



GEMS Wellington
International School

مدرسة جيمس ولينغتون
التراشيولال



PARENT HANDBOOK

LOWER SCHOOL

ACADEMIC YEAR 2020-2021



WELCOME TO GEMS WELLINGTON INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL



Maryssa O'Connor
Principal - CEO

I am delighted to be able to welcome you to GEMS Wellington International School our consistently outstanding school in the centre of Dubai. GWIS will always strive for academic attainment and personal wellbeing, for creating a supportive and inclusive community whilst also celebrating individual successes and for a fulfilling education that endures long after the examination results have been published.

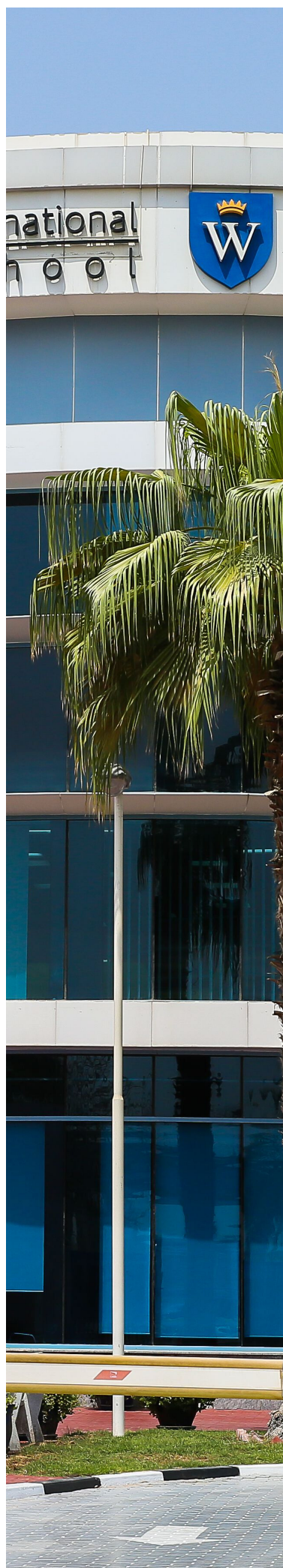
Our purpose as educators is to encourage intellectual curiosity, independent thought and effective learning habits. From an early age, we encourage pupils to be dynamically intellectual, culturally and creatively develop independence, so by the time they leave Sixth Form, they are well prepared for the expected, but can also tackle the unknowns.

The success of a student cannot be measured only by their academic success alone, but also by the development of their social and interpersonal skills and contribution to school life. Pupils have over ninety clubs and activities, encompassing the creative arts, outdoor education and a vast array of sports, to choose from in school. We help our students to develop existing interests and to find new ones that will stay with them for life

Here at GWIS our students are individuals with potential, unique strengths and interests and I believe that it is our duty as a school to add value to each student by helping them achieve academic success and the joy of learning in an inclusive community in which all our students, parents and staff feel challenged, valued and successful.

With regards,

M O'Connor



WELCOME

WELCOME TO GEMS WELLINGTON INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL



Benjamin Sharratt
Head of Lower School

As Head of Lower School I am delighted to welcome you to WIS. We are truly a family school with strong family values meaning we are here to support you every step of the way as you embark on your Lower School journey. We are passionate about our students learning through their holistic experiences, and as much as possible using real-life knowledge and skills to underpin their learning.

We know that our students learn best when their levels of well-being and engagement are high, so our Lower School team work collectively on ensuring children feel safe, settled and secure providing them with many exciting and challenging learning opportunities. At WIS we pride ourselves on cultivating a 'Performance Mindset' within our students, encouraging them to be creative thinkers, risk takers and resilient in their approach to challenges, knowing that success comes from effort and determination.

Our Values, Attitudes and Attributes (VAA's) are the cornerstone of this where we encourage our all stakeholders to be hard-working and agile, alongside being empathetic in their approach to others. These values ensure that your children will receive a challenging and well-rounded start to their WIS journey. Parents are valued partners in this journey and we welcome you to come and share in your child's learning at different points throughout the term where the personal interactions with teachers and leaders help us work as an effective team to support your child in becoming the very best that they can be.

With best wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Benjamin Sharratt'.



