

WELCOME  
BACK



## OUR RETURN TO SCHOOL LOWER SCHOOL GUIDE FOR PARENTS



GEMS Wellington  
International School

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**Benjamin Sharratt**  
Head of Lower School

## Welcome back to school

Students, parents and teachers have undoubtedly just completed one of the most challenging academic years in our history. We are excited to be welcoming back both new and existing students. Your support as parents has been excellent and working with you as partners is essential as we move into our new academic year, 2020-21.

Over the course of the summer our Executive Team has worked closely with other schools within the GEMS network and the KHDA to develop guidelines and protocols that will ensure a safe return to school for your children. The guidelines here have been developed in partnership with parents, students and the KHDA as well as drawing on international best practice.

This guide is intended to best prepare you and your child for the return to school in August. Further detailed information will be released, specific to your child in the coming days and weeks, to ensure a successful and safe transition to blended learning for all in the first instance. We look forward to welcoming you back to our school community.

Kindest regards,

Benjamin Sharratt

# Return to school

FS1/FS2/Year 1					
Timings	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday
AM (7:45 -10:45)	Diamond	Diamond	Diamond	Diamond	Diamond
	Emerald	Emerald	Emerald	Emerald	Emerald
PM (12:00-15:00)	Onyx	Onyx	Onyx	Onyx	Onyx
	Ruby	Ruby	Ruby	Ruby	Ruby

FS1, FS2 and Year 1 students within Diamond and Emerald House will attend school between 7:45am-10:45am every day and then receive our Remote/Blended provision between 12:00pm-3:00pm at home.

FS1, FS2 and Year 1 students within Onyx and Ruby will attend school between 12:00pm-3:00pm every day and then receive our Remote/Blended provision between 7:45am-10:45am at home.

<b>Year 2, Year 3 &amp; Year 4</b>	Students present in school 100% of the time every day (5 days per week)
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Students within Years 2, 3 and 4 will attend school for a full day everyday (7:40am-2:40am).

**It is important to note that the first day of school for Lower School (FS1-Year 4) students is:**

**Sunday 30th August**

# Organisation

- **For our youngest students (FS1-Year 1) we want to maximize class teacher contact and time in school face to face and our AM/PM model ensures high quality daily interaction between the teacher and children. Our learning group sizes of a maximum of 10 students have been determined by the KHDA.**
- **To ensure that daily contact between our youngest students and teachers, FS1, FS2 and Year 1 will be on a half day timetable, attending school either in a designated morning session (7:45am-10:45am) or afternoon session (12:00pm-3:00pm) .**
- **In Years 2-4 students will attend school 100%. Each class will form a learning group and be taught face to face every day by 1 class teacher and 1 teaching assistant. Classrooms have been adapted to enable 1.5m distancing to be maintained at all times.**
- **To minimize contact with different groups of students, Years 1 and 2 specialist lessons in Arabic, Islamic and Performing Arts will be streamed live or recorded. Year 3 and 4 in addition to this will receive streamed MFL provision.**
- **Students will transition in school for core Physical Education lessons. Social distancing will remain during all PE lessons and therefore only non-contact activities will be taught.**
- **For more information and detail surrounding your child's offer of learning, please refer to the Blended Learning Plan: Guidance for Parents.**
- **100% Remote Learning will be available as stipulated in the Parent School Contract should parents wish to choose this offer.**
- **The number of desks, chairs, tables and furniture will be reduced in all classroom areas to ensure students are at least 1.5 metres apart when seated or working in designated learning areas or spaces. Teachers will be positioned at the front of the classroom area. Any learning resources or equipment used by students in classrooms will be sanitized after each usage.**
- **Students will access the bathroom in their designated corridor and classroom areas, with careful social distancing measures implemented. Adults will be on hand throughout the Lower School to support our youngest students with any support or help children where required.**
- **All toilets and wash basins will be sanitised and cleaned by our cleaning staff after each usage. Social distancing measures are in place within the toilets ensuring that only a certain number of toilets are accessible.**
- **Hand sanitising stations are at the entrance doors of all classrooms with clear signage and instructions available. Your child will be encouraged to use these stations throughout the day, with compulsory use before and after lunchtime.**



