



The Educational Mission of The Methodist Church in Singapore



Council on Education
The Methodist Church in Singapore

THE METHODIST CHURCH IN SINGAPORE

Nurturing Generations of Men & Women of Character & Integrity

This document is a brief on the Educational Mission of The Methodist Church in Singapore. It serves as an introduction to anyone serving in our Methodist Schools.



HISTORICAL BACKGROUND – ONE COMMON PURPOSE

The Methodist Church has consistently invested heavily in providing an all-round, holistic education for all since the days of its founder, the Rev John Wesley (1703-1791). Wesley reckoned that everyone, irrespective of background, could develop his full potential of reasoning and thinking through a Christian education. Thus, an essential part of our educational mission is to explain the teachings of Christ.

From its humble beginnings in Singapore, the Educational Mission of the Methodist Church has grown steadily through the years. Methodist missionaries started all our schools, except for St Francis Methodist School, with the common purpose of being part of the outreach arm of the Church. This is an expression of the Methodist Church's service to the community, regardless of race or religion.



VALUES – HOLISTIC EDUCATION FOR ALL

- John Wesley believed that education, through the teachings of Christ, develops the full potential of our reasoning and thinking. He regarded traits like arrogance and uncontrolled anger as diseases that destroy our character and that the grand end of education is to cure them.
- Wesley also held that the educator's role is to prepare students for life's challenges by developing their characters¹.
- Academic excellence is one important component of character-building and our schools should always strive towards that end. However, as not all our students can be academically inclined, we should aim at helping each student develop his own full potential so that he may become a responsible and upright member of society.
- Money raised from the sale of text books written by Wesley was given to the poor so that everyone may have the opportunity of receiving an education. Likewise, our churches must always set aside some money to develop our educational mission².
- Our schools provide an excellent opportunity to nurture the mental, emotional, physical, social and spiritual potential in each person. These lessons must be taught by word and deed.
- Christ left the security of heaven to show us the way in our troubled world. Likewise, the best way to educate our students is for us to set good examples for them to follow. Bishop Oldham (the pioneer of our Methodist Educational Mission in Singapore) wrote, "The silent influences that come forth from a teacher, filled with the Holy Spirit, are more productive of direct religious outcomes than the most elaborate services or attractive periods of worship." The quality of our education is directly related to the quality of the lives of those of us who are entrusted with the responsibility to teach.
- There are two traditions that have been handed down through all our Methodist Schools that assisted our educational mission to build character:
First, the weekly chapel service which is an integral part of the life of the school. All staff and students should attend it. Special permission for absence may be granted on a case by case basis.
Second, a brief "Thought for the Day" based on the Bible followed by a short prayer shall be delivered everyday.

¹ For the full text on John Wesley's sermon "The Education of Children", go to: <https://www.resourceumc.org/en/content/sermon-95-on-the-education-of-children>
² For more information visit: <https://www.methodist.org.sg/what-we-do/methodist-schools-foundation/>

Today, we have close to 21,000 students and 2,000 teachers and staff in all our Methodist Schools in Singapore.



ANGLO-CHINESE SCHOOLS (ACS)

- Bishop William F Oldham founded ACS on 1 March 1886. He started with only 13 pupils in a small shop house at 70 Amoy Street. When the student population increased to 104 the following year, the school moved to Coleman Street, where the first Methodist Chapel had already been established.
- The Methodist Chapel served as the School Chapel while the school building housed the missionaries and young boarders.
- Mrs Oldham brought many of the boys to Sunday School and Sunday Church Services.
- Today the ACS family of Schools consists of the following: Anglo-Chinese School (Primary), Anglo-Chinese School (Junior), Anglo-Chinese School (Barker Road), Anglo-Chinese School (Independent), Anglo-Chinese School (International), Anglo-Chinese Junior College and Anglo-Chinese School (Academy), which supports students on the autism spectrum who are able to access the National Curriculum. Altogether, the schools serve a student population of more than 9600.



METHODIST GIRLS' SCHOOL (MGS)

- In 1887, Miss Sophia Blackmore, with the support of the Women's Foreign Missionary Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church in America, started Methodist Girls' School.
- In 1925, when the premises along Short Street could no longer accommodate the enrolment of 150 students, the school moved to a Methodist Church property at Mount Sophia, where it remained until 1992. Today MGS is located at Blackmore Drive, and has a population of about 2,600 students.
- MGS is a full school, with a government-aided primary school, and an independent secondary school. In MGS, we educate every girl in a Christian environment To Master, To Grow and To Serve in every phase of her life. We are committed to nurturing our students in being and becoming their best selves, grounded in Godliness, Excellence and Love, to learn well, live well, and serve with purpose – beyond self, beyond school, and beyond now.