OUR SCHOOL DAY - FS1-2


Morning Drop Off - Sunday to Thursday

Learning Zones Open at 7:30am

Soft Drop Off - 7:30 - 8:00am

The National Anthem for the United Arab Emirates is played at 7:55am
Students and any remaining parents on site are
expected to stand in silence for the duration of the Anthem.

Learning Zone doors will close at 8:00am

(Late register will be taken from 8:00am)



Afternoon Pick Up - Sunday to Wednesday

12:30pm - FS1

2:30pm - FS2

Thursday Pick Up

12:30pm - FS1

12:45pm - FS2





OUR SCHOOL DAY - YEARS 1-4



School Day Starts 7:40am

School Day Ends 2:50pm (Sunday - Wednesday)

1:00pm (Thursday)

Core Skills 7:40 - 8:20am

The National Anthem for the United Arab Emirates is played at 7:55am
Students and any remaining parents on site are expected to stand in silence for the duration of the Anthem.

Lesson 1 Starts 8:20am

Break 9:20 - 9:40am (Sunday to Wednesday)

10:00 - 10:40am (Thursday)

Lunch 11:40- 12:40pm

End of school day 2:50pm (Sunday-Wednesday)

1.00pm (Thursday)



ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY

At GEMS Wellington International School we believe that good attendance and punctuality are vital indicators of an outstanding school. These factors are also key in enabling students to make the most of their learning opportunities and prepare for a successful transition into the world of higher education or employment. Any barriers to punctuality and regular attendance will be identified and addressed as swiftly as possible by introducing and reinforcing the policy below.

We expect that all students will:

- Attend school every day as per the published academic calendar
- Arrive on time every morning
- Be on time to all lessons
- Take responsibility for obtaining and completing work when absence cannot be avoided.

We ask parents to:

- Support the schools expectations of attendance
- Ensure their child arrives to school on time every morning
- Endeavor to schedule medical appointments outside of school hours
- Avoid students travelling during term time
- Inform absence_wis@gemsedu.com or call reception on **0434 84999** or send a text message to **0569962428** by 7.30am when your child is absent
- Work with the school to resolve issues and ensure their child has good attendance and punctuality
- Inform the school in the event of a student contracting an illness or suffering an injury which is likely to involve an absence of 3 days. Medical notes will be required for absences of 3 or more days
- Complete a leave of absence form (available from reception) in advance of a scheduled absence (PLEASE NOTE– this will be sent to the Head of School and may or may not be authorised after review).

KHDA states that students should not have more than 20 consecutive days or 25 non-consecutive days of unauthorised absence. Should this be exceeded then students are at risk of losing their place at the school. Outstanding attendance is 98% as a minimum.

Punctuality is monitored by the Heads of Year and parents will be contacted where there is persistent lateness.





UNIFORM

The aim of our uniform is to ensure that students take pride in being members of the GEMS Wellington International School community. Personal presentation is therefore very important and a high standard of personal appearance is expected of all students at all times, both inside the School and outside in the local community.

The students are our ambassadors when they are in the Dubai community and, what they do and say, and how they look reflects on all of us. Students will continue to create a positive impression of GEMS Wellington International School by leaving school in their uniform and wearing it with pride.

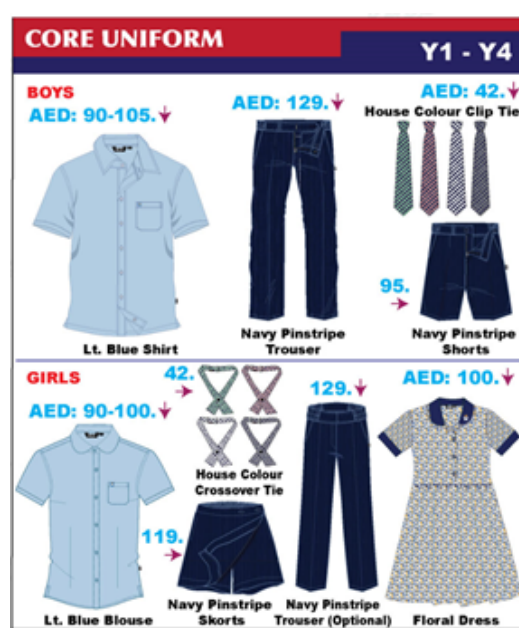
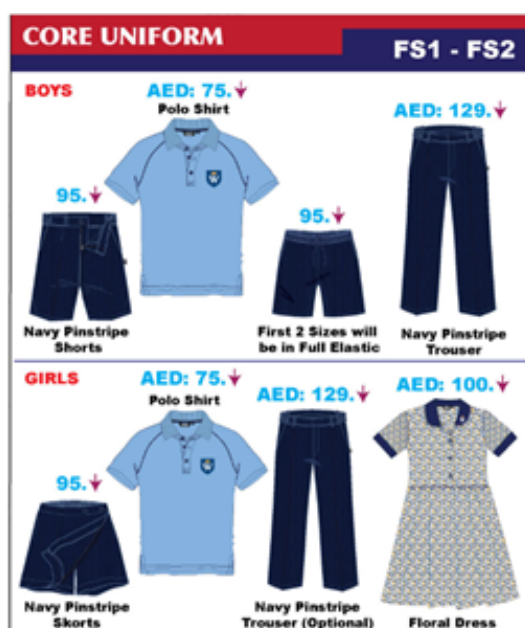
The uniform is compulsory throughout the School and may be purchased from the Threads store, Times Square. Alternatively uniform can be ordered online from: www.threadsme.com.

