



Thursday 25th March 2021

RE: Secondary Update

Dear Parents / Carers

I hope this letter finds you well.

Firstly, this week the UAE received sad news of the passing of Sheikh Hamdan bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Deputy Ruler of Dubai and Minister of Finance, on Wednesday 24th. WSO expresses our sincere condolences and sympathies to the Al Maktoum family.

Thank you

As Term 2 draws to a close, I want to acknowledge our staff, students and families. I know we keep saying it and that is because it remains our truth – COVID continues to challenge us in many ways, some known, others a little less predictable. I can only commend everyone for making the adjustments with us, understanding the changes and restrictions, and being patient. We will continue to search for ways to enhance the overall student experience in spite of the pandemic, without compromising our health and safety standards. Thank you once again for your support and critique this term. I can honestly say that we are receiving affirmation and constructive criticism in equal amounts, and we appreciate the time you are taking to send these. Both are invaluable to us and we welcome them again after this Spring Break.

Inclusion

The Academy continues to work towards achieving the SENDIA award for our Inclusion Provision. Our Inclusion student ambassadors who sit on the SENDIA working party have been busy this week with our Inclusion Celebration Week, decorating reception to raise awareness and reduce stigmas around Inclusion support. On Sunday, our students came into school 'rocking their socks' to show their support of down syndrome awareness. Students have been learning about differences during well-being lessons and Assemblies. They have discussed what makes us unique and how to include and support those faced with learning difficulties. Some of our students have been decorating sock shaped cookies and tie-dyeing t-shirts to light it up blue for a more inclusive society.

Year 11 & 13 Exams

Yesterday afternoon, families of Year 11 and 13 students received a message from us about the UAE potentially cancelling exams for international schools using the British Curriculum or the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme. I must emphasise that until we can verify that statement and source, all students should utilise their time as if exams are going ahead. We are monitoring the situation daily and will keep you posted as soon as we know further details.

Exam timetables for Years 7-10, and 12

We will wait for the above situation to be resolved and then finalise and release these timetables for all families, early after the Spring Break. We want to avoid clashes and also releasing many different versions of these timetables, which would cause undue confusion. Thank you for your understanding.



Legally Blonde Music Video - Dazzle and Adrenaline have been working extremely hard on their pieces for this, while also staying socially distanced through rehearsals and practising in separate year groups. This has been a collaboration of incredible student leadership, as Kyla Munro has choreographed the Adrenaline piece and the BTEC Music Production students have recorded and edited 'Omi God You Guys', in the recording studio for the Dazzle students. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-nFAeGhPsSo>

Travel declaration reminder – You should have seen an email from GEMS in the past week which was a travel declaration link. If you intend to travel outside of the UAE, it is important that this link is filled in. Please also fill it in if you are not travelling.

DEWA Earth Hour

Scheduled for Saturday 27 March, please see <http://www.dewa.gov.ae> for details of how to get involved and contribute.

Ramadan Hours: Years 7 -13 – Ramadan will begin during the first week back after the holidays. An official announcement will be shared with our school community once this is confirmed. Please see the below school timings that we will follow once Ramadan begins.

08.30	08.50	Tutor Time
08.50	09.30	Period 1
09.30	10.10	Period 2
10.10	10.30	Break
10.30	11.10	Period 3
11.10	11.50	Period 4
11.50	12.10	Lunch / Break
12.10	12.50	Period 5
12.50	13.30	Period 6
13.30		End of day - release non-bus students
13.45		Release bus students
14.00		Buses depart



End of Year Celebrations

On Wednesday 30 June and Thursday 1 July, we will have our celebrations of exceptional student effort and achievement. In previous years, this has been scheduled at the start of the next Academic year as an Awards Evening. The reason for moving it to the end of the current year is to make the event more meaningful for the students that receive an award.

Due to COVID restrictions, this year we will run celebration assemblies within the school day, for the students within each year group that are receiving an award. We will also hopefully be able to live stream this to parents too.

We are also inviting sponsors for awards. If you work for / own a business that would be interested in this, please contact Alex Munro (Parent Council) gowestoban@outlook.com who can send you further details. Your support would be hugely appreciated!

Our thanks again for your ongoing support. Please email me on a.kaifong_wso@gemsedu.com if you have any queries.

Wishing you a safe Spring Break
Sincerely

Andy Kai Fong
Secondary Principal



Sunday 28th March – Thursday 08th April	Spring Break – Academy reopens on Sunday 11th April
Tuesday 13th April	Likely start of Ramadan school timings (end 11th May)