

the school



Newsletter August - 2026

This issue of the school newsletter is about the first three months after reopening of school for the new academic year, 2026-27. We hope that readers will get a sense of what happened in different parts of school through pictures and writings.

Welcome Back!



After two months – a warm welcome and children entering school on the first day.



A Tree Blooms this Year

In the word of Kanthi (Akka) Phatak a long-time teacher of the school.

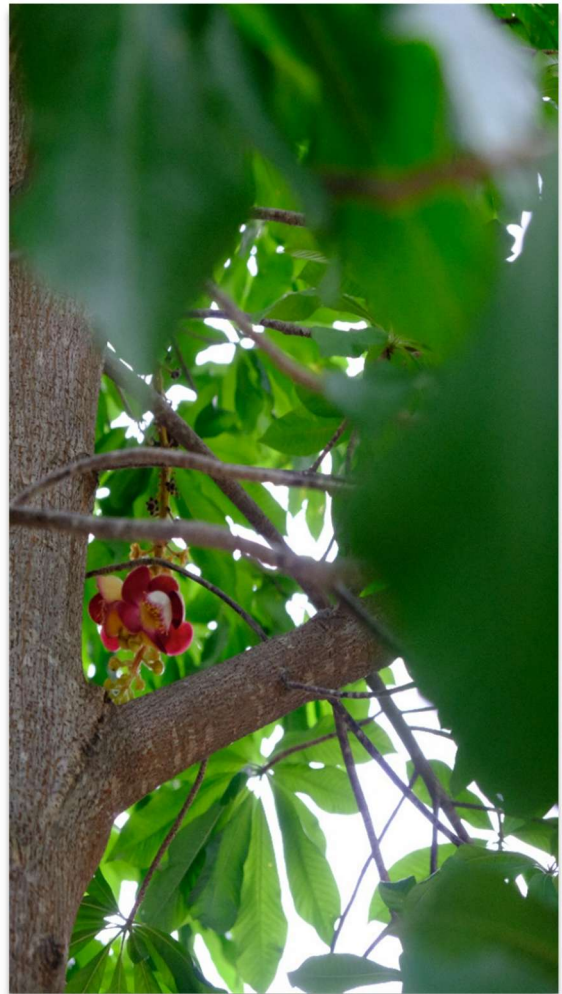
First blossoms . . . give birth to an indescribable feeling of joy. On the first day of this academic year, I was at school and at tea time a teacher came to me and in her hand was a flower - nagalingam, or the cannon-ball tree. The feeling of joy was extra special because this tree had come as a little sapling from the Damodar Gardens - Adyar campus of the school and much like many of our children grew and flowered under our caring eyes. There are many such saplings from the old campus that stand tall and majestic here at Thazhambur today. To name a few other trees: frangipani, vennangu, malai vembu, aanai gundumani, ashoka, the tree of life, putranjiva, tamarind, mayil konrai, kozhukattai mandarai and maghizham. A rare tree is the kalabash or the tree whose fruit becomes the mendicant's bowl.

The relocation of the school was announced in 2010 and what followed were years of looking for land and planning on the how, what and when of the shifting of an over forty-year-old school. The trees on campus were an integral part of our life at school and in the midst of the moving of the school an idea grew in my mind. The gardeners and I gathered as many saplings as possible and nurtured them in pots from 2011 to 2018.

We planted them on our own campus in the months of August and September, 2018. It was touching to receive many saplings from parents, teachers and alumni as well. Particularly touching was an institution of higher education welcoming us to the new part of the city with many saplings. Some of the planted saplings have grown taller than the buildings that they stand beside; for instance, the grand kadamba next to the library. Again, to name a few - pride of India, sarakonrai, punnai, illuppai, pomegranate, gumohar, porasu, ramphal. Here I would like to mention one tree that we could not identify for a long time and this year it blossomed for the first time. We excitedly took pictures and got it identified as the falsa or unni.

After a few years on campus, we received saplings that could withstand water logging like the neer kadambai and other trees from Nizhal. Nizhal works towards urban greening and caring for trees in the city. Trees such as neikkottan, anjan, vagai, maavilingam, soap nut, berya javonica.

