



أكاديمية جيمس ويلينغتون واحة السيليكون
GEMS Wellington Academy
SILICON OASIS

WSO Primary Opening Guidance – 2021/22

Introduction

Welcome back!

I truly hope that everyone in the primary community has had a wonderful summer holiday on the back of quite 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, this guidance has been created to share the impact of the new rules and regulations on WSO primary students. Please can I politely ask that you familiarise yourselves with these new rules and continue to support the school with our transition into new territories. **Where there is significant change compared to last year, these points within the guidance will be bold in a dark red font.** It's 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.

See you soon!

Nathan Sadler
Primary Principal



STAY AT HOME IF 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 and we need all parents to support this.
- 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
 - Diarrhea or nausea
 - Shortness of breath and difficulty breathing
 - Cough, Headache, Sore throat
 - Runny nose or nasal congestion
 - Loss of sense of smell or taste
- Parents must seek medical advice for further management before returning to school, which must then result in either;
 - Doctors 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.
- We understand the pressures around childcare and work commitments, however we cannot compromise the health and safety of our community and it is better to be overly cautious with this.



Returning to School

- **In line with new protocols for face-to-face learning, please note that it is no longer obligatory for schools to request parents to submit a “Travel & Health Declaration Form”, as this embedded within the wider Dubai protocols. This needs to be communicated to all parents, students and teachers.**
- For any student/parent/staff member, if they have been back in Dubai for more than 10 days before returning to school - no further PCR test is needed
- For any student/parent/staff member, 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 via 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.

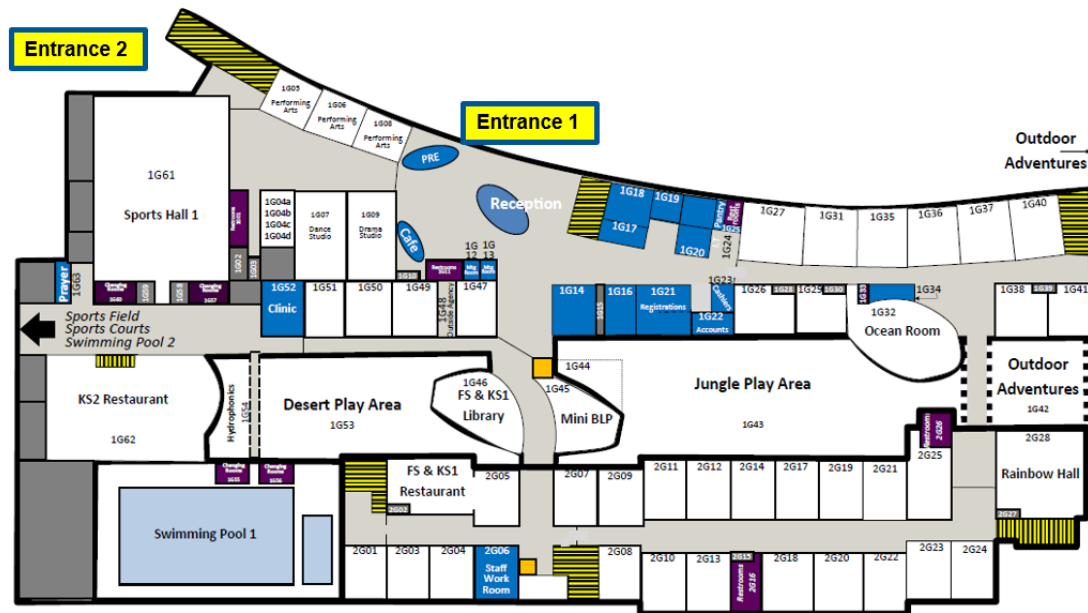
Face to Face/Remote Learning

- 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
- **If you wish for your child to learn remotely in September then please contact their class teacher to indicate this and we will accommodate it. If you have not done this, then any absence will be treated as Unauthorised and will be followed up on.**
- **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



