



Tuesday 11th August 2020

RE: Secondary Re-opening Plans

Dear WSO Secondary Community,

Welcome to the new academic year. This communication is the start of our efforts to keep you informed about the learning and teaching programme that will commence in September.

After a challenging and very successful Remote Learning Period that concluded in July, we have been planning how to offer a Blended Learning Programme from September, which is a mixture of face to face learning and remote learning.

I can assure you now that the learning regardless of whether it is face to face or remote, will offer the same opportunities for your children.

The KHDA has approved our re-opening plan and have now given us permission to share our plan with our school community. The purpose of this letter is to give you further guidance with regards to our re-opening plan which is specific to Year 7-13 students.

I will also explain all of the different events taking place this month to ensure as a community we are all ready for the new academic year. Understandably, I am sure you will have many questions which I hope will begin to be answered in this letter.

The thought of returning to school will bring a raft of emotions for families. Our planning will try and take into account these thoughts and offer families and students choices along the way.

I am certain, based on the experiences of last term, that when we work together, we can find solutions to every issue that may arise. Our goal is to provide the best possible learning experiences to your children and ensure they are well cared for, given the current restrictions.

Our experiences from last term also tell us that change can be very positive for learning and we expect this to continue in September.

Please enjoy the remainder of your holidays. If you have any questions at all, please do not hesitate to contact the school directly.

Kind regards

Andy Kai Fong

Secondary Principal



EDUCATION

Will GEMS Wellington Academy be open in September 2020 for my child?

Yes! WSO will open safely for the upcoming academic year. The educational model for each year group will differ slightly; please see information relevant to each year group on the next page. *Please note, the amount of students in each group follows the KHDA protocols for reopening:*

As we did for the Remote Learning Period, we will be offering the full curriculum to all year levels. Sometimes we have a need to adjust content but you can expect all subjects and options to be offered every week.

| | |
|--|---|
| <p>Y7 Y11 Y13</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the opening phase of school, we are prioritising face to face time for our new students to secondary (Y7) and also our examination years (Y11 and 13) • The ratio of face to face learning to remote learning for these year levels will be approximately 80% face to face and 20% remote learning • There may be some slight variations to this ratio depending on class numbers and class sizes, and you will be informed if this occurs • As we finalise details, all families will receive confirmation of these ratios and how this will look from week to week • Each year level will be roomed separately in areas around the school • Students will, where possible, remain in the same room each day for classes and teachers will move to them • Options and specialist classes will still occur and students will travel to those rooms • In all classes, the guidelines around social distancing will be adhered to. |
| <p>Y8 Y9 Y10 Y12</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the opening phase of school, our non-examination AND established year levels will have a different ratio of face to face learning and remote learning • The ratio of face to face learning to remote learning for these year levels will be approximately 50% face to face and 50% remote learning • There may be some slight variations to this ratio depending on class numbers and class sizes, and you will be informed if this occurs • As we finalise details, all families will receive confirmation of these ratios and how this will look from week to week • Each year level will be roomed separately in areas around the school • Students will, where possible, remain in the same room each day for classes and teachers will move to them • Options and specialist classes will still occur and students will travel to those rooms • In all classes, the guidelines around social distancing will be adhered to. |

Why do some year groups have more face to face learning than others?

In order to comply with all social distancing measures set out by the KHDA, it is not possible for us to have all students on site at the same time. Our decisions for the ratios described above are as follows

- Y7 students being new to secondary need the chance to settle into their new environment AND make the necessary adjustments to cope with remote learning
- Year 11 and 13 classes are our examination years and to start the year, we wanted to prioritise their face to face learning. They have already experienced considerable changes to their learning programme and we felt this would offer them some stability to begin with.

- Y8-10 and Y12 are established in secondary and to some degree with remote learning. While they receive less face to face learning to begin the year, this, in no way diminishes the value we place on their learning programme.
- During our successful 100% remote learning experience in Term 3 of the last academic year, many of our students adapted well and feedback from many parents indicated that they grew in their ability to self-manage – time, balance of work and play, and resilience.
- We have taken the feedback from the July survey and used this to shape our thinking

Even though some year groups will not be on site every day, they will still be receiving a full curriculum that has been judged by KHDA as ‘Outstanding’ consistently over previous years. In addition, our high quality remote learning provision, which received the top grading by the KHDA during our Distance Learning Evaluation (DLE), will combine with face to face learning to ensure our students continue to flourish.

What if my child has level 3 inclusion support?

The IST team will make individual contact with you with regards to a personalised provision model.

What if I do not want to send my child back to school initially? Will I still be able to receive 100% remote learning? What will it look like?