There are some new items being introduced this year for WIS students. Please note that items from 2019/20 academic year can continue to be worn for 2020/21 until they are phased out. This refers to:

The fleece jacket has been replaced by a hoodie for PE days.

The PE polo shirts, which have been replaced with a higher-grade material.

All shirts across the school are now pale blue but cream shirts may be worn for one more academic year.



SAFEGUARDING

GEMS are driven by a singular purpose – to put a quality education within the reach of every student. For our students, we are a window into a vibrant tomorrow – to their future, and their endless potential. We recognize that in order to ensure all our students achieve their potential we must first ensure students feel safe, and are safe.

GEMS Wellington International School is fully committed to safeguarding the welfare of all students and young people. We recognise our responsibility to take all reasonable steps to promote safe practice and to protect students from harm, abuse and exploitation. We acknowledge our duty to act appropriately in response to any allegations, reports or suspicions of abuse. Paid staff and volunteers will endeavor to work together to develop an ethos which embraces difference and diversity and respects the rights of students, young people and adults.

Lanyards:

All employees and visitors to the school are required to wear a lanyard for identification purposes. Yellow lanyards can be obtained from the reception and this must be done as soon as possible. Photographs are required on the ID cards in the lanyards for identification purposes. New parents must request their lanyards by providing a photograph to the Reception desk.

Lanyard details:

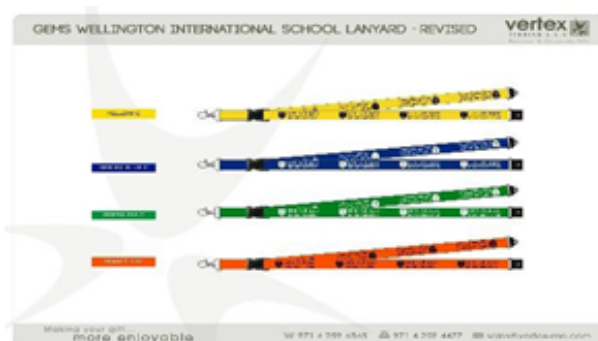
Blue = GEMS Wellington International School Staff

Yellow = Parents/ Guardians – including nannies, maids & drivers

Pink = People who attend the school regularly, such as external Music Teachers, Invigilators

Green = Contractors (escorted by a member of staff)

Orange = Parents & Staff in school for External ECAs



In school we have “Designated Safeguarding Leads” who have received training in dealing with sensitive issues surrounding child protection with both students and parents. It is our duty of care to follow up anything which a student may disclose to us. In some cases this might mean you are invited into school to discuss a situation that your child has raised. If necessary, we seek support and follow professional advice for our families from suitable agencies in Dubai.

Those attending the school regularly and will be in contact with the children (e.g. pink lanyard wearers) will have completed all of the necessary safeguarding checks and training.

Please do not be offended if we do not let you into school without the proper identification. We take safeguarding of your children very seriously and it is important that everyone can be identified.



LEARNING PRINCIPLES

Our unique 'Three School Model' starts in the Lower School where our students begin their learning journey in the Foundation Stage. Each area of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) curriculum has an Early Learning Goal, (ELG) which is the standard that a child is expected to achieve by the end of Foundation Stage 2.

