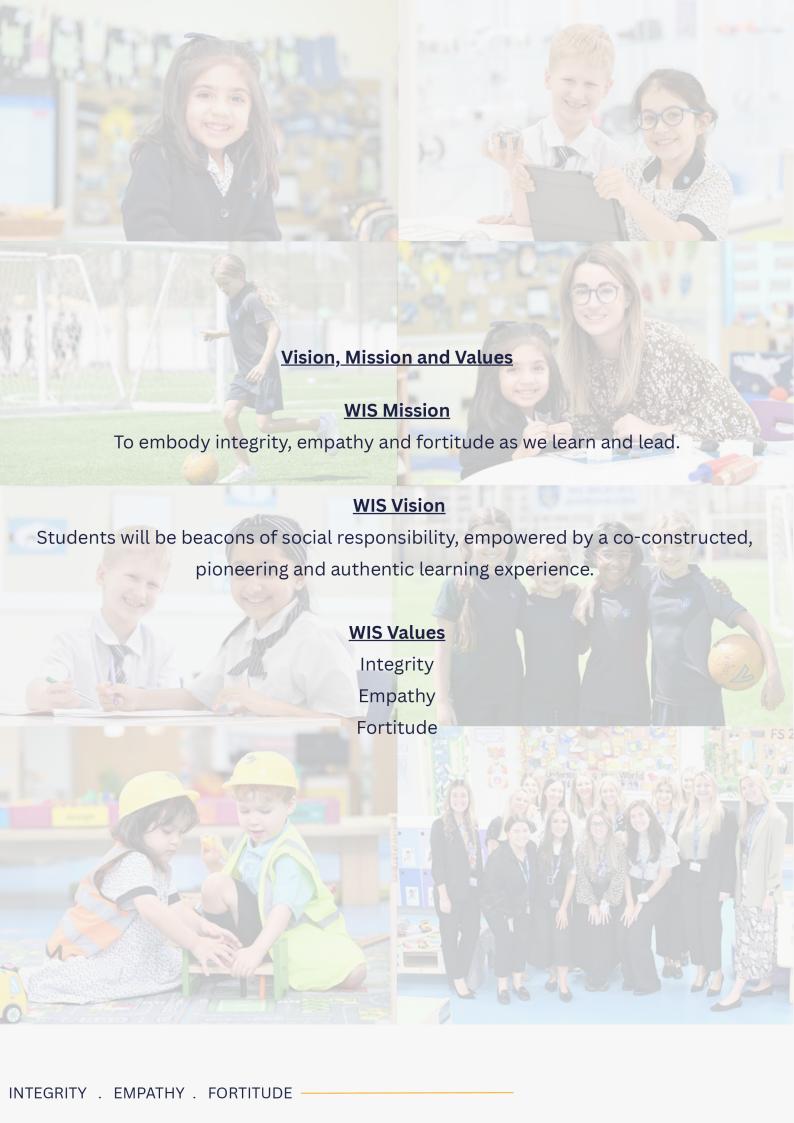


PARENT HANDBOOK LOWER SCHOOL 2025-26











WELCOME TO

GEMS WELLINGTON INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL

Andrew Jenkins Principal/ CEO

It is with great pleasure that I welcome you to the 2025/26 academic year at GEMS Wellington International School (WIS). Whether you are joining us as a new family or have been part of our community for many years, I am delighted to have you with us. Each new academic year offers a fresh opportunity to build upon our shared values, strengthen our connections, and continue shaping a school environment where every child feels a deep sense of belonging and purpose.

As we stand on the threshold of another exciting year, we are ever mindful of the rapidly evolving world our young people will inherit. In an era defined by digital innovation and the transformative power of artificial intelligence, the most important gift we can offer our students is not simply knowledge, but a true love of learning. The future will demand of them not just technical expertise, but the ability to unlearn, to adapt, and to embrace change with confidence and agility. It is this mindset that will sustain them well beyond the walls of WIS, equipping them for success in further education and in life. At the heart of this philosophy is our forward-thinking curriculum, delivered by passionate, expert educators who care deeply about the young people entrusted to their guidance. Every lesson, every experience is purposefully designed to nurture curiosity, creativity, and collaboration. We firmly believe that the ideas of our students will shape the world of tomorrow, and as such, we strive to create a learning environment that champions innovation, encourages critical thinking, and fosters meaningful engagement both in and beyond the classroom.

