



Thursday 20th May 2021

RE: Secondary Update

Dear Parents / Carers

I hope this letter finds you well.

Parent Survey – 30 May 2021

As you are aware, you will be invited to complete the Parent Survey on 30 May. We have valued your input from the last survey and focused our efforts on the 4 key areas you identified as needing further work.

- Well-being
- Preparing for the future
- Personalised learning
- Student Voice

For a reminder of the actions, efforts and improvements taken place since the first survey, please refer back to the Primary Parent Newsletters from 6th May 2021 and 22nd April 2021. To access these letters again, they are located on our school website [here](#). We hope you will see we have been responsive and we welcome your acknowledgement and further ideas in the coming survey. As well as identifying next steps, we also use this as an opportunity to share all of the amazing, positive comments you write with our teaching staff. We highly encourage all of our parent community to complete this survey – thank you in advance.





Changes to Student Support from September 2021

COVID has required us to make changes to some systems at WSO in the last 12-18 months. With the potential for the current situation to continue into the new academic year and after thinking about how we continue to improve service to you as parents and families, I write to inform you of some planned changes.

These impact the House System and Tutor Groups and the leadership of year levels. In brief, the changes include

- Moving to horizontal tutor groups. This means that students will be in tutor groups of ONLY their year level
- All students in tutor groups will be in the same house eg 7A and 7B could be all EMERALD
- We have appointed new Heads of House
- We have appointed Heads of Years – each of whom will oversee the complete student support systems for every child in their cohort.

The Heads of House will have as their major priority, a calendar of whole school events which will rejuvenate house and school spirit and while being mindful of COVID restrictions, will not be restricted by them.

The horizontal nature of tutor groups will allow tutors to focus on the social emotional and academic needs of a narrower band of students and therefore be more effective in meeting those needs.

The Heads of Years will oversee the entire student experience for every child in their cohort. They will liaise with Tutors, Teachers, Heads of Departments, Heads of Houses and Senior Leadership Team to ensure we know your child and are attentive to their needs and yours.

The experience of a student at WSO has changed during COVID, some changes for the better, some harder to adjust to, depending on individuals. We do know that student wellbeing is an important factor in alleviating undue stress at all levels. We also know that student interactions are essential to students feeling connected to our school and each other. The changes will address these aspects of need and underpinning them all is the need to understand and know your children as individuals and do our very best with the resources we have, to ensure they are successful in every regard.

Finally and importantly, I want to acknowledge the work of the current Heads of House and their assistants and wider Pastoral Team. They have built invaluable relationships with you and we hope to sustain many if not all of those despite these changes. You will see they all feature in the new structure as we take their expertise and connections and build upon those in the coming years. These changes are in no way a reflection of their work – as you can see we are adding more staff into the student support system, which can only improve the experience your children and our service to you.



Students will be receiving a survey after this newsletter to gain information that will help us reconfigure the tutor groups.

It is my absolute pleasure to include for you here, introductory videos to our Heads of Houses and Heads of Years from September 2021

Heads of Year	Video Link
Year 7 - Mrs Heather Howard	https://tinyurl.com/3aunf7e3
Year 8 - Mr Max Patrick	https://tinyurl.com/4hzzh7u8
Year 9 - Mr Christian Dwyer	https://tinyurl.com/2arrzs46
Year 10 - Ms Nicola Beejeraz	https://tinyurl.com/ytzvf6y3
Year 11- Mrs Jemma Arnold	https://tinyurl.com/4ey47ey7
Year 12 - Ms Britny Goulet	https://tinyurl.com/2u4u4e4v
Year 13 – Mr Jack Luffman	https://tinyurl.com/5hezfavv
Heads of House	Video Link
Diamond - Miss Hannah Lunt	https://tinyurl.com/y782m6m3
Emerald – Miss Sophie Ashkuri	https://tinyurl.com/ycc5uawx
Onyx – Mrs Samia Beckley-Lines	https://tinyurl.com/dubsf7d
Ruby – Mrs Rachel Bartlett	https://tinyurl.com/2v4vv4hf

Progress Tests in English, Mathematics and Science – Years 7 to 10

Over the next three weeks the annual Progress Tests in English, Maths and Science will be carried out in class. These are online assessments that we do every year, along with all other similar schools in Dubai. The schedule for each class can be seen at the end of this letter.