Entry, Pick-up, and School Visit Procedures

- At the school entrances, every child's temperature will be scanned using installed thermal technology
- There will be two entrances to the primary building, entrance 1 and 2 (see map below), **which will both have thermal cameras present.**
- Children who arrive by bus will have their temperatures scanned before boarding the bus.
- Anyone with a fever ≥ 37.50 C will not be allowed entry into school or on the bus



Primary School | Phase 1 & 2 | Ground Floor

Entry, Pick-up, and School Visit Procedures

- Only one family member or guardian is allowed to enter the school facility to drop off or pick up their child. Two adults cannot enter the building with just one student. We need to limit the number of adults accessing the school building. We encourage all families to not bring siblings (who do not attend WSO) into the Academy, however we understand in some circumstances this is unavoidable.
- Students in Nursery, FS1, FS2 and Year 1 can be dropped off or picked up in their classrooms. Parents and guardians may not have access to the rest of the school and must follow the correct entrance and exit procedures which will be shared with you by the class teacher.
- **At the beginning of the year, students in Year 2 must be dropped off in Sports Hall 1 where they will be met by their teachers**
- **Students in Years 3 and 5 will enter the primary building independently via Entrance 2.**
- **Students in Year 4 will enter independently through Entrance 1**
- **Students in Year 6 will enter phase 4 independently**
- **Students in FS1, FS2 and Year 1 will enter through Entrance 1**
- **Nursery Students only will access the private nursery entrance**

Adults entering the School

- **Parents, guardians, or visitors who enter the school premises, including those dropping off and picking up children in Nursery, FS1, FS2 and Year 1, 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**
- **Class teachers will be contacting parents shortly to explain our procedure for parents to prove vaccination status.**
- **Once a parent has shown their vaccination proof to the teacher (Al Hosn screenshot, vaccination certificate, etc), the teacher will provide a WSO vaccination card which the adult should attach to their parent lanyard for proof.**
- **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**



School Timings

- We will continue to implement a staggered entry and exit procedure to eliminate overcrowding and maintain the recommended one metre of physical distance in high traffic areas.

Year group	Drop off	Collection
FS1 & FS2 Year 1	7:35 am – 7:45 am	FS1 – 12:30 pm FS2 – 1:30 pm Year 1 – 2 pm
Year 2	7:25 am – 7:35 am	2 pm
Year 3 & 4	7:20 am – 7:40 am	2:50 pm
Year 5	7:30 am – 7:40 am	3:20 pm
Year 6	7.30am - 7.40 am	3.20 pm

Sibling Club/Little Falcons



If you have siblings in the school or have difficulties picking up your child at the end of the academic day, then we will offer the Little Falcons after-school care. **You will need to sign-up for the provision at the beginning of the year to ensure your child is allocated a place. Juliet Freeman has sent out a sign up form and the deadline for the sign-up is Monday 30th August at 10am.** If you secure a place for your child for our after-school provision, the pick-up times are as follows:

Year Group	End of the Day
FS1	1.30, 2.15 or 3.20pm if needed
FS2	2.15 or 3.20pm if needed
Years 1 - 4	3.20pm if needed

Please note:

FS2-Year 4 after school care will begin from Wednesday 1st September.

FS1 will begin on Sunday 3rd October. This is in-line with previous years as the younger students need shorter days at the beginning of the academic year to support their transition into school. Thank you for your understanding.



Suspected and Confirmed COVID-19

- 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;
 - **Doctors 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.
- **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) 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
- 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.