Student agency plays a fundamental role in this vision. By actively listening to our students and valuing their voices, we ensure they are empowered to explore their interests and passions in purposeful, impactful ways. Through our exceptional partnerships with industry and the wider global community, we are able to offer authentic, immersive experiences that deepen learning and provide real-world relevance.

The results of this approach speak for themselves. Year after year, our students achieve academic outcomes that place WIS among the top-performing schools both regionally and globally. More importantly, they leave us not only with outstanding qualifications but with the confidence and character to thrive at some of the world's leading universities.

An international education is a profound privilege, one that carries with it a deep responsibility. We are committed to cultivating a global perspective in our students; helping them to become ethical, empathetic citizens who are prepared to take on the challenges of an interconnected world. In partnership with you, our families, we aim to develop young people of integrity who are resilient, courageous, and ready to make a meaningful difference.

I have had the privilege of being part of the WIS community for eight years. It is my sincere hope that, as we embark on another year of learning and discovery, you will feel the warmth, the energy, and the spirit that makes WIS such a truly special place.

WELCOME TO THE Lower School



It is an absolute honour and privilege 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.

Our school provides the perfect balance and blend of academic excellence and challenge, personal care, development and enrichment that allows for the holistic development of each and every child; the development of the child as an individual; as a whole person. The outstanding quality of learning and teaching in the Lower School enables us to achieve our aim to help our students grow into the very best they can be and to make their mark in the world.

We know that our students learn best when their levels of Wellbeing and engagement are high, so our Lower School team work collectively on ensuring children feel safe, settled and secure in their environment, 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. At WIS we develop independence and resilience in every student by focusing firmly on building positive relationships and a culture of challenge, aspiration and innovation.

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 to achieve beyond their every goal and dream.

Natalie Twigger Head of Lower School

Yuvaan Sawlani Head Boy 2025-26



It is truly an honour to be able to serve as Head Boy at WIS for the academic year 2025-26. Having spent over 13 transformative years at this institution, I have experienced first-hand the school's unwavering commitment to academic excellence, student agency and personal growth. From leadership opportunities through academics, sports or extracurriculars, WIS truly builds an environment where students are celebrated and included in its culturally diverse and inclusive environment, allowing students to take initiative and think beyond the classroom.

The school's dynamic and forward-thinking environment fosters not only academic rigour and pride but also its core values of integrity, empathy and fortitude. Whether it's nurturing future changemakers or celebrating diversity, WIS truly creates a space where every student feels seen, valued and inspired.

As Head Boy, I look forward to giving back to the community that has shaped me by encouraging student voice, championing inclusivity and helping others turn their passions into impact.

From our Head Boy and Head Girl



Anastasia Sorial Head Girl 2025-26

It is a privilege to serve as the Head Girl of GEMS Wellington International School for the academic year 2025-2026. After 14 years here, WIS has become far more than just my school. It has shaped how I think, lead, and connect with others, becoming a second home that has instilled in me our core values of integrity, empathy, and fortitude.

WIS is truly a place where ambition meets opportunity -where students are encouraged to challenge themselves and inspired to support one another. From academic excellence to service, creativity, and innovation, WIS cultivates not just strong learners, but compassionate global citizens.

We spend 132,040 minutes together each school year - and I believe each one holds the power to inspire something greater. As Head Girl, I am committed to making every one of those minutes count. Together, we can turn ideas into action, and this school year into something truly unforgettable.