## Before school starts

- It is important you reassure your child that the school is a safe place for them to learn.
- Talk through the school's plans for re-starting the school year, presented within this booklet, discussing any questions your child may have. Please do not hesitate to contact your child's class teacher or Head of Year if there is anything you or your child are unsure about.
- Please do talk to your child about some of the things that will be different about their return to school.
- Let your child know that hand sanitising stations will set up throughout the school, with clear instructions on how to use and signage available. It is also important that you remind your child about effective hand-washing and sanitising routines.
- Normal school uniform should be worn. However, please inform your child that they must come to school in their full PE kit during the school day, on days where they have PE lessons, as changing rooms will not be available. This information will be shared with with parents on the first day of school.
- In the Lower School in particular we are well aware that your children have been at home and directly with you as parents for a long period of time and that detachment may be an issue. We recommend you practise (where comfortable) leaving your children with a family member or friend for a gradual period of time so that they get used to this routine again.
- Students will be expected to bring their own stationary to school. Further details surrounding this will be shared with parents closer to the start of the term.

# Preparing for your child's first day



We fully appreciate that this will be a start to term like no other. It's so important that we support your child in making the best start possible to the new academic year at GEMS Wellington International School, by helping them get into routines and taking responsibility for their own safety.

- Please ensure that your child has a home temperature check before leaving home and that you are confident that your child is well enough and fit enough to attend school. It is important that your child is not putting themselves or others at risk. A policy of "staying at home if unwell" for students, teachers and school staff who feel unwell will be enforced.
- Should your child's temperature exceed 37.5 degrees Celcius then we ask that you do not bring them to school on that day. Please inform the school on +971 (0) 4307 3000 following our usual absence procedures.
- During the day teachers and teaching assistants will support to your child to follow the required hand washing procedures. To help prepare them, for this please practice hand washing at home.
- In-line with our BYOD policy students in year 2, 3 and 4 should bring a fully charged device to school every day along with a set of headphones/earphones.
- Students from FS1 to Year 1 do not need to wear masks to school. However, if you or your child would prefer that they did wear a mask during the school day, please pack two masks in your child's bag for school each day. Students in Year 2 upwards (or from age 6) are mandated to wear masks at all times inside the school from entry unless eating or involved in physical activity.
- Please ensure that your child has enough food, stored in a cool bag, and water for the school day. Water dispensers will not be available, therefore it is vital that your child brings enough water to keep them hydrated throughout the day.
- This is a good opportunity to develop independence by supporting your child to check their own bag, taking responsibility for their own belongings, including stationery, packed lunch and masks.
- Teachers will support your child with the arrangements for returning home or for pick up and where you will meet them at the end of the school day. Personalised information surrounding this will be shared by your child's class teacher, closer to the start of term.

# Arrival at school



In line with KHDA regulations:

- Families may drop off and pick up at designated areas only.
- There will be no access to the school building for family members or visitors.
- The maximum time limit for drop off and pick up is 10 minutes by one family member only.
- Foundation Stage 1 (FS1) enter the school via the side gate 5 at the rear of the school and will have a designated area for lining up on the FS playground adhering to 2 metre distancing regulations. They will be escorted into the building by our FS staff (including our Year Leaders and Senior Team) through the temperature checkpoints. Foundation Stage 2 (FS2) parents and students will enter at the front of the school and will have a thermal camera check to allow a single parent drop-off with one-way flow. Areas within Lower School and our FS corridors will be clearly signposted in child friendly language and images in order for your child to feel safe, settled and secure. Safety markings will be set up along the corridors for all adults and children.
- For Years 1-4, drop-off and pick-up will be organised using the outdoor recreation/sports spaces, at the rear of the school, with students spaced at a 2 metre distance using markers for them to stand on and follow. Years 1 and 2 will be escorted and accompanied into and out the building by teaching staff and members of the Senior Team, floor markers will ensure students and parents clearly know where to stand.
- Year 3 and 4 students can make their way into school independently. Adults will be spaced accordingly along the designated route in which students should follow into school. Safety markings will be set up along the corridors. A one way system will operate throughout the school building. Staff members in high visibility jackets will direct students around the building and along corridors to their classrooms in school.
- There will be a fluid drop-off point at the rear of the school for Lower School parents who do not need to park. Students will see staff members in high visibility jackets who will direct them into the building and along corridors to their classrooms.
- Timings and maps of the designated areas and spaces will be provided via a personalised communication before the start of term.