Along with the trees on the campus when we moved here such as the mango, jamun, pungam, teak, jackfruit, neem, thenpoochi, amla and peepul, we now have this splendidly diverse wooded space. The campus has become a space that adds immeasurable value to the growth and nurturance of children and adults who work here or visit, and as it does to all other life forms that make the school.

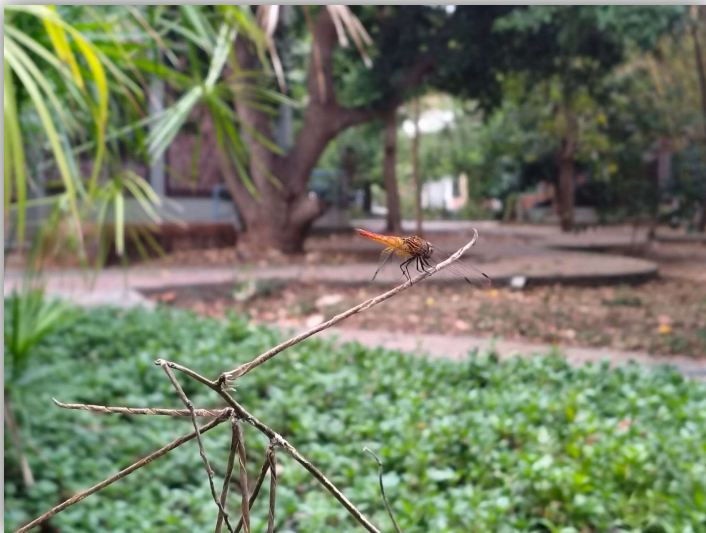


A Rare Sighting in the Campus



The common redeye was sighted in campus on the 27th of June. It is a species of butterfly and more specifically it belongs to the family Hesperiidae. Hespericides are fast flying butterflies that tend to prefer the shady undergrowth of densely vegetated areas. This one in particular was seen amidst leaf litter in the mango circle. The redeye butterfly is completely brown but has a redeye - an aptly named species. It resembles leaf litter to the point where one might need to look for an awry leaf, rather than a butterfly to spot it. To add, when it is not flying full speed in a zig zag pattern it is perfectly still.

This butterfly has only been seen in a handful of locations throughout Chennai. Please search and look around. The species of butterflies change from season to season, so please keep looking. There are plenty to be found and you may have to wait a while before they return.



Further, spotted recently on campus Kedar (Bhaskar) Anna notes are the dragon flies below.



Events by Alumni

A Bharatanatyam offering by alumnae Mitra Dinesh and Anitra Srinivasan for the first assembly of the academic year.





Pradeep Chakravarthy, an alumnus, a historian and a writer introduced his latest book titled "The Greatest Books of Ancient India" to students.

T M Krishna, Musician, writer and an alumnus at school spent August 3, 4 and 5 at school. He records his experience of the interactions he had with the students below.



"My association with Krishnamurti Schools goes back four decades to when I joined The School KFI in Adyar. My association was first as a student, then alumnus followed by many years as a parent and continues now as a friend. Earlier this week Sangeetha and I spent three days with the students of the school having conversations and holding sessions on music. The discussion flowed untethered by habit, traversing through the various thoughts that occupied the students. Societal divisions, free will, responsibility, fear, acceptance, self-affirmation, empathy, vulnerability, violence, ethicality and ambition as felt and observed realities were discussed and responded to. Responses were often between the students themselves. I became just an observer. The music sessions were wonderful with students singing with great power and passion. Each section of school in wonderment about music and also expressing their likes and dislikes and sometimes the fatigue of having to sing school songs! But the junior school children were the ones who stole the show and took over the music session!

People often ask me what is so special about a KFI school. Some wonder whether this is just a make-believe intellectualism. I concede that this is a difficult question to answer. Is the school a perfect place? Absolutely not. But rare a place that fear does not reign, rare a place where love is natural, rare is a place where conflict meets patience, rare is a place where freedom is not a privilege. For this is The School."



Junior School Theme Meeting

Understanding Childhood - a Theme Meeting at School

The Theme Meeting of the parents of students of Classes 2, 3 and 4 and the teachers of the school revolved around the theme - Understanding Childhood. Below is an extract of Sangeetha (Mahayan) Akka's introduction outlining the topic and taking the group through the thinking and the questions raised for parents and teachers alike.