Year group	FS1/FS2	Year 1-4
Drop-off	7.15 - 7.40 am	7.15 - 7.40am
Pick-up	Monday-Thursday: FS1: 12.30pm FS2: 2.40pm Middle and Upper School Siblings 3pm Bus: 3.10pm (leave at 3.25pm)	Monday-Thursday: 2.40pm Middle and Upper School Siblings 3pm Bus: 3.10pm (Buses leave at 3.25pm) Year 1-3
	Friday: FS1 and FS2 - 11.30am 11:50am Middle and Upper School Siblings Bus: 11:55am (leave at 12:10)	Friday: 11.40am 11:50am Middle and Upper School Siblings Bus: 11:55am (leave at 12.10)
Pick-up Location	FS1 via Gate 5 only FS2 via Gate 5 or Gate 1 only	Year 1-3 - Classrooms via gate 4 only Year 4: FS playground via gate 5 only

If you need to collect your child early, we kindly ask that this is done before 2:00 pm. Collections after this time are strongly discouraged unless in the case of an emergency, as they can disrupt end-of-day routines and learning.



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 below. Punctuality is monitored by the Class Teacher and Head of Year and parents will be contacted where there is persistent lateness/absence

WE EXPECT THAT ALL STUDENTS TO:

- Attend school every day as per the published academic calendar.
- Arrive on time every morning (learning starts at 7.40 am).
- Be on time for all lessons.

WE ASK PARENTS TO:

- Support the school's expectations of attendance.
- Ensure their child arrives at school on time every morning.
- Endeavour to schedule medical appointments outside of school hours.
- Avoid students travelling during term time.
- Email absences_wis@Gemsedu.onmicrosoft.com and your class teacher by 7.30 am if 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.

Leave of Absence Form

Now we have made it easier with a one click option of scanning the QR code where parents can fill in the leave request online and submit it. Leave request submitted will be automatically sent to the Heads of school for approving/declining and then the Attendance officer/Student absence team shall be contacting the parents accordingly.

<u>Incase of Emergency</u>

Incase the school needs to reach a parent, we will call the primary number that is listed on the student profile. Should the primary contact number change please do inform the school as soon as possible so that we may update our records.



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.



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 key information about the curriculum, our policies, enrollment, student life, our school calendar, and so much more.

Visit the website on www.wellingtoninternationalschool.com



WISway Newsletter

Our bi-weekly method of communication to parents is the WISway newsletter, which provides key messages, weekly highlights and details upcoming events throughout our school. This newsletter is released weekly thorough our GEMS Connect app and emailed to you directly.



End of Week Emails

Parents will receive end of week emails from their Heads of Year. These emails will inform parents of important information from the week as well as the next week, upcoming events and other key information that parents should be aware of. These emails will be sent to the primary contact that is listed with the school.



WhatsApp Channels

Year Group specific information and key events will be shared including trips, reminders, parental engagements and EEE information. Time sensitive information, such as school closure due to weather conditions, will also be shared in this Channel. Channels only provide one way communication from WIS. Sensitive information and student photographs will not be posted in WIS Channels.



GEMS Connect

Please ensure that you download our GEMS Connect App. This will enable you to view and access all Academic Reports and update any personal details relevant to home/school communication. This will also provide you with a host of GEMS related products and initiatives. With the GEMS Connect App, parents can now access and edit student information, pay fees, view attendance and assessment reports, submit leave requests and do much more in one place



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) For safeguarding reasons we ask that you do not post pictures of other students at school events on social media.





Summary of Term Dates 2025/2026 - Parents

WINTER TERM 2025

Tuesday 26th August

Monday 25th August Start of term for All FS1 & FS2, Year 7, Year 12 & all NEW

students

(Buses to run from Tuesday 26th August)

Start of term for all REMAINING year groups

Friday 5th September* Prophet Muhammad's Birthday*

Monday 13th – Friday 17th October Half Term Break

Monday 1st December* Commemoration Day*

Tuesday 2nd December – Wednesday 3rd December* National Day*

Friday 5th December Last day of term

SPRING TERM 2026

Monday 5th January Start of term for ALL Students

Tuesday 17th February* Ramadan Starts*

Friday 13th March Last day of term

Thursday 19th – Friday 20th March* Eid Al-Fitr*

SUMMER TERM 2026

Monday 30th March Start of term for ALL Students

Tuesday 26th – Friday 29th May* Eid Al-Adha*

Tuesday 16th June* Islamic New Year*

Friday 3rd July Last day of term

^{*}All Public/ Islamic holidays are subject to confirmation from the Ministry of Education and KHDA

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

Additional uniform guidance is below:









We kindly request that students do not use wheeled bags as their school bag and rather a backpack or satchel, which can be carried. only jewelry permitted in the lower school is a pair of small studded earrings, no loops, necklaces or bracelets should be worn.