The ELG's covers all of the seven areas of learning as specified in the Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum for England which are:

- Communication and Language
- Physical Development
- Personal, Social and Emotional Development
- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the World
- Expressive Arts & Design

This is a holistic, creative and very important stage as it helps your child get ready for school, as well as preparing them for their future learning and successes. At WIS, we believe that your child should experience a happy, active, exciting, fun and secure learning environment; encouraging them to be challenged and take risks along the way, all the time being supported and developed by our highly trained and dedicated Early Years Team.

Continuing their Lower School journey our students progress into Years 1-4 where they follow the National Curriculum for England. Through a rich, diverse and exciting curriculum offer, our students develop into well rounded, confident learners pursuing 'excellence' in all that they do. English, Maths and Science are very important and are considered the core subjects in our Lower School, combined with our Arabic and Islamic provision. Alongside these are the familiar non-core subjects of; Art, Computing, Modern Foreign Languages, Humanities, Music, Drama, and Physical Education.

As one of only 13 schools worldwide to hold the status of a High-Performance Learning (HPL) World Class School we ensure that through our Values, Attitudes and Attributes (VAA's) our students develop into well rounded global citizens, who actively seek challenge, take risks and develop themselves as leaders of the future. Outside of the classroom, our Enrich, Excite, Explore (EEE) extra-curricular program cultivates the wide range of gifts and talents that our students have; where we offer a wide range of activities before, during, and after school across five domains; (STEM, Creative, Language and Literature, Music and Performing Arts, and Wellbeing), this enables students who have a variety of different interests to choose a bespoke provision that best suits their individual needs.



The Lower School Curriculum is aligned with UK Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and the National Curriculum for England (NCfE) for Years 1 – 4, placing a focus on the core subjects English, Maths and Science as well as humanities; History, Geography, Art.

EYFS Framework - <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-years-foundation-stage-framework--2>

NCfE for Key Stages 1 and 2 (Years 1-4) - <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-curriculum-in-england-primary-curriculum>

As a British Curriculum School we follow the guidelines above with some adaptation to suit the international context of the school. Throughout the curriculum we ensure inquiry based learning, opportunities for STEAM, innovation, digital and creative technologies and traditional learning are interwoven through themes. This well rounded and balanced curriculum ensures that our students are prepared for the next stage of their education.

We also leverage the unique international context of Dubai and the UAE for learning opportunities such as EXPO 2020, Happiness and Well-being, Tolerance and local projects across the country. We are fully compliant with the UAE Ministry of Education curriculum expectations for the teaching of Arabic, Islamic Education, Moral Education and Social Studies.

Learning Zones - EVERY OPPORTUNITY IS A LEARNING OPPORTUNITY

Our Innovative Learning Zones; Creative, Active, STEAM and Digital play a vital role in how our curriculum is delivered here at WIS. The investment into learning in the lower years enables our students to learn in the most effective ways with maximum impact. The children thoroughly enjoy learning in the Zones with a variety of approaches. They are a real highlight of learning and teaching and have a positive impact on the progress of all students.