Here is a scenario that many of us may have witnessed.

A child is building something with blocks. The structure keeps falling. Another child suggests a different way, but the first child says, "No, I want to try again." A few minutes later, frustration has turned into excitement—not because an adult solved the problem, but because something was discovered through trying.

What were we seeing in that moment?

Was it play? Problem-solving? Persistence? Independence? A child learning to work with emotions? Perhaps it was all of these together.

And this is where our inquiry begins.

What does it mean to understand childhood?

Play

When children are building, pretending, negotiating rules, inventing games or simply wandering in imagination, what exactly is happening?

Do children play only during play, or is there a playful quality of mind that can also exist in learning, relationships and discovery?

We all carry some experience of childhood—our own, that of our children, or the children we live and work with. Yet, when we pause and look closely, the question becomes more complex. Does understanding come from what we know—our reading, experience and theories of child development? Or does it begin

Peer Relationships

Friendship, conflict, cooperation, exclusion, generosity and competition all become part of growing up

How does a child come to experience trust? What does friendship ask of a child? How do children discover empathy, fairness, belonging or exclusion?

And what happens to our relationship with a child when our attention shifts more towards managing behaviour than understanding the person before us?

somewhere quieter: in a more demanding space: in the ability to observe -not to observe in order to evaluate, compare or fix, but simply to see.

Krishnamurti often invited educators to begin not with methods, but with questions. Before asking How should we teach? he asked, why do we educate at all? In a similar spirit, perhaps before asking How do we raise children well? we might first ask: What is this thing we call childhood?

Even this question has been understood differently across time.

Sometimes childhood has been viewed as a biological stage—a period of growth, brain development and increasing

physical and cognitive capacities. At other times, it has been understood as a psychological journey, with thinkers like Piaget and Erikson helping us notice how children think, feel, relate, question and gradually come to know themselves. Sociologists remind us that childhood is also a social and cultural idea. What we expect of children—their freedoms, responsibilities, roles and even the length of

Developing Autonomy

One of the most visible movements in childhood is the desire to do things independently.

Sometimes we welcome this. Sometimes we find it challenging.

Where does autonomy really begin?

Is it simply the freedom to choose?

How do we know when we are supporting independence, and when we may unintentionally replace a child's exploration with our own certainty?

How do we recognise the difference between healthy independence and simple resistance?

childhood
itself—varies

across cultures and historical periods.

Nurturing The Child

As adults, we may notice how often our attention is drawn to children's difficult emotions:

Anger. Jealousy. Fear. Frustration. Disappointment. Conflict. Our first impulse is often to solve, comfort or remove the discomfort. What is the place of discomfort in childhood? How do children learn to stay with their feelings? And perhaps another question for us as adults:

How comfortable are we with a child's discomfort? Does nurturing consist only in providing care and opportunity? Or does it also include the quality of attention we bring to children?

Each perspective offers something valuable. Yet every perspective seems to illuminate only part of the picture. They simply invite us to notice different dimensions of childhood.

Theories may help us notice certain aspects of childhood, but they cannot do the seeing for us.

As we prepared for today's meeting, we realized that our conversations and observations as teachers rarely ended with rigid answers. More often, they opened into and further questions. We found ourselves returning to daily moments of school life—the child who refuses help, the child who struggles to join a group, the child who becomes deeply absorbed in an activity—and wondering if we were seeing these moments afresh.

Engaging with conflict

Conflict seems to be an inevitable part of childhood.

Children disagree.

They compete.

They misunderstand one another.

They hurt and are hurt.

Our first impulse is often to intervene, resolve or restore harmony.

What is a child learning in moments of conflict?

And how do we recognise the difference between protecting children from conflict and protecting them from the opportunity to grow through it?

Those questions gathered around five themes - *Play, Peer Relations, Developing Autonomy, Engaging with Conflict and Nurturing the Child.*

These are not themes we expect to resolve today. They are simply places where our inquiry has led us, offered in the hope that they open further conversations. We need not search for the one correct understanding of childhood. Instead, we might notice what becomes visible when we listen carefully—to one another, to the children around us, and perhaps also to our own assumptions about what childhood ought to be.

