



أكاديمية جيمس ويلينغتون واحة السيليكون  
GEMS Wellington Academy  
SILICON OASIS

# Secondary Opening Guidance

## August 2021

# Welcome Back

## Dear Parents and Caregivers

Welcome back to a new academic year at WSO. We trust you have had a restful and safe summer break, after what was a unique and remarkable academic year.

With the new school year only days away, we look forward to seeing our returning families and we want to wish a huge warm welcome to the many new families and students to our Academy.

On Monday 23rd August 2021, the KHDA published a revised set of protocols for Private Schools in Dubai, replacing the previous guidance shared in July 2020. These protocols are public documents and can be found by clicking [here](#) on the KHDA website. Overall, there is a general (but cautious) relaxation of protocols in comparison to the year before, with KHDA creating the hashtag of #TogetherAgainDubai.

To support our community, these slides have been created to clarify WSO's interpretation of the new rules and regulations on our Year 6-13 students.

Please can I politely ask that you familiarise yourselves with these new guidelines and continue to support the school with the transition.

It is very important to remember that we are still within a global pandemic, therefore it is all of our responsibility to stay safe by remaining vigilant and cautious at all times.

As always, the entire staff at WSO will do everything they can to make the upcoming school year the best it can possibly be for your children.

We look forward to seeing you soon.



**Andy Kai Fong**  
Head of Secondary



# New families

To our new WSO families

A warm and special welcome to you all. We look forward to meeting and working with you while your child(ren) learn with us. You are joining a vibrant community that is family-focused.

As we emerge slowly from the tight restrictions of COVID, we hope there will be even more opportunities to engage with you and our existing families, onsite and face to face. In the meantime we will maintain our high levels of vigilance around Health and Safety and the unerring focus on the highest quality learning experiences for your children.

Our 'doors' are open to you at any stage – please use my email address [a.kaifong\\_wso@gemsedu.com](mailto:a.kaifong_wso@gemsedu.com) until you meet your child's form tutor. I hope you are excited to join us, as together, we write the opening chapters of your story with WSO.

Induction for ALL new students to WSO – Y7-13

Tuesday 31 August 9.00 – 12.00pm

Please come to Phase 3 Reception.

You will be met by staff and taken to the appropriate room



# Returning to School

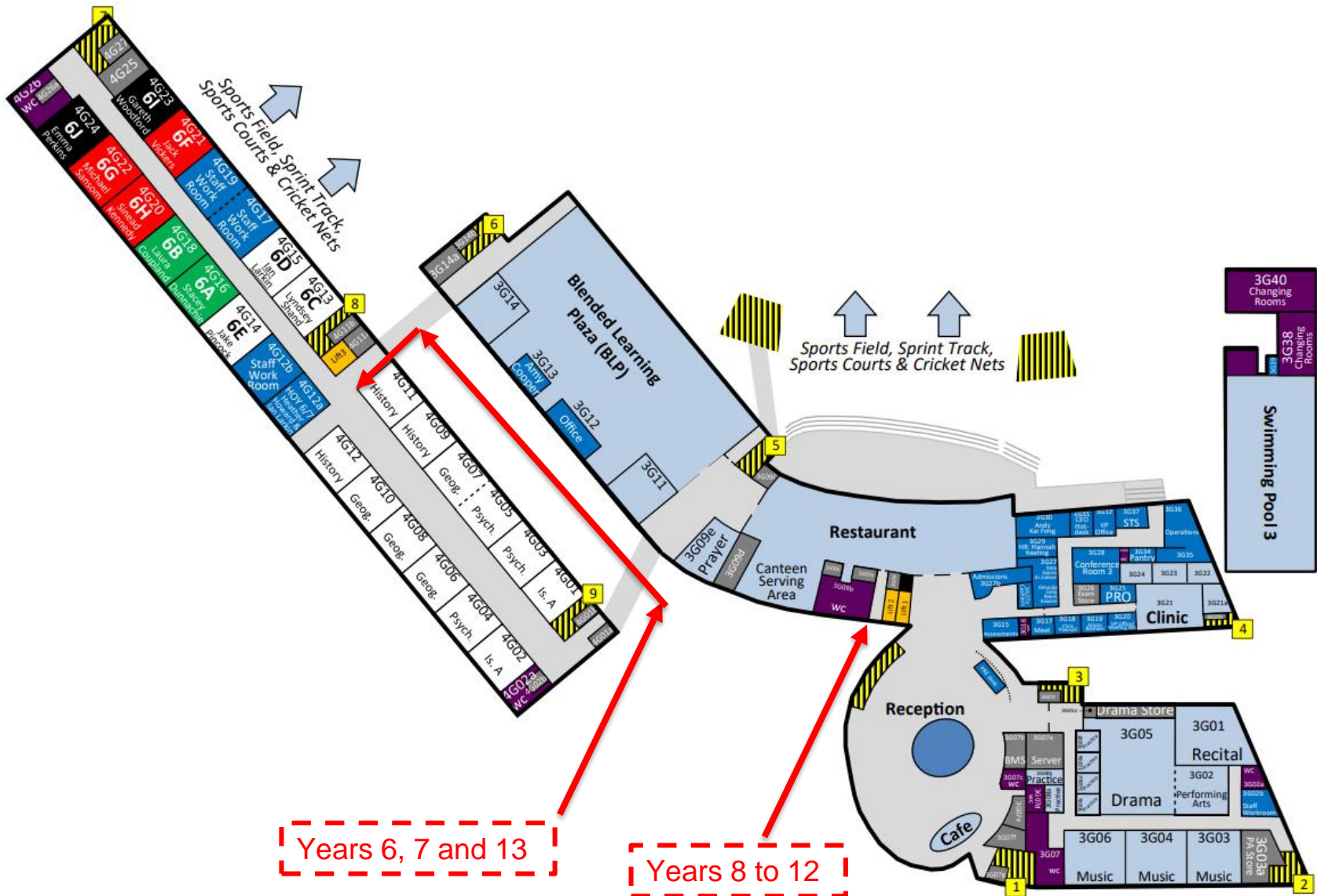
- It is no longer a requirement for parents to submit a Travel and Health declaration
- For any member of the community, if they have been back in Dubai for more than 10 days before returning to school - NO further PCR test is needed
- For any member of the community, if they have been back in Dubai for less than 10 days before school starts – you need a PCR test from within 48 hours prior to returning to school, or you must complete 10 days quarantine away from school if you do not wish to have a PCR test.
- Students must bring their own stationery items to school. Students should not share their stationery. If the children need stationery, it should be provided by the teacher after proper disinfection.
- Regarding school uniform, due to the delays in stock with threads, we understand that some students will be coming to school without the correct uniform which is completely fine to do. Teachers are aware of this and will support your student if affected.