The main way these tests are used is to plan for effective interventions for our students. They allow your child's teacher to see which areas of the curriculum they are strong in, and which they need more support in. They also allow us to adapt our curriculum and teaching to better meet the needs of the students as a group, being able to focus on areas of general weakness and coordinate our teaching so that the most progress is made by the greatest number of students. Once the reports are available, we will share them with you again, as we did in October 2020.

For the testing session to run smoothly there are a few points to note:



1. Students should attend on the day of the test with a device that can connect to the school WIFI, preferably a windows laptop or a MacBook, but if your child only has an iPad then we can supply a school device for the test. They should also bring with them a means of charging their device in case of low batteries at the end of the day.
2. All students need to bring headphones with them to listen to the tests. Some parts of the test are only accessible by listening to them, such as the mental Maths tests and some spelling tests.
3. Your child will have been given access codes by their tutors and class teachers. These need to be accessible, preferably stored safely on their computer or written clearly in their notes.
4. **Students who are 100% remote learning.** Unfortunately, this test cannot be taken at home. Students should come in to carry it out in test conditions with their peers. They can come in, complete the test at the allotted time and then return home immediately if that is what you wish. We need to ensure the safety of our students, and so only students who are collected by their parents will be allowed to leave school before 3.20pm. If you want to drop your child for the test and then collect again before the end of the day, please complete this survey: [Click here](#)
5. All the preparation that has needed to be done for these tests has happened in lessons, and your children should not be stressed about the test at home.

YEAR 7	English	Mathematics	Science
A	Tuesday 1 June Period 5&6	Monday 31 May Period 2	NO TEST
B			
C			
D			
E	Tuesday 8 June Period 1&2	Sunday 30 May Period 3	
F			
G			
H			

YEAR 8	English	Mathematics	Science
A	Wednesday 2 June Period 5&6	Monday 31 May Period 1	Monday 7 June Period 3&4
B			
C			
D			
E	Sunday 30 May	Wednesday 2 June Period	



F	Period 5&6	1	
G			
H			

YEAR 9	English	Mathematics	Science
A	Wednesday 9 June Period 1&2	Sunday 23 May Period 5&6	Wednesday 2 June Period 3&4
B			
C			
D			
E	Monday 31 May Period 3&4		
F			
G			
H			

YEAR 10	English	Mathematics	Science
A	Sunday 30 May Period 1&2	Monday 24 May Period 3&4	Tuesday 1 June Period 1&2
B			
C			
D			
E			
F			
G			
H			

Re-enrolment for 2021/22 Academic Year

Thank you to the significant number of families that have re-enrolled for 2021/22. We are looking forward to continuing the relationships and educational journey with you. Preparations for next year are well



underway and we need to be placing students in classes and houses. We can only do this with those that are re-enrolled. We would appreciate your attention to this process. You may receive a phone call soon regarding this matter and if you have any questions please contact s.christiansen_wso@gemsedu.com

As always, I welcome your feedback – about this article or any aspect of your child's experience with us. Please email me on a.kaifong_wso@gemsedu.com

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



Sincerely

Andy Kai Fong
Secondary Principal

May	GEMS Parent Survey Part 2 – This will be sent to parents directly from GEMS. Please refer to CEO letter sent earlier this week.
Monday - 24th May	Year 13 Graduation – Students only in Academy. Link for parents will be shared.
Tuesday – 25th May	Parent Engagement - The Importance of Languages (Celine Dwyer)
W/C 30th May	GL tests commence – Y7 – Y10
Sunday - 30th May	Parent Engagement -How to support your child with a Healthy Active Lifestyle. (Reece Davis)
Tuesday – 01st June	Parent Engagement- Confidence, Communication and Expression, how to support your child during COVID times (Matt Bowden)