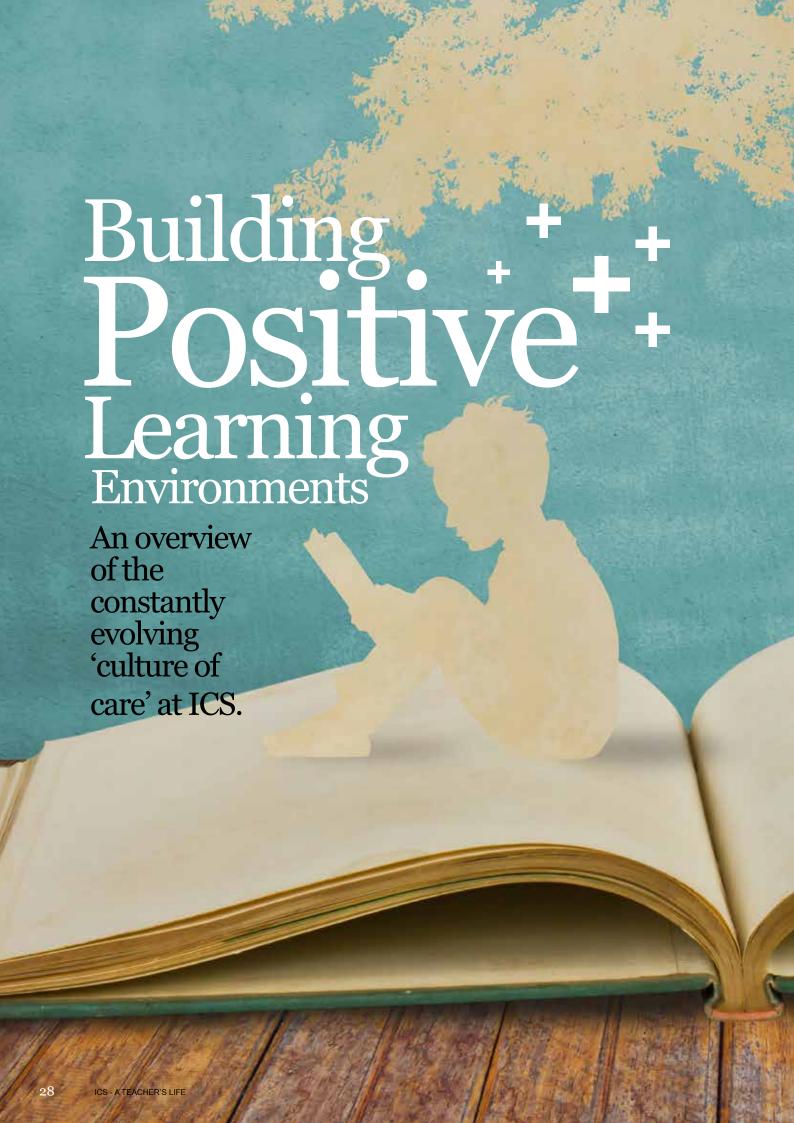
Our task, then, has been to provide a holistic continuation of life as we return to campus. There is a cruel irony, of course, that the return to the 'familiar' has actually been quite the opposite for our students as the physical layout of the school has to adjust for a period of time. The most important goal, therefore, has been to welcome people home and to reinject the true 'spirit' of ICS despite all of these restrictions. We have seen our Art Department decorating our playgrounds and heard the great talents of our Music teachers through performances at breaktimes – both of which have, quite literally, brought the colour and song back to our school. For that, and for everything, our staff have given above and beyond the call of duty, we are immensely grateful.