# Entry to School

- At the school entrances, every child's temperature will be scanned using installed thermal technology
- There will be two entrances which will have thermal scanners
  - Middle of Phase 4 – for Y6, Y7 and Y13 students
  - Phase 3 Canteen – for Y8-12 students
- Children who arrive by bus will have their temperatures scanned before boarding the bus.
- Anyone with a fever  $\geq 37.50$  C will not be allowed entry into school or on the bus

# Entry to School 2



# Adults entering the School

- **Parents, guardians, or visitors who enter the school premises, should provide proof of vaccination or a negative PCR test taken in the previous 48 hours.**
- **This includes nannies, maids, drivers and other family members who collect or any family members that need to make payments.**
- **Parents who have arranged meetings on the school premises will need to show their vaccination status to redeem a WSO vaccination card**
- **For parents wanting to enter the school site who are choosing not to vaccinate, a PCR result from within 24 hours should be presented. Please speak directly to Alison Baldwin (Health and Safety Manager) for further clarification – [a.baldwin\\_wso@gemsedu.com](mailto:a.baldwin_wso@gemsedu.com)**



# Face to Face or Remote / Distance Learning



- From the start of the academic year until September 30, parents will have the choice of distance learning or face-to-face learning for their children
- **From October 3rd, all teaching and learning at WSO will be face-to-face only.** After this date, students may be able to continue with distance learning in exceptional circumstances only, such as health emergencies. These are assessed on a case-by-case basis by the school leadership team.
- Students in isolation or quarantine due to contracting COVID-19 or being confirmed as a close contact will be able to access learning remotely, in either a synchronous or asynchronous way





# Blended Provision to start

- Our blended provision of learning (ie face to face AND remote / distance) will continue from Sept 1-30 for those that remain at home.
- If you intend for your child(ren) to access remote / distance learning, please email the appropriate Heads of Year before Wednesday 1 September 2021

|     |   |     |   |
|-----|---|-----|---|
| Y7  | Heather Howard<br>h.howard_wso@gemsedu.com      | Y11 | Jemma Arnold<br>j.arnold_wso@gemsedu.com  |
| Y8  | Max Patrick<br>m.patrick_wso@gemsedu.com        | Y12 | Britny Goulet<br>b.goulet_wso@gemsedu.com |
| Y9  | Christian Dwyer<br>c.dwyer1_wso@gemsedu.com     | Y13 | Jack Luffman<br>j.luffman_wso@gemsedu.com |
| Y10 | Nicola Beerjeraz<br>n.beerjeraz_wso@gemsedu.com |     |   |

# Blended Provision to start 2

- Once we receive your email, we can record your child as 'remote'.
- If you do not inform us, and your child is absent from school, form tutors will follow up for explanation - as they would for a normal absence.
- Families who wish to continue with remote / distance provision beyond Oct 3, please email [a.kaifong\\_wso@gemsedu.com](mailto:a.kaifong_wso@gemsedu.com) by September 23. This will give us time to assess the requests and seek guidance on eligibility, if this is required.