Every family is facing different challenges during this current time. As a result, some of you are still apprehensive to send your child back to school. If this applies to you, we will of course ensure that your child still receives a 100% remote learning education. Therefore, **if you would like to opt for 100% remote learning for your child, please could you fill in the below survey as a matter of urgency, by 3pm on Sunday 16th August.** If you have multiple children that you are requesting this for, please fill in the form separately for each child.

[Click Here to request 100% Remote Learning for September 2020](#)

When will I know my child’s tutor group and house?

Parents will be informed of their child’s tutor group and house in the week beginning **Monday 16 August**. We thank you for your patience in this regard. We had planned for vertical tutor groups for the start of this year but given the Health and Safety requirements we need to adhere to, we now have to reshape them to be single year levels.

Regardless of the changes, we retain a huge focus on wellbeing through the tutor groups and there will be opportunities to meet tutors before school starts.

When will my child return to school?

The first official school day for all year levels is Wednesday 2 September. There will be opportunities to meet tutors and key staff before this date – see information below.

What will be the daily school timings?

The school day starts this year at 7.40am and finishes at 3.20pm

This is to align times with our primary staff and for families with students on both sides of the school.

How will my child enter the school building?

This is a significant challenge given all students need to be thermally scanned upon entry. We intend to produce small video clips to outline entry and exit procedures and also how students will move around school during the day, if required. These will be available in the week beginning Monday 16 August.

What protocols are in place to ensure the safety of our learning community?

Any student with a temperature of 37.5, or above will not be allowed entry into school. These students will be taken to a dedicated medical room within the school, where further temperature and medical checks will be made, and families subsequently notified.

The GEMS health and safety department has established a robust set of health, safety and operational procedures and protocols, in order to support the safe reopening of schools. Quality assurance checks will also be conducted to monitor the effectiveness.

Desks will be set at a safe distance apart of 1.5 meters, and physical markings will be used in classrooms to ensure desks remain in the correct locations. Teachers will be positioned at the front of the classroom area, at a distance of 1.5 meters from the front row desks.

Safety markings will be set up throughout corridors, the markings will dictate safe distances of 2 meters. Students will be monitored to ensure adherence. One-way pedestrian flows will be required and will be marked out accordingly.

Students from the same learning group must adhere to 1.5 meter safe distances, students from different learning groups must maintain 2 meter safe distances.

Schools will operate pre-packed lunch service, with no live cooking taking place at school. Students are to bring their own food from home. Water dispensers are not permitted to be used, therefore students must bring a sufficient supply of water, particularly on PE days.

Will students and staff wear masks?

Teachers and students above the age of 6 are required to wear face masks. Face masks can be removed during strenuous physical activity. Face shields can be worn for those employees who are in direct contact with students. It is suggested that students bring two disposable masks to school per day or one re-usable option. It will be the responsibility of the students to ensure that they bring the required number of masks each day and ensure any disposable masks are washed in line with the manufacturer's guidelines.

What training will the staff have before school opens?

All staff will undergo specific Covid-19 training prior to the start of the new academic year. In addition, teachers will regularly communicate and provide information to students on the associated risks, safe practices and controls. All students will be briefed on this plan prior to the start of the academic year.

What are the cleaning and hygiene procedures?

Our school has conducted a review of all potential frequent touch points, including, door handles, light switches, handrails, taps and washbasins, etc. Increased cleaning and sanitization will be conducted across these areas throughout the duration of the day. A thorough cleaning of the school will be conducted each day by an approved vendor, using approved Municipality chemicals. A thorough deep clean and sanitization of the school will be conducted at the end of each week. Cleaning staff will wear the required PPE for all cleaning activities.

In the event there is a potential or confirmed COVID-19 case, how will it be handled?

Managing a potential Covid-19 case in school

If a student is suspected of being a positive Covid-19 case, they will be immediately removed to the school isolation room. Only the school medical and emergency services team are permitted to enter the isolation room and full PPE must be worn when entering the room. The students' parents will be contacted immediately by the school doctor and the required authorities will be notified. The school will strictly adhere to the health authority requirements for managing and transferring any suspected cases of Covid-19. All areas which may have been accessed will be thoroughly deep cleaned and sanitized following any suspected cases. These areas will be closed immediately until the deep clean is completed. Tracing will be conducted to identify those who may have come into contact with the student or staff member. Health authority requirements will be strictly adhered to. This may include additional testing and isolation of persons who have come into contact with a positive case. Each school will have a detailed medical procedure plan in place, which will detail the emergency procedures for each school. This will be developed in consultation with the GEMS Senior Medical Supervisor and school medical teams.

Managing a confirmed case

A confirmed case could be in the form of a student, staff member or contractor. In such cases the person will be in isolation for a period of time, this may be at home or in a medical facility. Upon receiving notification of a confirmed case, a tracing exercise will be conducted by the school. This will identify all other persons who may have come into contact with the positive case.