Festival of Drama and Dialogue

The Festival of Drama and Dialogue took place over two days, the 28th and 29th of July 2026. More than a hundred students from nine different schools from in and around Chennai participated in the festival this year. Along with our school, children from Good Earth School, Vidyasagar, Pathashaala, AMM School, KC High, Tatva School, AVM School and Sankara School were part of the festival.



The festival is a non-competitive platform for school students, to encourage them to explore a theme and express their views and concerns through the medium of theatre and drama. This year, the key themes

explored by the students were living together, interdependence and independence, societal expectations, academic pressure, women's rights, global warming, social media and its manipulation, digital misinformation within domestic settings, use of substance, trust. A unique feature of the festival is space for dialogue and conversation. After every two plays, students and teachers discussed the theme of the plays, social issues brought out and the processes followed during their preparation. This discussion, which is an important part of the festival, allowed for sharing of many thoughts and questions.

As part of the festival, Class 11 students of our school presented the play titled "New Moon – Shrouded Reality" – where the play dealt with social hierarchy, media manipulation, sensationalism, and the relationship between personal interest and power.

Pictures from our school's play



As part of the event, Class 12 students of the school were invited to write reviews for the plays. Here are the exert of their reviews of the plays put up by different schools,

"For me, the message was clear; it is okay to take help sometimes, and the more people work together, the better the world becomes"

"Play was an interesting insight into how external pressure is manifested in one's mind, and felt quite relatable to the audience, as self-doubt is a central theme in all our lives"

"A quote that stuck with me was "are some people more "people" than others". I felt this was a good way to question inequality"

"The use of keyboard for continuous background music was subtle and aided in providing the right kind of soundtrack based on the scene being presented, allowing for a more dramatic and engaging performance"

"In a world where independence is not only encouraged but is also in some ways a template for each person to fill, Vidyasagar's play highlights the importance of interdependence and working together"

"What worked in the play – the honest effort of the student players who believed in what they wanted to say"

"I felt that the topic which the play discussed is quite important and relevant issues which need to be talked and it was really good that it was brought forth"

"Perhaps the most relevant question that the play covered, and a question I'd like to pose to the audience is, what happens when we only see what we are shown? And as a final callback to the name, the reality was never hidden, just shrouded"



Jamun picking by children.

At the school



The first assembly of the new academic year, bringing together all junior, middle and senior school children, teachers and parents in the assembly hall.



A quiet moment with a Common tree frog.

First “All Parents Meeting” of the new academic year.



Library week

The middle school participated in a library week event for four days from 20th July to 23rd July. The intention of the library week was to give them an opportunity to explore different sections of the library. A variety of activities were designed for student's to engage with books, reading and exploration of the library. The research and reference activity had children look for topics of interest and find books that helped them further their interest. A book hunt to locate specific books, a section search using a library map, outdoor reading session, a reading nook in their classroom, craft work to design bookmarks and book jackets, writing book reviews, library care and plenty of time to read – where all part of the library week.



Waking up to leaving for school in comic strips – middle school children respond to the talk of the visiting illustrator Mr. Satwik Gade

The library week concluded with a talk and workshop with illustrator Satwik Gade on the 24th of July. Satwik explained the process of designing and illustrating comics, and showed us his work for an as yet unpublished book on Indian history! There were a lot of questions and curiosity. This was followed by an activity to make a 4-panel comic strip on their journey from home to school. The children came up with interesting stories and drawings, many true to their experience and a few fanciful ones too. The strips were displayed outside the dining hall and were read by many.

A few experiences of a day



Top: A morning at karanai Government School – An outreach initiative. Right: Banana peels after breakfast are fed to goats as they roam the neighbouring land. Bottom: A visit to Siruseri Panchayat library.

Every month a group of parents of Junior School come together to celebrate the birthdays of children of the month with a performance



Hidden butterflies: "Look! Who is here?" – Indian Oak leaf, nature's little master of disguise.