# School Timings

## Y7 to Y13



| Sunday to Wednesday | Thursday            |                 |
|---------------------|---------------------|-----------------|
| 07:40 to 07:55 (15) | 07:40 to 07:55 (15) | AM Registration |
| 07:55 to 08:50 (55) | 07:55 to 08:50 (55) | Period 1        |
| 08:50 to 09:45 (55) | 08:50 to 09:45 (55) | Period 2        |
| 09:45 to 10:40 (55) | 09:45 to 10:40 (55) | Period 3        |
| 10:40 to 11:00 (20) | 10:40 to 10:55 (15) | Break time      |
| 11:00 to 11:55 (55) | 10:55 to 11:50 (55) | Period 4        |
| 11:55 to 12:50 (55) | 11:50 to 12:45 (55) | Period 5        |
| 12:50 to 13:30 (40) | 12:45 to 13:15 (30) | Lunch time      |
| 13:30 to 14:25 (55) | 13:15 to 14:10 (55) | Period 6        |
| 14:25 to 15:20 (55) |                     | Period 7        |

# Feeling Unwell

- **Students, teachers and school staff must stay home if unwell**
- We adopt an over-cautious approach to any children showing symptoms of being unwell. They will be sent home. This is to reduce the chance of the virus spreading.
- According to the DHA, KHDA and GEMS Policy, children and staff should stay home from school/work if displaying any of the following COVID-19 symptoms:
  - Fever - you should not go to school/work if your temperature is greater than or equal to 37.5°C. People need to be fever-free for 24 hours without the help of a fever-reducing medication before they return to school/work.
  - Muscle aches/pains or fatigue
  - Diarrhoea or nausea
  - Shortness of breath and difficulty breathing
  - Cough, Headache, Sore throat
  - Runny nose or nasal congestion
  - Loss of sense of smell or taste



# Feeling Unwell 2

- Parents must seek medical advice for further management before returning to school, which must then result in either;
  - Doctor's note clearly stating the child is 'fit to return to school' as they have clearly diagnosed another cause of the symptoms.
  - Doctor recommending a PCR test – student can only return to school after symptoms have subsided and a PCR test is negative.

# Suspected and Confirmed COVID

- The class teacher will refer students with Covid-19 symptoms such as cough, body aches, fatigue, shortness of breath, sore throat, runny nose, diarrhea, nausea, and headache, to the school clinic for further screening as per the Dubai Health Authority (DHA) guidelines.
- Parents must seek medical advice for further management before returning to school, which must then result in either;
  - **Doctor's note clearly stating the child is 'fit to return to school'** as they have clearly diagnosed another cause of the symptoms.
  - **Doctor recommending a PCR test** – student can only return to school after symptoms have subsided and a PCR test is negative.

# Suspected and Confirmed COVID 2



- **Receiving a positive PCR test**
  - If a student gets a positive PCR test, school must be informed immediately so we can 'contact trace' close contacts at school, and the student should then follow home isolation guidelines which will be issued by the DHA.
  - We also ask parents to share details of other 'close contacts' who are part of the WSO community that we may not be aware of (socialising outside school for example).
  - Students can return after symptoms have subsided and a de-isolation certificate has been issued by the DHA. Please can this certificate be emailed to the school clinic ([medical\\_wso@gemsedu.com](mailto:medical_wso@gemsedu.com)) and the class teacher, prior to returning.
  - Our Academy Medical Team will be in touch to offer support and guidance throughout the students isolation period and will support students with their return.

# Monitoring Attendance and Contact Tracing

- Currently the DHA protocols for 'Contact Tracing' require all people who have been in close contact with a positive case to home quarantine for 10 days, **regardless of vaccination status.**
- 'Close contacts' are classed as **any individual who spent time around a confirmed COVID-19 case**, from two days *before* their symptoms appeared or their test date (whichever came first), or any time during the 10 days of infection, that meets the following criteria;
  - Closer than 2m to for more than 15 minutes, or without a mask for any length of time
  - Had physical contact with
  - Shared car transport, even if both parties were wearing a mask
  - If you did have contact with a positive case, but not to the extent of the criteria above, then you don't need to quarantine, but you should monitor yourself for symptoms



# Monitoring Attendance and Contact Tracing 2



- When we learn of a positive case in the school community, we will assess the guidelines above, and identify anyone who meets the 'close contact' criteria. These people will be informed to home quarantine for 10 days, with Day 1 being the day *after* they last had contact with the positive case.
- Our Academy Medical Team will be in touch to offer support and guidance throughout the students quarantine period and will support students with their return.
- Being told to quarantine can be frustrating, especially if your children mix with lots of different groups (school, sports activities, after school clubs, bus transport) and have been asked to quarantine previously, but it really is the best way to halt the spread of infection, and should always be adhered to.