A Human Challenge and Lesson Learned

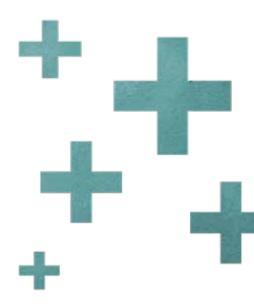
The impact of COVID-19 is not 'over' for ICS, and it may not entirely be for some time, but in the spirit of true continuation it seems right to reflect 'on the move'. In amongst the technical, pedagogical and logistical challenges of our transition(s), the most heart-warming feedback has been decidedly human. "People have felt 'held'," our Senior Leadership Team observes, "and could genuinely be hopeful." Alongside this we see mutual appreciation elevated beyond anything we could have imagined. The status of teachers, the appreciation of the sacrifices made by parents, and our pride in the incredible resilience and adaptability of our students have all been significantly and permanently elevated.

The horrific loss of life that has resulted from the COVID-19 pandemic has been a blight on humanity of global and historical significance. From out of this time, however, some good must come. We have seen unparalleled ingenuity and professionalism from staff, we have truly appreciated the importance of well-being underpinning the delivery of curriculum and we have shown how individual circumstances can be truly understood and adapted for through hyper-personalisation of learning.

There can be no doubt that both organisationally and down to each individual within our community, we have learned more about how we learn, what we are capable of achieving when faced with adversity, and what quite powerful a force of support the ICS community is capable of being. Long may those outcomes of these times remain as we continue our journey – on whatever line that may be.







If the last twelve months have shown educators anything, it is that our most fundamental responsibility is to care for those in our school community. Without students feeling genuinely safe, no achievement — academic or otherwise — is realistically possible. That we have been able to maintain achievement in the face of such disruption is testament to this unshakable truth; everything we do is based on care.

Such a principle, however, cannot only be seen in moments of crisis — it must be ever-present and ever-evolving to meet the needs of our community. We must always evaluate the meaning of 'pastoral care' and look to build learning environments that are supportive, productive, and positive. This does not mean being 'permissive' or unrealistic; it means having the systems, strategies, and communication in place to forge strong relationships on which outstanding learning can be based.

Knowing Every Child



This commitment is not new to ICS, of course. Embedded in our philosophy is the idea that, "...students learn effectively, feel

safe, welcome and respected within the community...", but we are always looking to improve. To do this, it's often best to start at the simplest point - asking young people what they need from us. The answer, invariably, is simple. To be able to help them organise their learning — which is important, but 'functional' - and to know who they are, which is fundamental. Let's start there.

Truly knowing our students is not achieved simply by wanting to, it is done through processes, such as the 'Morning Meeting' in Primary. By greeting every child, allowing them to share ideas, facilitating a group activity, and providing a thoughtful morning message, we are showing our students that they are heard and known. This may seem simplistic, but such research-driven ideas give direction to knowing our students better.

It holds that if we better know our students, we are better placed to build resilience within them. Resilience – the ability to 'manage' difficult situations – is highly individual but can be 'worked on'. The more positive the environment, the more the scales 'tip' in favour of positive experiences in the mindset of the child, meaning they are better equipped to handle difficult times that might threaten to 'unbalance' them. We have seen our resilience pushed in recent months, but we have also seen it shine.



they cannot stop all negative

incidents from arising. Reaction, in this sense, is as important as

pro-activity. Many pre-existing systems at ICS 'kick in' when such scenarios sadly arise. Our Student Pastoral Oversight Team (SPOT) is tasked with monitoring individual circumstances where there is cause for concern, and our Student Study Team are called into action when specific action is needed. By calling a meeting of all stakeholders in the school who support any given child, we are able to have a "...team approach to putting our arms around the child."

To support this, we have recently appointed Grade Level leaders for Secondary grades. Where Primary students have a lot of time with specific teachers, those in Secondary will take lessons in different groups. It is important, therefore, to develop a Grade Level 'culture' that can provide pastoral consistency to the student experience, as "...we do not see a clean cutoff between pastoral needs and curricular needs." These leaders are visible and available to students as 'Go-To Adults', alongside Tutors and Counselors. This Grade Level leader programme is to be expanded to Grades 11 and 12 in the coming year.