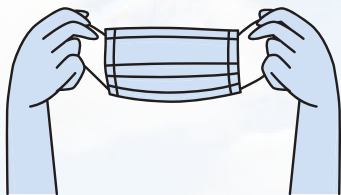


## Bus Journey: What are the Differences?

- Our STS Bus Service will operate at half capacity and place seating markers on chairs to accurately guide children where to sit. Signs will be strategically placed around the bus guiding your child towards respiratory hygiene and waste management practices when on the bus.
- Your child will require a temperature check before they board the bus. Their temperature will be recorded and then taken again as they enter school. If your child has a temperature of above 37.5 degrees they will not be permitted to board the bus.
- High standards of bus hygiene will be apparent at all times. Before your child enters the bus all seats, seat belts, arm rests, handles and rails will be sanitized. This process will be repeated once the children depart the bus. This is in accordance with strict guidance from the RTA. Additionally the swipe machine used to register children will be disinfected after each use.
- High standards of behaviour are expected on the bus at all times and our normal behaviour policy will apply. Any children not being safe or consistently misbehaving will be reported by the bus conductor and dealt with immediately by the Head of Year or House who will call home as a result. Students who compromise the safety of other passengers will be asked to find alternative transportation to school.
- Please refer to the website link - [www.schooltransportservices.com](http://www.schooltransportservices.com) for further guidance or contact [cce-wis@stss.ae](mailto:cce-wis@stss.ae)



# Lunchtime and breaks



- The use of outdoor space for your child will be encouraged as we return to school. Specific areas will be designated for each year group where social distancing measures of 2 meters will be applied to ensure that overcrowding in communal areas does not happen.
- Markers on playgrounds and outdoor surfaces will ensure that students can gather and socialise safely and at a safe distance. Masks must be worn at all times by students aged six and above when socialising outside of the classroom.
- As students transition to outdoor or indoor social spaces the safety markings in corridors will dictate a safe distance of 2 metres at all times between anybody walking through the corridors. A one way system will operate throughout corridors that will show how to remain at a safe distance during transitions at break and lunch time.
- Usual playground equipment such as balls, nets and goalposts will not be permitted for use. Benches and seating arrangements will adhere to 2 metre distancing guidelines which will be sanitised as appropriate.
- Teachers and Leaders will be on duty throughout all breaks and lunchtimes making themselves easily accessible to students whilst also supporting the correct routes and procedures
- Students in Years 2-4 should bring a packed lunch to school including their own disposable cutlery if required.
- Students in FS1, FS2 and Year 1 should bring sufficient snacks and food to school suitable for their needs, including their own disposable cutlery if required.

# End of day procedures



In order to ensure your child's safety, we will be implementing a phased exit from the school building at the end of the school day. As detailed below, it is important that your child listens out for announcements in school that will support their timely exit of the school building.

There will be a staggered end to our school day to ensure all students safely exit the building. The below summarizes this:

**Phase 1 - Bus students - 2:40pm**

**Phase 2 - Siblings of all ages - 2:50pm**

**Phase 3 - All remaining Lower School students - 2:50pm**

**Phase 4 - All remaining Middle School students - 3:00pm**

**Phase 5 - All remaining Upper School students - 3:00pm**

Teaching staff and the Senior Leadership Team will be on hand to support with end of day transition.

Parents will be expected to wait in the clearly designated waiting areas at the rear of the school for Years 1 - 4. FS parents will wait in the designated FS waiting areas outside of school.

**All adults in school are on hand to support with all end of day procedures.**