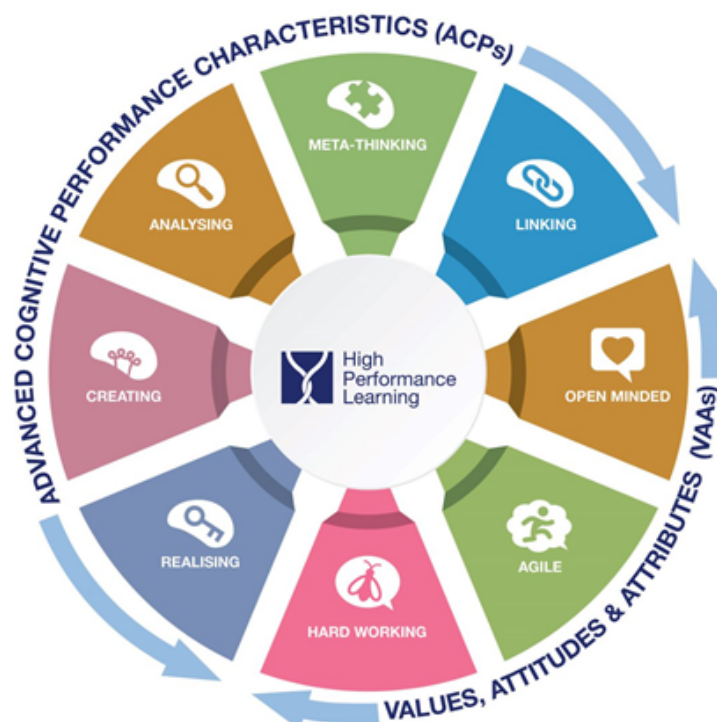


Everyone wants a high performing education system, but education systems continue to assume that only a minority of students can reach high levels of educational performance. At GEMS Wellington International School our High-Performance Learning (HPL) program instils within our students that they can achieve the very best grades through the development of appropriate learning habits. To reach the very top, students need to work hard, ask for help when they need it, and, most importantly, believe that they can do it. For them to believe it is possible, it is essential that parents and teachers model that positive assumption, known as our 'Performance Mindset'. As a 'World Class School', accredited by HPL, we do not let our students think "I'm not good enough", but encourage them to believe that with enough hard work that anything is possible and that they can achieve excellence.

The ACPs (Advanced Cognitive Performance Indicators) and VAAs (Values, Attitudes and Attributes) form the key principles of HPL. The ACPs are "thinking skills" and these require practice in order to become a high performer. At WIS we call these 'The HPL Brains' ensuring that our students are encouraged to think analytically and creatively, alongside encouraging them to link ideas and concepts, with the expectations that this is done accurately and quickly to train the brain effectively. In addition to this our students reflect on their learning by 'thinking about thinking' always ensuring they consider 'how' and 'why' they have arrived at a particular conclusion.

At WIS we encourage the belief that success is not possible without the right attitude, so we encourage students to practise and improve their VAAs too, with a focus on three core areas: hard work, empathy and the ability to be agile. These life skills are the DNA of a WIS student.

In school, students develop these ACPs and VAAs explicitly in lessons, but it is also vital for them to continually improve outside of school, realising how they affect every aspect of their lives. In the end, by developing their ACPs and VAAs, your children will become more efficient learners and will be ready for their exams, for further study, work, and for the rest of their lives. WIS prides itself on our students not just being ready for the next stage of their academic journey: our students are ready for whatever challenges in life come their way and as High-Performance Learners, they will tackle life head on with a thirst to overcome any obstacle.



Early Years Foundation Stage

There are 17 areas of learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) that relate specifically to the Early Learning Goals (ELGs)

Children work within age bands for the different areas of the curriculum, 16-26 months, 22-36 months, 30-50 months and 40-60 months before achieving the Early Learning Goals at the end of FS2.

For each age band, and each area of learning, there are a series of statements relating to a child's development: for example, 'notifies simple shapes and patterns in pictures'. Within each age band you will be given an indication as to whether your child is emerging (E), developing (D), or secure (S) within that band. By the end of FS2, the expected standard is 'ELG S': this would indicate that your child is secure in the different areas of the EYFS curriculum. Your child will have either met the expected age band, be working towards it, or have exceeded it.

Areas of Learning and Development	Early Learning Goals
Personal, Social and Emotional Development	Making relationships
	Self-confidence and self-awareness
	Managing feelings and behaviour
Physical Development	Moving and handling
	Health and self-care
Communication and Language	Listening and attention
	Understanding
	Speaking
Literacy	Reading
	Writing
Mathematics	Number
	Shape, space and measure
Understanding the World	People and communities
	The World
	Technology
Expressive Arts and Design	Exploring and using media and materials
	Being imaginative



Years 1 - 4

Every year group has a number of objectives that the students should achieve by the end of the year in order to achieve the 'expected standard' and as a school, we will be assessing how well they have understood those objectives. Every term, your child will be assessed against the objectives that they have been taught so far and your report will state their level of understanding of those taught objectives.

Working Towards the Expected Standard	Emerging with their understanding of the objectives and are still working on fundamental basics. Additional support will be put in place to help accelerate a child's progress.
	Developing their understanding of the objectives and are beginning to secure those fundamental basics. Additional support will be put in place to help accelerate a child's progress.
On track to meet the expected standard by the end of the year	Secure with their understanding of the objectives and fundamental basics that have been taught and can use them independently.
	Secure + with their understanding of the objective and fundamental basics and therefore beginning to show their advanced knowledge, in variety of ways across the curriculum, whilst working more independently.
On track to be working at greater depth within the expected standard	Mastered the objectives and are applying them across the curriculum, in a range of ways, confidently and imaginatively. Children work independently and can clearly reason, justify and explain their thinking.