'digital citizens' in the modern world. Our children - their parents or teachers - are 'digital

natives', and may take features of the digital world for granted. It is our responsibility to extend the idea of 'pastoral care' to this space. Our core messaging to students is based on 'respect' - respect for other, for oneself, for data, and for intellectual property.

In Primary, we regularly share reminders with students about digital citizenship. This might be as simple as how to limit time on devices or protect passwords and data - and is balanced with positive messages about the potential of the online world. In Secondary, we are driven by a partnership-based attitude where school and home must work together. We are very keen to share resources such as those found on Common Sense Media ; as we cannot divorce ourselves from pastoral issues that arise outside of school as if they are "not our problem." Anything that impacts our students' welfare is important to us.





understandable anxiety for any parent is the idea of their child being 'bullied'. First, we must distinguish between moments

of 'meanness' and 'bullying' -instances of the former must not push us towards an assumption of the latter. A great deal of our pastoral work, in this sense, is based on preventing 'meanness' transitioning into repeated. power-driven. fear-provoking behaviour that truly is "bullying." In whatever space, we are quick to ensure that children have a 'Go-To Adult' that they trust, and in whom they can confide. Incidents of this type are always idiosyncratic - "...there is no set rulebook for how this is handled."

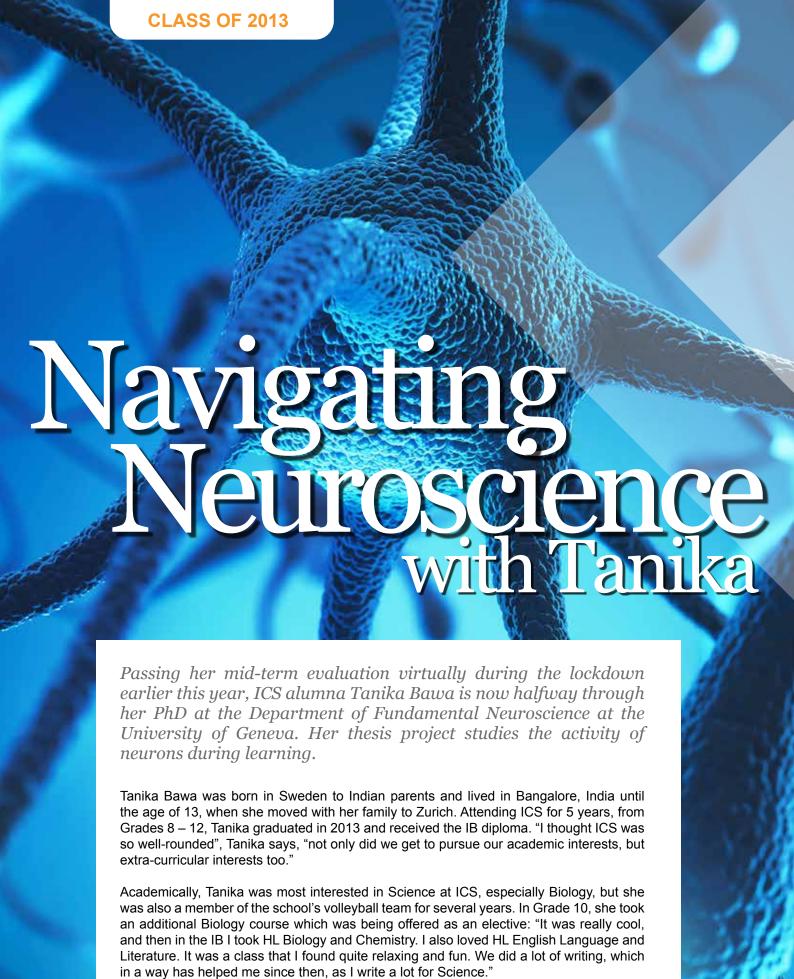
The ideal for any community self-moderation, which is possible in older year-groups where unacceptable behaviour can be 'called out', but realistically we must be prepared to deal with transgressions quickly and sensitively. This sensitivity applies to the 'victim', of course, but in a positive learning environment it also applies to those who cross lines. By confronting behaviour before moving to educating and supporting individuals to improve their choices, we are enacting long-term cultural change in our community, not short-term 'fixes'.

and Working Together

We are entirely committed to 'see every child'. To further improve this commitment. however, staff must go beyond the superficial and attempt to see the invisible. Through regular training from our Counselors, we are encouraged to better identify features of every child's background, interests, and character. With better knowledge, we can offer better care.