Any persons who have come into close contact with the confirmed positive case will be sent home from school immediately, with a potential isolation period of 14 days. Further advice from the authorities, including the health authority and education authority, will be required on this aspect. No persons who have tested positive will be permitted to return to school without first providing evidence of a negative test result, in line with authority requirements. All relevant areas will undergo a thorough deep clean and sanitization exercise.

Communication of a confirmed case

It is important that parents are provided with suitable information regarding confirmed cases within the school. It is also vital that people's individual privacy is maintained. Parents will be notified when there is a positive case to a class member or class teacher. The required procedures will be followed for notifying the authorities. A detailed GEMS medical manual has been developed and the manual complies with UAE health authority requirements.

Dubai Media Office Champion GEMS Health & Safety

GEMS education schools across the UAE are looking forward to welcoming students, teachers and parents back to school in September, with all the necessary health and safety measures in place. [Click here](#) to watch the latest video from our GEMS CEO, Dino Varkey, from the Government of Dubai's Media Office

Will school buses operate?

Bus routes will be revised based on the demand of parents wishing to continue to use bus transportation and to accommodate the new staggered start times.

- All temperatures are taken at the pick-up points and any cases will be documented and notified to the relevant parties
- Daily records will be maintained
- Bus' will be disinfected before and after each use
- Adequate signage will be placed inside the bus
- Procedures are in place should a child display signs of COVID 19 while in the bus
- Marking will be on the seats for guidance

Please view the STS Health and Safety Bus video for your reference by [clicking here](#)

What will be the communication channels for families?

WSO will ensure that we remain in constant communication with our families during our re-opening and throughout the academic year. Where possible, we will provide documents or transcripts of our communication in additional languages for parents where English is not the primary language. Our communication channels will include:

- **Email** – Our Parent Relations Executive (PRE), Michelle Purnell, will continue to send formal letters written by the Senior Leadership Team when new information is ready to be shared
- **WSO News** - The weekly document will continue to be shared by our PRE
- **Video updates** – where possible and appropriate, we will update parents and families using short video clips
- **Parent Meetings** – meetings between parents and teachers/leaders are to take place virtually where possible, or can take place face-to-face if the need is critical and has been arranged by appointment only. No walk-in parent meetings can take place.
- **Monthly one-to-one communication** – Every family will be contacted by a member of the education team on a monthly basis, via phone call, video call or email.

How can I follow social media for more updates?

There will be frequent updates on our various school social media channels. If you haven't already, please do follow the below channels!

Instagram

| Handle | Web link | Content |
|-------------------------|---|---|
| @gemswso | https://www.instagram.com/gemswso/ | Official Instagram account for the whole Academy |
| @primary_principalwso | https://www.instagram.com/primary_principalwso/ | Updates given by Mr. Nathan Sadler, the Primary Principal |
| @secondary_principalwso | https://www.instagram.com/secondary_principalwso/ | Updates given by Mr. Andy Kai Fong, the Secondary Principal |



| Handle | Content |
|----------------|---|
| @GEMS_WSO | Official twitter account for the whole Academy |
| @WSO_Primary | Updates given by Mr. Nathan Sadler, the Primary Principal |
| @WSO_Secondary | Updates given by Mr. Andy Kai Fong, the Secondary Principal |
| @CeoWso | Updates given by Mr. Kevin Loft, our Academy CEO/Principal |

facebook

| Website | Content |
|---|--|
| https://www.facebook.com/GEMSWSO | Official Facebook page for the whole Academy |

What happens next?

Over the course of this month, we will be continue to update you with information and parental engagement events that we encourage you to participate in.

W/B 16th August – Year group Videos

Videos are being created by our school leadership team to help show families what it will be like coming back to school. The links for these videos will be emailed to parents and will also be posted on social media channels.

19th/20th August – Live Q and A with the Secondary Leadership and Staff

We are pleased to invite all of our parents to year group specific Zoom Q&A sessions with our Secondary Primary Leadership Team. During each 1-hour session, members of leadership and key staff will give an overview of what school will look like on our return, including face to face learning and remote learning. To attend these sessions, parents must register for the event in advance by clicking on the link below. If you have children in multiple year groups, you are welcome to sign up to more than one session. To ensure your questions are answered, please write your questions on the form below that you would like to be answered.

| Date and Time | Year Group |
|---------------------------------|------------|
| 19 th August – 1-2pm | Year 7 |
| 19 th August – 2-3pm | Year 8/9 |
| | |
| 20 th August – 1-2pm | Year 10/11 |
| 20 th August – 2-3pm | Year 12/13 |

[**Click Here to sign up for Q&A**](#)

W/B 23rd August – Year group full re-opening documentation shared with parents

A detailed year group specific document will be shared with families before school opens, outlining all specific details and support needed for our families to feel confident and safe returning.

1st September – Meet Tutors

Tutors will be hosting online video sessions to introduce themselves, update information and respond to questions