Contact Tracing

It is important that all parents are aware that by opting for your child to join any of the below programs, you will be increasing the likelihood of your child becoming a close contact of a positive case. This is because they will be in contact with students from other classes. These programs include:

- Sibling Club
- Bus Club
- Staff Club
- **Extended Day**
- **Sports Squads**
- **PE extra-curricular activities**
- **Performing Arts Groups (Dance/Music)**
- ESM groups



Remote Learning

- After the 3rd October, students will only be able to access remote learning if they:
 - ❑ Are isolating or in quarantine
 - ❑ Exceptional circumstances, such as health emergencies, confirmed with School Leadership
- Families will not be able to move between remote learning and face to face during September

Year 2-6

- If a child needs to access remote learning for the above reasons, they will be offered a live zoom with their class teacher every day. There will also be additional opportunities to connect with the teacher, teaching assistant and class throughout the day.
- All lessons for the day will be provided on Seesaw, ensuring that children can access and engage with learning from home. Specialist subjects will also provide live lessons where appropriate.

Foundation Stage & Year 1

- All lessons and activities for the day will be provided on Seesaw, ensuring that children can access and engage with learning from home. Opportunities to connect with the teacher or specialist teacher will be provided live on zoom at least 3 times per week.



Parent Communication

- Whenever possible, meetings should take place online. If there is a critical need for an in-person meeting, it should be made by a confirmed appointment only. Parents cannot enter the school to request to meet a staff member, it must be arranged over online communication.
- Parents may attend parent evenings in person if other Covid-19 protocols are in place, such as physical distancing and face masks. We will be offering virtual attendance.
- WSO will ensure that we remain in regular communication with our families during our re-opening and throughout the academic year. Our communication channels will include:
 - **Email** – Every Thursday, our Parent Relations Executive (PRE) will continue to share a letter from either Mr. Nathan Sadler (Primary Principal) or Mrs. Sarah O'Regan (CEO/Principal)
 - **SeeSaw** – Once the school year has started, our teachers will be setting up their class seesaw pages which will be used to communicate between teacher, student and parents throughout the year.
 - **WSO News** - The weekly 'Sway' will continue to be shared by our PRE every Saturday
 - **Parent Meetings** - Meetings between parents and teachers/leaders are to take place virtually where possible or can take place face-to-face if pre-arranged and necessary.
 - **Social Media** - WSO has many social media accounts that keep our community up to date with what is going on. On Instagram, please follow @gemswso and @primary_principalwso. You can also follow the school facebook page on 'GEMS Wellington Academy – Silicon Oasis'



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 sanitized
- We encourage a strict hand washing regime and adequate hand washing breaks for all students. We provide younger children with handwashing assistance, including humming the Happy Birthday tune twice over!
- Hand sanitisers are available throughout the school premises, but kept out of reach of young children. We provide only hand sanitisers approved by Dubai Municipality
- Anyone who enters the school will wear a mask and use the hand sanitiser provided at the entrance.
- Frequently-used shared electronic devices will be sanitised after each use (i.e. Ipad's, laptops, etc.).
- To further minimise spread of Covid-19, we adopt 'paperless' processes where possible that rely on the effective use of technology.
- Posters describing effective handwashing techniques are placed near all sinks. Additional material about hygiene are placed throughout the school building and shared with our community regularly.



Masks

- All staff, visitors, and students 6 years or older, except those with an approved exemption, must wear masks as soon as they enter the school. Noncompliance will lead to denial of entry to the school
- Anyone over 6 years old (all students in Year 2 and above and when a student turns 6 in Year 1) should wear a mask, unless they have a mask exemption permit. Masks can be removed when eating or during high-intensity physical activity.
- As a school, we strongly advise that students in year 1 also wear a mask, in preparation for when they turn 6 years old. We often had FS2 students wearing masks last year.
- **Our teaching staff responsible for younger children are encouraged to wear transparent masks / face shields to enable lip reading and facial expression**
- Students should bring their own masks to school and have spares just in case.

Physical Distancing

- **One metre of physical distance is recommended in all common areas, at reception desks, and where different groups of students, staff, and visitors mix.**
- We have designed our classrooms and learning spaces to have enough space for groups to maintain a physical distance of a recommended one metre per child when possible
- We will utilise outside space whenever possible, however only when the temperatures are safe to do so
- **One metre distance is recommended between students using our playgrounds at the same time, unless those students are part of a 'bubble'.**
- 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.