One such example of this is 'Check-in Tuesday' in Grades 6-11, where students are invited to 'log' how they are feeling and if there is anything they would like a trusted adult to know. Although this concept was borne from monitoring well-being in a remote environment, the value of it has been very evident, and it has become another important pastoral system.

Ultimately, building positive learning environments comes about from asking questions of each other. Whether we ask how best to identify warning signs in children, or how we can better understand the motivations for poor behaviour - or any other progressive question - we are at our best when we ask it together. Our commitment to constant evolution of pastoral systems can only be truly improved by cultivating genuine partnership between school and home.



"One of the things I also liked about ICS was that there were a lot of volunteering opportunities," Tanika says. She was an active participant in a number of voluntary committees, such as the AIDS committee, Women's Day presentations, and the Water Scarcity Forum. In Grade 11 she started the Animal Cruelty Awareness group at ICS,

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raising money for the Swiss chapter of VSTU (Vereinigung Schweizer Tierheim Unterstützung) through bake sales and raffles. During her Personal Development Month in Grade 10, Tanika organised and raised funds for 3 free eye camps in Delhi, India where the underprivileged could get their eyes tested and treated for free. She also holds a Teach India Certificate for completing 40 hours of volunteer teaching.

Tanika says that in her final year at ICS she benefited from teachers' valuable feedback while preparing her university application essays. She believes it was important to receive the IB diploma, saying, "the IB diploma is well-recognised, so universities understand the grading system. All the UK universities have IB point requirements, which makes it easy to know where you stand. Being in an international school also helped me integrate better at Durham, which is quite international too."

Biomedical Science at Durham University

In 2013 Tanika started her studies in Biomedical Sciences at Durham University in the UK. In her first year at Durham, Biological and Biomedical Sciences students were placed together, as both student groups were required to take foundation courses such as molecular biology and physiology. The following year Tanika and the other Biomedical students, who were for the most part focusing on human biology, could "decide to go down the medical route or the research path. I loved research so I did that."

"In my third year I had the pleasure of working with Dr Martin Goldberg and Dr Tim Hawkins on a large project where I had a chance to work with confocal and electron microscopy," Tanika says. "Later in the year, I had the chance to write a small literature review, which was a huge learning process. Right after that, I started my Bachelor thesis, studying the role of the enzyme Nitric Oxide Synthase (NOS) in the Paraventricular nucleus of the hypothalamus (PVN) during heart failure in rabbits." During this time Tanika did "a lot of immunohistochemistry, slicing and confocal microscopy." Immunohistochemistry, or IHC, is a powerful microscopy-based technique for visualizing cellular components.



In the summer of 2015, following her second year at Durham, Tanika returned to Switzerland and completed a 3-month internship at the University Hospital of Zurich (UZH) in the Department of Forensic Medicine. Tanika interned with Dr Natasha Arora at the Institute of Forensic Medicine and Dr Linda Grillova, who was visiting from the Czech Republic. "I learnt so much from this internship," Tanika says. "They allowed me to be in charge of the finances for that summer, so I learnt how much different components cost and how not to waste. We developed a great workflow. We also collaborated with Dr Philipp Bosshard at the USZ (University Hospital Zürich) and collaborators in Spain. So, I also learnt how it is to collaborate with multiple people on a project."

Graduating with Honours, Tanika received her Bachelor's Degree in Biomedical Sciences (BSc) from Durham University in June 2016.