As students progress through each term, more of the year group objectives are covered.

Term 1	Term 2	Term 3
0-40% coverage of the year group objectives	Up to 70% coverage of the year group objectives	Up to 100% coverage of the year group objectives
Your child will be assessed as either an E , D , S , S+ or M based on their understanding of this 40% of the curriculum	Your child will be assessed as either an E , D , S , S+ or M based on their understanding of this 70% of the curriculum	Your child will be assessed as either an E , D , S , S+ or M based on their understanding of 100% of the curriculum



Parental Communication in the Lower School

There are several ways in which the School will communicate with parents:

- 'Face to Face' communication is important with our parents of our younger students. If you are dropping off and collecting then we encourage you to build that relationship with your class teacher early on. If your child gets the bus or you are unable to collect then please rest assured that we will ensure you are contacted weekly by the class teacher.
- Weekly newsletter from the Head of Year (Years FS1 to 4) sharing some of the learning and activities over the past week and informing you of dates and events coming up in your child's year group.
- If you have a query, concern or comment please speak to your child's teacher as they are the person who best knows your child and will either be able to help with your query or direct you to the person who can. The Head of Year is also your main point of contact regarding any information you need for the class and year group.
- We will also host a variety of coffee mornings and information evenings which you will be invited to.

Expectations

- Please allow us 48 hours to respond to an email from you. On some occasions it may take longer for us to fully respond but you should hear back from us within 48 hours.
- We ask that emails are written in a courteous manner to our staff. If an email is sent regarding a concern we will do our utmost to respond and rectify the situation. However, we do ask that you write to in a polite manner and avoid the temptation to make generalisations.

Administration Contacts

Please see below for information relating to our key admin contact, who can support you with queries that you may have.



Eleanor Morse

REGISTRAR



Marisa Joy Ruthkowski

ADMISSIONS SECRETARY



Rana Hashem

GOVERNMENT RELATIONS
EXECUTIVE



Bijili Binu

ADMISSIONS ASSISTANT



Natasha Lamb

EVENTS AND MARKETING
COORDINATOR



Vimbiso Mangoro

RECEPTIONIST



D6 Communicator

- Please download our free app D6 for direct parent communication; our Reception team is here to help with the set-up process. This is our main form of communication with parents.
- Direct emails or SMS to the main contact parents are asked to confirm who this should be, i.e. mother or father. If you wish to have both parents alerted then please let the Registrar or PRE know by emailing either registrar_wis@gemsedu.com or pre_wis@gemsedu.com and they will update our records to reflect this.
- A termly newsletter will allow Parents to share all aspects of life across our school including academic and sporting successes, new initiatives and other items.



Social Media

- We celebrate the successes of students and teachers on our social media pages and we share the latest news on a daily basis. We use Facebook ([GEMS Wellington International School](#)), Instagram ([gems_wis](#)) and Twitter ([@gemswis](#)). For safeguarding reasons we ask that you do not post pictures of other students at school events on social media.



Website

- Our website provides you a wide variety of information that you may find helpful. On the website, you can discover more about our Leadership Team, as well as book appointments with them, as well as key information about the curriculum, our policies, enrollment, student life, our school calendar, and so much more. The website address is www.wellingtoninternationalschool.com

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[Curriculum](#)
[Student Life](#)
[For Parents](#)

A FUTURE-FOCUSED
LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

WHY CHOOSE WIS

For any queries or concerns In the first instance, you should contact your child's teacher and then their Head of Year. These two people are the best informed to help any query you might have or any concern. If necessary, they can then pass the concern to someone who is better placed to help. If you have an appointment then please come to the front reception desk where our reception staff will contact the person you have the appointment with. They will come down to meet you and escort you to the designated meeting room.

Some key email addresses are:

Head of Lower School (Mr Sharratt) - b.sharratt1_wis@gemsedu.com

PA to Principal - Lower School - Mrs Steel (Mrs Scala) – primaryadmin_wis@gemsedu.com