We kindly remind all parents and visitors of the importance of adhering to the school dress code when entering the school. Living in the UAE, it is essential that we respect local customs and values by dressing modestly and appropriately. This not only sets a positive example for our students but also reflects the inclusive and respectful ethos we uphold at WIS.

Please bring the following items to school each day. We encourage students to take ownership of their belongings and we ask that every item brought into school is <u>clearly marked with name and class</u> in case items are misplaced.

Food

Please ensure that your child has enough food, stored in a cool bag for break and lunch, and water for the school day. Water dispensers are available in corridors and communal areas to refill. Children are only required to bring a small bag each day with their water bottle, lunch box and device (Years 3-4). Please note wheelie bags are not permitted as these take up unnecessary space in the classroom. We encourage students to bring healthy and well balanced lunch boxes to school. It must be noted that the school operates a strict no nuts policy (including nutella) to ensure we maximise student safety in relation to allergies. In line with Muslim values and respect for local culture we also do not allow pork products into school.

Birthday Gifts

Our Lower School teachers take great pride in making your child feel special on their birthday. At WIS we acknowledge and celebrate students' birthdays by announcing the birthday child during morning registration, singing the "Happy Birthday" song and allowing children to wear a very special birthday hat or sash on their special day. We kindly prohibit the distribution of both edible and non-edible gifts brought in from home to celebrate birthdays. The reason for this is due to the growing number of students who have food allergies and diabetes and to encourage equality in all birthday celebrations. We thank you for your understanding with this.







Year 2 - 4 pencil case list:

- Eraser
- Pencils x 3
- Sharpener with cover
- 30cm ruler
- Colouring pencils
- Glue Stick

To promote the health and safety of all students, we kindly ask parents to ensure that children do not bring unhealthy food items to school. This includes donuts, sugary snacks, sodas, energy drinks, fast food or take-out meals. In addition, due to the serious risk of allergic reactions, we maintain a strict **no nuts policy**. Foods containing nuts or nut by-products must not be brought to schools under any circumstances. We appreciate your support in helping us create a safe, nutritious, and inclusive environment for every child.

No-Nut Food Checklist for Parents Please do not send the following items to school, as they contain nuts or may contain nut traces

All Chocolates & Sweets are Prohibited in school

Examples of Prohibited Baked Goods

Almond croissants
Banana bread with walnuts
Muffins or cupcakes with nuts
Cakes with nut toppings or
fillings
Baklava (pistachios or walnuts)
Macarons (often contain
almond flour)

Other Foods

Satay (contains peanut-based sauces)
Pesto (typically contains pine nuts)
Dishes with nut oils or hidden nut ingredients
Packaged snacks with "may contain nuts"
warnings

Any food from facilities that process nuts

Nut-Based Snacks

Mixed nuts (salted, roasted, raw, etc.)
Trail mix containing nuts
Nut butters (peanut butter, almond butter, etc.)

Nutella or chocolate-hazelnut spreads Granola bars with nuts Protein or energy bars with nuts Energy bites with dates and nut butter KIND bars or Nature Valley bars with nuts

Tip: Always check food labels for:

"Contains nuts"

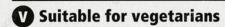
"May contain traces of nuts"

"Produced in a facility that processes
nuts"

Wheat biscuits fortified with vitamins and iron.



- · Contains wheat, gluten.
- Recipe: No nuts.
- Ingredients: Cannot guarantee nut free.
- Factory: Product made in nut free area, but nuts used alsowhere.



Ingredients

Wheat (95%), Malted Barley Extract, Sugar, Salt, Niacin, Iron, Thiamin, Riboflavin, Folic Acid.



Please be advised that our food may have come in contact or contain peanuts, tree nuts, soy, milk, eggs, wheat, shellfish or fish.

















Please ask a staff member about the ingredients used in your meal before ordering. Thank you — Management.

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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. If you have any questions or concerns regarding the safeguarding of children at WIS then please contact one of the Designated Safeguarding Leaders below.