Following Neuroscience from Durham to Geneva

Tanika started her Master studies in Neuroscience at the University of Geneva in September 2017. "I knew I wanted to study Neuroscience after my studies at Durham. I also knew I wanted to do in vivo studies, which means in the alive, awake brain. At the same time, I was very interested in learning new imaging techniques, in particular 2-photon imaging. I applied to a few labs in Geneva, but the one I wanted was the one with my Professor, Anthony Holtmaat. He is known for using 2-photon microscopy to monitor structural and functional changes in the brain in the Department of Fundamental Neuroscience. The University of Geneva has a good inter-disciplinary Master in Neuroscience, so I got to take some psychology courses too."

Tanika says that the lab is quite international, therefore English is spoken for the most part, but as there are also many Swiss French and French people working in the department, she has also learnt some French.

After receiving her Master in Neuroscience (MSc) in May 2018, Tanika started as a PhD student in the Department of Fundamental Neuroscience at the University of Geneva in August of the same year. She explains: "My thesis project essentially involves studying the activity of neurons during learning ... I am using 2-photon microscopy to image the cortex



simultaneously during a sensory discrimination task. Thus, I am studying the evolution of activity while the mice learn this task, as well as how this activity changes when the rules are reversed. This will give us a good idea of the level of stability of neurons during learning as well as re-learning upon a rule change.

Tanika believes that the results from her thesis project can help further our understanding of the possible mechanisms behind perceptual learning as well as disorders that result in sensory perception deficits. Her thesis results can also be useful for computerized learning systems and artificial intelligence.

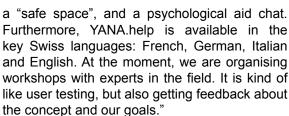
A Swiss Vs Virus Hackathon Spawns YANA.help

During the 2020 lockdown in Switzerland, Tanika learned about the Swiss Versus Virus Hackathon from a colleague in the lab. The competition required potential participants to choose a topic connected to problems emerging from COVID-19. One of the issues that interested Tanika was the prevention of domestic abuse, so she joined forces with a team of students interested in the same topic, as founder and treasurer of YANA.help. "The solution we came

up with during the Swiss Vs Virus Hackathon was YANA.help. It is a platform available to victims or witnesses of domestic abuse. We were one of the winners so we received some money to bring it to life. We then took YANA. help to the Pan-EU vs Virus Hackathon, where we further developed the platform, and we got advice from some mentors. We were also chosen as a category winner there."

Since the lockdown began, domestic violence cases have gone up. Tanika and her team colleagues believe that their platform is something that could help across all of the Swiss cantons. YANA.help provides a platform to help victims of domestic abuse, witnesses, or anyone who wants to be involved. It provides a safe space to access canton-specific emergency contact information and offers support for victims. "Additionally," Tanika says, "our participative web platform aims to connect domestic abuse victims, witnesses and professionals through discussion forums. Users can create an account to participate in discussions: this can be done with an alias for victims or other users, while experts can register with an accredited account. Assistance is offered through four key services: emergency contacts, helpful articles,

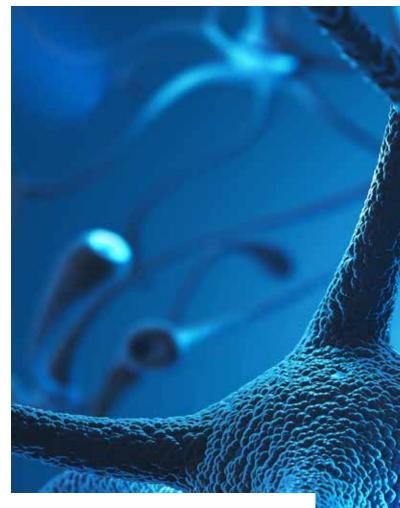




Academia and an Occasional Dose of R & R

Tanika is now halfway through her PhD and passed her mid-term evaluation virtually during the lockdown — "It was a first for me!" She is currently involved in three exciting projects and says she is the only one in the lab doing behavioural imaging experiments. "Academia is quite flexible", Tanika says, "you have to be very self-motivated. The harder you work, the better your chance is of getting a publication! I'm also happy with my extra-curricular work."