Letter from the Principal

Reproduced below is the letter from the principal to the parents of the school at the beginning of the new academic year



Dear Parents,

We are happy to share the new school diary with you. Every year, it arrives with a sense of excitement: about the cover, the little changes in the year plan, and, of course, the holidays. This year the cover features drawings done by the students of Class 1. Please take time to look at both the front and back of the cover.

Before closing for the vacation break, Class I students began sharing with their teachers how much they would miss school during the summer holidays. Subsequently, they revisited many memorable moments and experiences from the year. Then they filled their pages with colourful illustrations of the spaces that meant most to them. If you look closely, you will notice the plants and flowers taking on colours and shapes as they imagined them in the months of March and April. You will also see the jungle gym where some of them may have invented games together; the library, where a few spent long stretches dwelling on pictures and words that spoke to them; basketball court, where they watched a ball drop through the net amid the loud cheers and spirited expression of older children, and the playground which opened up a wider view of whole space and invited them to give it their all.

On behalf of my colleagues, I welcome all of you to the new academic year 2026-2027, and with a special welcome to the parents and children who have joined us this year. I would also like to share that this is my first year as the Principal of the school and I look forward to meeting you and working together for the education of your children.

Education is a broad term, and J Krishnamurti urged both teachers and parents to go beyond the definition. He asked, “Can we help children discover the vast and rich unseen treasures hidden in life?” When we pause to read and reflect on the question again, it can momentarily awaken us to the richness and depth of life that is so often overlooked. Here the term ‘treasure’ refers to something that has living quality as illustrated in the quiet musings of Class I children, found in moments of attention and sensitivity. And to ‘discover’, refers to coming upon something with a mind that is free, alert and attentive to everything around and engaging fully without the urge to possess. Such treasures have an immeasurable quality that opens our view to the larger world and enlivens our innate senses.

Krishnamurti saw the school as a space concerned with the ‘all round development’ of a human being, nurtured in a manner that is neither exclusive nor narrow. He cautioned against fragmentary approaches drawing attention to a world preoccupied with parts - the artists, intellectuals, technicians, scientists, philosophers or even physical culturists, focused solely on the ‘body beautiful’ and so on. This preoccupation creates a sense of separateness and a limited sense of freedom.

The modern world demands professionals such as data scientists, analysts, biotechnologists, renewable energy engineers, who could navigate the promising age of AI and information technology. This has led to new approaches in the curriculum design, focusing on specialised skills. However, no matter how skilled one becomes, one cannot function in isolation. “Life does not permit cultivating one’s own private little yard”, Krishnamurti pointed out.

He spoke of developing the ‘totality of mind’, which not only inquires and thinks independently but in doing so, it is capable of dealing with many issues of life as a whole. The approach challenges the overemphasis on content in the curriculum, which can hinder observation, listening and beginning from the learner.

Kabir Jaithirtha, an educator and a former Trustee of the Krishnamurti Foundation of India writes in his essay, *My Quest as an Educator*, “I start from seeing whether the education is about awakening, attention, alertness, a certain kind of awakened state, and from there I begin to see what kinds of skills, what kind of knowledge are needed.” This can be likened to a young child, surrounded by caring adults who engage her in conversation and help her make sense of the world while she looks on with wonder and a glow in her eyes.

Krishnamurti asked whether, childhood could be extended and adolescence be delayed, allowing the inner process of learning to take deep root. This helps the child become aware of the relationship with the world, not only appreciating its beauty but also observing without fear, the realities of conflict, power and desire. When children are encouraged to see life as a whole, they are not afraid of it, he pointed out.

The challenge lies in overcoming the indifference to this wider and deeper understanding of education. A total development in the child can emerge only when there is meaningful relationship between teachers, students and parents. We would like to begin by acknowledging your interest in a Krishnamurti school and invite you to deepen this shared inquiry into education. This calls for each of us to create space for thoughtful engagement and participation.

Last but not least, please take time to go through the school diary in detail and stay informed about the month wise activities. Importantly, mark the dates for meetings and events related to your child. Please note that the handbook for parents and students has been reviewed this year to give you a good sense of the school's functioning and also help answer many of your questions.

With our good wishes,

Rajiv V

(Principal)

June 10, 2026



A bountiful harvest from the campus vegetable patches and fruit trees this term – mangoes, papaya, jackfruit and pullich cherai.