FAIRFIELD METHODIST SCHOOLS

- In 1888, Miss Sophia Blackmore also started Telok Ayer Girls' School in Cross Street. When a new school building was constructed at 178 Neil Road in 1912, the school was renamed Fairfield Girls' School, in honour of Mr James Fairfield, a generous American donor. In 1958, under Mrs Lim Bock Kee, the first Asian Principal, the school name was changed to Fairfield Methodist Girls' School.
- The school became co-educational in 1983 when it was relocated to Dover Road. Fairfield Methodist School (Primary) and Fairfield Methodist School (Secondary) now have a total student population of about 2,700. The secondary school became an Autonomous School in 1996.



PAYA LEBAR METHODIST GIRLS' SCHOOLS

- Paya Lebar Methodist Girls' School was established in 1916 on a piece of land purchased by the Methodist Church. This was the beginning of Paya Lebar MGS.
- The school was started as a branch of the Anglo-Chinese School and was known then as Paya Lebar English School. The first Headmaster was Mr Robert Hanam.
- Mrs Chew Hock Hin (wife of Rev Chew Hock Hin), the Principal of the school from 1935 to 1957, is regarded as the founder of Paya Lebar MGS as she re-organised the school with the help of the American Crusade Fund after the school building was razed to the ground during World War II.
- In 1986, the school became two units and now comprises Paya Lebar Methodist Girls' School (Primary) and Paya Lebar Methodist Girls' School (Secondary) with a combined student population of more than 2900. The secondary school was given Autonomous status in 2002.



GEYLANG METHODIST SCHOOLS

- Geylang Methodist Primary and Secondary Schools started as Geylang Methodist Girls' School in 1924. The school was established by Rev Floyd Herman Sullivan, the District Superintendent of the Methodist Church, together with a member of the Methodist Church, Miss Emma Eaton Walker.
- The total enrolment then was 27 girls and the sanctuary of Geylang Chinese Methodist Church was used as a classroom.
- In 1931, Mrs E.S. Lau, wife of the pastor of the English section of Geylang Methodist Church, Rev E.S. Lau, was appointed as the Principal.
- In 1984, the school became co-educational and became two separate schools known as Geylang Methodist Primary School and Geylang Methodist Secondary School.
- In January 2007, to reflect the oneness of the Geylang Methodist family of schools, the schools were renamed as Geylang Methodist School (Primary) and Geylang Methodist School (Secondary). The combined student enrolment for both schools is above 2,700 annually.



ST FRANCIS METHODIST SCHOOL (INTERNATIONAL)

SFMS (INTL) was founded by Mrs Harriet Doraisamy as a private school for girls in 1960. It was then known as St Francis Girls' School. On her retirement in 1995, The Methodist Church in Singapore took over the school. The school became co-educational, was renamed as St Francis Methodist School and moved to Mount Sophia. In 2001, SFMS (INTL) moved to its present location at 492 Upper Bukit Timah Road. Today, SFMS (INTL) is a leading local private school, offering primary, secondary and pre-tertiary education to about 500 international students. The school provides a Singapore approach to learning in an international school environment. The school now offers a range of international qualifications from Cambridge International, the Western Australian Certificate of Education as well as the Singapore-Cambridge O Levels.



FOUNDATIONAL PRINCIPLE – WE ARE ONE

- The Methodist Church in Singapore is organised into three Annual Conferences – the Chinese Annual Conference (CAC), Emmanuel Tamil Annual Conference (ETAC) and Trinity Annual Conference (TRAC).
- Each Annual Conference, led by a President, is made up of a number of churches³ called Local Conferences. Together they form the General Conference (GC) of The Methodist Church in Singapore led by our Bishop.
- All Methodist Schools come under the jurisdiction of the Council on Education (chaired by the Bishop) of the General Conference.
- Each of our Methodist Schools has a Methodist Church associated with it.
- All our Methodist Churches and Methodist Schools are part of one family. We elect one Bishop every quadrennium (4 years) to oversee the entire Methodist community in Singapore.

³ For a full list of churches go to:
<https://www.methodist.org.sg/contact-us/find-a-methodist-church/>



OUR EDUCATIONAL MISSION

The rapid changes that are taking place in our society pose many challenges for us. Our Educational Mission, however, remains unchanged.

We are called to nurture each new generation of students, raising them to be men and women of godly character and integrity, equipped to make a responsible contribution to society.

Methodist Churches and Methodist Schools will continue to work hand in hand with the Ministry of Education to fulfil this high calling.



A METHODIST INSTITUTION: DEFINITION

As Methodist Institutions founded by, connected and accountable to The Methodist Church in Singapore, our Methodist Schools are guided by the beliefs and values of The Methodist Church in Singapore, with its emphasis on education and service to the community.

Traditions and practices within the Methodist Schools that are integral to character-building include the weekly chapel service and daily "Thought for the Day" and prayer.

In essence, our Methodist Schools believe that the education of the heart is essential to the heart of learning.



Council on Education

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