# Parent Communication

- Our commitment to keep you informed remains the same
- You will receive a letter fortnightly with relevant updates and information from Andy Kai Fong (Head of Secondary)
- On alternate weeks to the above, you will receive a letter from Mrs Sarah O'Regan (Principal / CEO)
- Every week, you will receive the 'WSO News' from Juliet Freeman (Parent Relations Executive)
- Your child(ren)'s Tutor remains your first port of call for everything – they will respond to you with answers or seek answers from other staff, for you.



# Parent Communication #2

- Whenever possible, meetings between families and staff should take place online. If there is a critical need for an in-person meeting, please confirm an appointment with the appropriate staff member(s) by email.
- In addition, this year, we are planning a monthly communication from our Heads of Year to all families



# How will we keep WSO safe and clean?

- WSO will have a robust deep clean, including sanitising all areas, before opening to our students
- The school premises will be cleaned and sanitised at the end of each school day, in line with DM guidelines
- Common areas and frequently touched surfaces (i.e toilets, stairwells, waiting areas, etc.) will be frequently cleaned and sanitised
- We encourage a strict hand washing regime and adequate hand washing breaks for all students.
- Hand sanitisers approved by Dubai Municipality are available across the entire site
- Anyone who enters the school will wear a mask and use the hand sanitiser provided at the entrance.
- To further minimise spread of Covid-19, we adopt 'paperless' processes where possible



# Masks

- Masks are still required at all times, for all adults and students Y7-13, whilst onsite.
- Students should bring spare masks each day and consider at least one change throughout the day
- Masks can be removed while eating and/or drinking
- Staff have the option to wear transparent masks or face shields to enable lip-reading and facial expressions to be seen

# Physical Distancing

- Physical distancing is now one meter (1m), where possible, in all situations (classrooms, public spaces, playground)
- At times when we are not able to meet the required physical distancing, we will take all necessary measures to ensure the health and safety of the school community.
- Use of bathroom facilities will be limited to ensure this distancing is maintained
- Use of outside space(s) is encouraged (weather-permitting)

# Digital Devices / Resources

- As our learning provision effectively continues from the end of the last academic year, students remain responsible for bringing fully-charged devices to school, and a charger if required.
- To support the move to a 'paperless' environment, we encourage effective storage of learning materials and student work using hard drive space on devices or cloud storage
- Students should be mindful to sanitise surfaces of devices regularly using an appropriate cleaner
- Sharing of resources eg stationery, by students is discouraged
- Any resources that are shared, will be sanitised by staff, between uses.

# Physical Education and Squads

- All students should come to school in their PE kit on the days that they have PE. If a child cannot participate, they should still wear PE kit so that they can be a Sports Leader within the lesson.
- Students should ensure they have adequate water for their PE lesson and ensure that they are not wearing jewellery.
- Children will continue to wear a mask but can remove this for strenuous physical activity.
- Students will continue to practice social distancing within lessons and equipment will be sanitised in between use.



# Physical Education and Squads 2

- Extracurricular activities will now be offered for students in Year 7-13.
- Students who are then selected for extracurricular squads will be notified of training start dates and times if they are successful.
- If a child does not make squad selection, they will be notified of Development Squad opportunities as well as our morning club provision.
- As per the guidelines of Dubai Sports Council, swimming will be reintroduced to the curriculum. Details to follow.



# Learning Resource Centre / Libraries



- Our libraries can be used again by students
- Guidelines for other classrooms and lessons apply
  - Physical distancing 1m
  - Sanitisation of surfaces regularly
  - Use of hand sanitisers
- Used books must be sanitised before re-use
  - Used book drop-off areas to be designated

# STS Bus Transportation

- All schools must adhere to RTA guidelines for further details on the management of COVID-19 protocols
- When students are collected by the bus on a morning, they will undergo a temperature check, and anyone with a temperature in excess of 37.50 will have to remain at home and will not be allowed to attend school that day
- **Bus capacity can increase to 100%, with all seating being designated pre-assigned**
- All passengers, with the exception of children younger than 6, must wear a mask



# STS Bus Transportation 2

- Bus hygiene will be maintained following appropriate sanitization standards in accordance with the guidelines set by the RTA for public transportation
- If a bus passenger tests positive, we would inform the passengers immediately adjacent (front, side, rear) of the positive case that they need to quarantine
- Signage will be inside the bus to remind of bus hygiene practices
- Bins are available in the bus for the disposal of waste materials

# Food and Drink

- Families are encouraged to continue to supply lunches and snacks from home
- We will look into options for re-opening the canteen safely. We will keep you informed on the progress
- Water fountains will be available for use by students and staff throughout the day.