PA to Principal - CEO - Mrs O'Connor (Mrs Wareham) - principal_wis@gemsedu.com

Assistant Headteacher - Lower School (Mrs Moss) - k.moss_wis@gemsedu.com

Head of FS1 (Miss Blakie) - h.blakie_wis@gemsedu.com

Head of FS2 (Miss Hillier) - v.hillier_wis@gemsedu.com

Head of Year 1 (Mrs Twigger) - n.twigger1_wis@gemsedu.com

Head of Year 2 (Miss Evangelista) - v.evangelista_wis@gemsedu.com

Head of Year 3 (Mrs O'Neill) - j.allen_wis@gemsedu.com

Head of Year 4 (Mrs Harriman) - k.harriman_wis@gemsedu.com

Deputy Head of Standards/Quality Assurance (Mrs Standring) - j.harrison_wis@gemsedu.com

Deputy Head of Arabic and Islamic (Ms Hamdan) – h.hamdan_wis@gemsedu.com

Deputy Head of Curriculum/Assessment (Mr Rostron) - j.rostron_wis@gemsedu.com

SENDCo (Miss Chapple) – b.chapple_wis@gemsedu.com



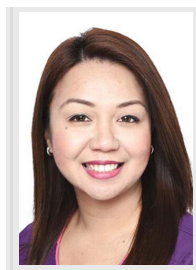
MEDICAL PROVISION

What should your child do if they feel unwell?

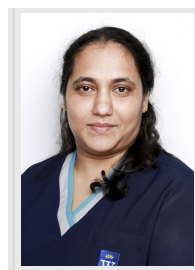
Our fully qualified Clinical Team are on hand to support and look after the students in the event of illness or injury. Dr Ishrat Jehan and Nurses Jissa Wilson and Christine Bravo have a wealth of experience in their field, alongside many years working within Dubai Schools.



Dr Ishrat Jehan



**Kristine Caculitan
(Nurse)**



**Jissa Wilson
(Nurse)**



**Christine Bravo
(Nurse)**

The school clinics are located between the swimming pool and the sports hall. If your child feels unwell during the school day, they should speak to their teacher who will then decide if a visit to the Nurse or Doctor is necessary. The teacher will then ensure they are escorted to the Clinic (FS1-Year 1- by an adult) (Year 2 - 4 with a buddy).

The clinic is operational between 7.30am-4.30pm Sunday-Thursday. If the Clinical Team decides your child is unwell they will call home to let you know or to ask you to collect your child from school.

If the child is treated at school the Clinical Team will send home a green medical information slip so you are aware of the treatment. Examples of this are; Plaster on a minor cut, cream administered for mosquito bite.

The email address for the Clinical Team is wismedicaldepartment_wis@gemsedu.com and you can also call the school on **04 348 4999** and ask for the medical team.

Sending medication to school:

If your child requires medication and has to take it during the school day, you should send this with a note and instructions to the nurses. The student will attend the clinic at the required time and the nurses will ensure the right amount of medication is administered.



IncludeMe

A very warm welcome from IncludeME to all new parents at GEMS Wellington International School.

IncludeME is a support group set up and run by WIS parents for parents and guardians of children who need extra support to succeed at school. We work as “parents as partners” with school leaders, staff and the WIS community to promote inclusive practices in every aspect of school life. The leadership and inclusion teams also passionately believe in the importance of inclusion and the positive impact it can have on the whole WIS community.

Our aim is also to provide parents with emotional and practical support and guidance. We regularly organise social events, workshops, seminars and presentations often with specialist guest speakers. In addition, IncludeME parents have wealth of experience with their own children and are therefore often able to guide you to the best place to seek professional help and also be there when you just need someone to talk to.

When you come to a meeting you will find a welcoming group of close knit friends who are all at different stages of their journey parenting a child who learns differently. We are here to celebrate with you and also help when you need someone to discuss your concerns.

If you would like further information or would like to be added to the WhatsApp group please contact us. We look forward to meeting you in the new academic year.

Best wishes,



Saba Alam - IncludeMe Coordinator

Email contact is - Includeme.wis@gmail.com





WISPA

Our Wellington International School Parents Association (WISPA) are an integral part of the WIS school community and with more than 5000 parents in the school the organisation is ever expanding, with a calendar full of events.

WISPA's aim is to promote our ethos of 'Parents as Partners', creating a bridge for increased parental partnership with events that bring together the WIS community. They play an important role in supporting the school's leadership team in developing the strategic vision for the school, creating opportunities to ensure that everyone has a sense of belonging to the WIS school community.

WISPA look forward to another successful academic year in 2019/2020. If you would like to get involved please reach us out on wispadubai@gmail.com or find us on our closed Facebook page – 'WIS Parents support group / WISPA'.



Amanda Jones - Chairperson