MS NATALIE TWIGGER LOWER SCHOOL



MS ANNE CLAMPETT
MIDDLE SCHOOL



MR OLIVER THOMPSON

UPPER SCHOOL

AND POST-16



MS SARAH WRIGHT WHOLE SCHOOL LEAD

s.wright_wis@Gemsedu.com

n.twigger1_wis@gemsedu.com

<u>a.clampett_wis@gemsedu.com</u>

o.thompson_wis@Gemsedu.com

Our Designated Safeguarding Leads have received training in dealing with sensitive issues surrounding child protection of both students and parents. It is our duty of care to follow up on 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.

Lanyards:

All visitors to the school are required to wear a lanyard for identification purposes. Yellow parent lanyards can be obtained by emailing <u>s.thomas1_wis@gemsedu.com</u> with clearly labelled photographs of your child and anyone who collects your child from school.

Maintaining site security is of the utmost importance. As a result, parents who do not display their lanyards will not be permitted entry to the school site.

Our Medical Team

Our fully qualified Clinical Team are on hand to support and look after the students in the event of illness or injury. Our medical team is well-qualified health professionals who have a wealth of experience in their field, alongside many years working within Dubai Schools.

What should your child do if they feel unwell?

The school clinics are located between the swimming pool and the sports hall. If your child feels unwell during a lesson, they should speak to their class teacher, who will take them to the clinic.

The clinic is operational between 7.30 am-4.30 pm Monday-Thursday and 7.30 am-12.15 pm on Friday. If the Clinical Team decides your child is unwell, I they will call home to inform you or ask you to collect your child from school.

If your child is treated at school, the medical 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 a mosquito bite. If you are collecting your child from the school because they are ill or injured, then your child will need a green medical slip to ensure that their attendance records are updated.

Sending medication to school:

If your child requires medication and has to take it during the school day, you should drop it directly into the nurse's office, as it needs to be signed into the clinic. The student will attend the clinic at the required time and the nurses will ensure the right amount of medication is administered.

Parental Communication in Lower School:

- '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, then we will be happy to arrange a mutually convenient 1:1 meeting either face to face or online.
- End of week email from your child's teacher 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 working hours to respond to an email from you. On some occasions, it may take longer for us to fully respond, but you will hear back from us.
- We ask that emails be written courteously 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 in a polite manner and avoid the temptation to make generalisations.

KEY EMAIL ADDRESSES:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Designation</u>	<u>Email Address</u>
Mrs Twigger	Head of Lower School	n.twigger1_wis@gemsedu.com
Mrs Standring	Head of Learning & Teaching	j.harrison_wis@gemsedu.com
Mrs Christley	Head of Curriculum & Assessment	s.christley_wis@gemsedu.com
Mrs Hamdan	Head of Arabic and Islamic	h.hamdan_wis@gemsedu.com
Miss Hillier	Assistant Headteacher EYFS - Year 1	v.hillier_wis@gemsedu.com
Mrs Cairns	Assistant Headteacher Year 2-4	t.jones_wis@gemsedu.com
Miss Jardine	Assistant Headteacher Learning & Teaching	m.jardine_wis@gemsedu.com
Mrs O'Neill	Director of Enhanced Curriculum	j.allen_wis@gemsedu.com
Mrs Richardson	Head of FS1	r.richardson_wis@gemsedu.com
Miss McNulty	Head of FS2	e.mcnulty_wis@gemsedu.com
Miss Kennedy	Head of Year 1	s.kennedy_wis@gemsedu.com
Miss Elkins	Head of Year 2	s.elkins_wis@gemsedu.com
Mr Wilkins	Head of Year 3	j.wilkins_wis@gemsedu.com
Mr Edwards	Head of Year 4	a.edwards_wis@gemsedu.com
Miss Chapple	SENDCo	b.chapple_wis@gemsedu.com
Mrs Adams	Lower School Counsellor	k.adams_wis@gemsedu.com
Lionel Pinto	Student absence/0569962428	absences_wis@Gemsedu.onmicrosoft.con

CONTACT DETAILS FOR THE CLINICAL TEAM

wismedicaldepartment_wis@gemsedu.com, or you may also call the reception on 04 307 3000 and request to speak to one of the medical team