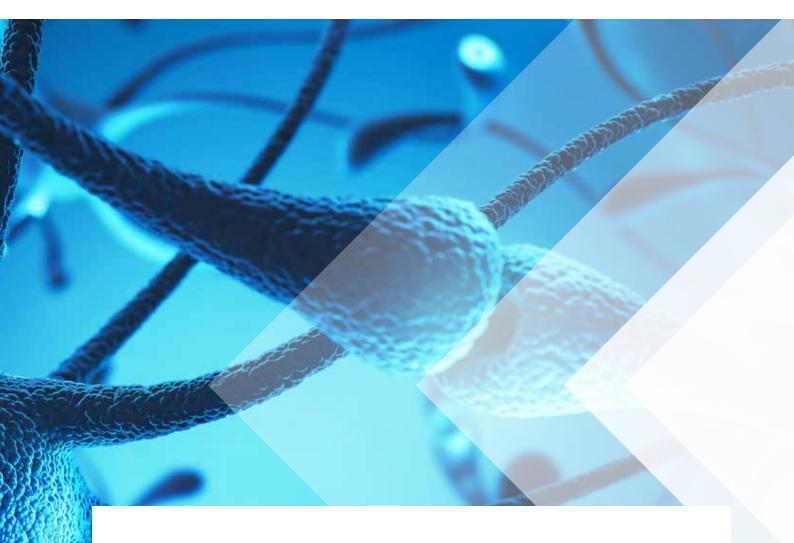
"I follow many researchers on Twitter, so you can see many of the new publications in the field on there. Thanks to Biorxiv, you can also read pre-prints, which are publications that haven't yet been through the peer-review process. We have regular journal clubs in the lab where we discuss new papers. We also have weekly



seminars in our department with researchers from around the world giving talks. I love that as a PhD student you have many courses available to you too. In addition, there are some very cool courses on edX, an online platform, that I do in my own time. It's also interesting and a good way to learn to follow someone in the lab who is doing a technique that you don't know. It's super important to do something besides work and study. I'm someone who needs a lot of social interaction, so I spend a lot of time with my friends after work!"

Though she is not exactly sure of what she will be doing in five years, Tanika definitely knows that she wants to be doing something "good for the world." "Even if it's in a small way, it would be nice to be doing something that can help us understand the world better or help in some way."

When asked if there might be an "alternative profession", apart from Neuroscience, that might interest her, Tanika replies, "I have always been very interested in animal conservation, so maybe conservation biology!" Tanika loves visiting farms and animal reserves: "It really relaxes me. I will pet any animal that allows me to. I would



say I am most relaxed when I'm around animals. Tanika's publications: I paint sometimes in my free time and I also have multiple adult colouring books, which are extremely relaxing. I highly recommend getting one!"

And what advice does Tanika have for ICS Grade 12 students in the process of deciding about the next steps to take in their future education? "I really would like to advise them to do something they are passionate about and are really interested in learning more about, instead of picking something you're just naturally good at. Of course, it's a bonus if the two are the same! It's just a lot easier to stay motivated if you are genuinely interested in what you do. And if you feel that you are in some, however small way, contributing to society."

- https://journals.plos.org/plosone/ article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0200773
- https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/ S0960982220301779
- https://www.nature.com/articles/ s41467-020-17005-x





At the Inter-Community School Zurich, our school year begins in August and ends the following June. You can print, download or view the ICS School Year Calendars on our https://www.icsz.ch/about-ics/school-year-calendar

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ICS Inter-Community School Zurich
Strubenacher 3
8126 Zumikon
Switzerland
Tel: +41 44 919 8300

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