Digital to Enhance Learning

- **BYOI expectations:** All students from Year 1 through to Year 6 will continue to bring their iPads into school to support the recent KHDA guidance:
 - 35. *To further minimise spread of Covid-19, schools should adopt paperless processes that rely on the effective use of technology.*
- We also want to guarantee parents that the iPads will be used for educational purposes and only when instructed by the class teacher. Additionally, students are not permitted to be using their iPads in the corridors while walking to class or when exiting the school.
- **Students Safety:** At WSO, we only use Apple iPads as this allows teachers to use the 'apple classroom' app. Through this app, teachers can manage students' devices and ensure that students are on task.
- **Screen time:** Understandably with the current KHDA guidelines regarding the use of paperless technology. Parents, please be reassured that there will be a balance between the use of technology and physical skill development such as handwriting, painting and colouring. Students will still have opportunities throughout the day to write into books
- **Digital in FS :** In the Foundation Stage, we will continue to provide students with the opportunity to access technology both in classrooms and in the Mini BLP (Blended Learning Plaza)

FS1/FS2 and Year 1

- **Provision for students in FS1, FS2 and Y1 requires “bubbles” of 15 or fewer children. A “bubble” means the same 15 or fewer children are in the same group each day and do not mix with other students.**
- Students will have a designated, pre-assigned table and chair with a **recommended one-meter distancing between them.**
- All students in FS1, 2 and Year 1 will be taught by a teaching and teaching assistant. Children will be divided into their safe learning bubbles within their classrooms using a clear perspex divider.
- All resources will be regularly sanitised and students will have access to individual resources.



Years 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6

- Classes should be kept together where possible
- Students will have a designated, pre-assigned table and chair with a recommended one metre distancing between them. Swapping of seats is not allowed.
- In instances where class rotations take place, such as Arabic and Islamic, staggered entry and exit procedure will be followed to avoid crowding. Cleaners or the teaching staff will clean the classroom before the next group enters.
- All students will be seated one metre from each other, as per the KHDA recommendation.
- Any resources will be designated to individual children and not shared without being sanitized.



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 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.
- Extracurricular activities will now be offered for students in Year 3 – 6. During the month of September, students will participate in 'Come and Trial' during their PE lessons. Students who are then selected for extracurricular squads will be notified of training start dates and times if they are successful.
- If a child is unsuccessful during their 'Come and Trial' session, 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. However, this will operate on a phased return and with limited number of students in the pool to accommodate the social distancing recommendations. Your child's PE teacher will inform you via SEESAW when they are timetabled to do Swimming.



Special Events, Gatherings and Trips

- **Our special events, such as awards, assemblies and celebrations can take place within certain parameters.** There must be enough space to accommodate all students while following physical distancing recommendations. Interactions between groups of students should be kept to a minimum; entry and exits to such events should be staggered, and event spaces must be cleaned before and after every event.
- **Performances in front of an audience can resume,** as long as physical distancing recommendations are met.
- **School trips are back!** These are allowed as long as they follow all the basic precautionary measures, such as physical distancing, staggered entry and exit and minimizing interactions among groups of students. The venue's capacity must be able to accommodate the number of students with the recommended one metre of physical distance between each.

Learning Resource Centers

- **All students across the academy will have a 30-minute, fortnightly timetabled session in one of our 2 Primary Libraries.**
- Students will attend in their bubbles to support with managing social distancing.
- During each Library session the students will be supervised by one of our librarians, their class teacher, and class TA.
- KS2 children will be encouraged to use our online search facility to manage the amount of book handling.
- Adults present will carefully supervise the children, giving guidance on the books available and managing the amount of books that are handled.
- All books that have been handled during the session will be placed into clearly labeled containers and sanitized before being placed back on shelves.
- The Libraries will be deep cleaned between sessions by our Librarians and members of the cleaning team.

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 37.5^o 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
- 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

