



FREQUENTLY

ASKED

QUESTIONS

The health, safety and welfare of our staff, students and wider school community is, and always has been, our number one priority at GEMS Education. During the current COVID-19 pandemic, we have been working hard to ensure that our health and safety standards are continuously reviewed, and where necessary, enhanced. In order to support this, we have developed an eLearning course specific to COVID-19. The course is accessible to our staff and parents.

The course aims to provide you with general knowledge and awareness of COVID-19 and introduce you to some of the GEMS protocols and processes in order to enhance our already excellent health and safety standards.

FOR STAFF: The course is available for staff via GEMS U portal. All staff members will have received a notification for this. Please ensure that you complete the course as a matter of urgency.

FOR PARENTS: The course will be available for parents next week via the [GEMS Parent Portal](#) as well as on the [GEMS Education](#) website.

TERESA VARMAN

PRINCIPAL

School Reopening Education Model related FAQs

What is the School's model for reopening?

Our model for reopening is designed to include a hybrid approach, 100% remote learning and 100% in-person classes, depending on the individual needs of students, parents' choice and examination grade requirements. There will be full curriculum coverage, including curricular and co-curricular subjects.

All three scenarios will run in parallel, and parents may choose the option that suits their child the best. All groups of students will have access to the highest quality in terms of lessons, teaching and learning. They will be engaged in learning for the same number of hours and access the same lessons.

Where can I find more details about these three scenarios?

Please read our circular dated August 18, 2020 for details regarding the three scenarios. [Click here](#) for the circular.

How do I communicate our choice for our child from the three given options?

Kindly click [here](#) to access the e-form. **Please complete and submit the form by Sunday, August 23, 2020.** Do ensure that you complete a form for each child in your family.

What will be the schedule for the day?

The schedule for the day will be the same for all three scenarios. The timetable will cover curricular and co-curricular subjects.

KG to Grade 2

- Arrival: 7:30a.m. (Staggered arrival and sanitization procedures)
- Registration and Morning Mindfulness sessions - 7.40 a.m. to 8.00 a.m.
- 1st Period 8.00 a.m. to 8.50 a.m.
- 2nd Period 8.50 a.m. to 9.40 a.m.
- **Break 9.40 a.m. to 10.10 a.m.**
- 3rd Period 10.10 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.
- 4th Period 11.00 a.m. to 11.40 a.m.

Duration of lessons: 40 minutes

Transition/ Wellness break: 10 minutes

During this time the teacher will be available for coaching students who might need extra help with a concept.

Grades 3 to 12

- Arrival: 7:30a.m. (Staggered arrival and sanitization procedures)
- Registration and Morning Mindfulness sessions - 7.40 a.m. to 8.00 a.m.
- 1st Period 8.00 a.m. to 8.50 a.m.
- 2nd Period 8.50 a.m. to 9.40 a.m.
- 3rd period 9.40 a.m. to 10.30 a.m.
- **Break time 10.30 a.m. to 10.50 a.m. (Primary and Girls 6 to 12)**
- 4th Period 10.30 a.m. to 11.20 a.m. (Boys 6 to12)
- 4th Period 10.50 a.m. to 11.40 a.m.(Primary and Girls 6 to 12)
- **Break time 11.20 a.m. to 11.40 a.m. (Boys 6 to 12)**
- 5th Period 11.40 a.m. to 12.30 p.m.
- 6th Period 12.30 p.m. to 1.20 p.m.
- Sanitization and Dispersal - 1: 35 p.m.

How will the hybrid option work?

Students of every class will be divided into 2 groups or cohorts; 50% of students will access onsite lessons while the other 50% will access synchronous remote lessons that are teacher-led.

Each class will be 50 minutes long. This includes a 10-minute wellness break/ transition time.

Over a two week period, both groups of students would have attended 5 days in School. Students will attend school as per the schedule shown below.

SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THURS
Group A	Group B	Group A	Group B	Group A	Group B	Group A	Group B	Group A	Group B

What are the advantages of the recommended hybrid option?

- All students will have the opportunity to attend in-person classes onsite on alternate working days
- Students will benefit from improved mental well-being that comes from social interactions with peers, albeit with physical distancing
- Students will participate in hands-on learning activities that reinforce concepts, especially with science practicals and lab work
- Students will be able to concentrate harder on learning due to fewer distractions and closer teacher supervision
- Students will be able to sit for pen-and-paper Mid-Term Examinations in School. This is extremely important, especially for students of Grades 10 and 12

If we choose the 100% remote learning option, can my child switch to the hybrid option later or vice versa?

Parents must agree to a minimum period of two months of accessing the remote learning provision – after an initial 1-week ‘introductory period’. That is, parents who initially opt for the 100% remote learning option can choose the hybrid option within the first 5 days (**by September 3, 2020**), or vice versa. The agreement cannot be changed subsequently until the end of the two-month period. Click here for the [Parent-School Remote Provision Agreement](#). The same flexibility applies to students who have opted for 100% onsite learning.

Would it be possible for siblings in a different grade to come to School on the same days?

We will try to accommodate siblings on the same day, as far as possible. Please enter this request as a remark when filling in the e-form.

Will the remote classes be interactive and be held on Microsoft Teams?

The school has made special arrangements for the benefit of students accessing their lessons remotely. In-person lessons being conducted in the classroom or laboratory (if applicable) will be telecast live. Teachers have been equipped with hands-free Bluetooth mikes and cameras that capture the classroom and the board. Students will access their lessons through MS Teams. During the lesson, they can pose questions and clarify doubts using the chat window. The teacher will also be available after every lesson to coach students who might need extra help with a concept.

Can students who have opted for 100% remote learning take their Mid Term Examinations online?

Students opting for 100% remote learning will necessarily take their examinations online.

Students choosing the 100% onsite lessons and the hybrid option will take pen-and-paper examinations in School.

Is it compulsory for all students to come to School for Mid Term Examinations?

It is compulsory for students who have chosen the 100% onsite lessons and the hybrid option to take the pen-and-paper examinations in School. This applies to Grades 2 and above.

Will the pattern of the Mid Term Examination papers be the same for all students?

The pattern of the question paper will be different for those taking online examinations. The online examination paper will largely have objective type questions. It will not include long answers and very long answers.

Only students who have opted for 100% onsite lessons and the hybrid option will take pen-and-paper examinations in School. The question paper will follow the regular prescribed pattern that includes objective and subjective type questions.

Students writing online examinations will have access to the regular question paper for the sake of practice after the examinations end.

Is it necessary for students of Grades 9 to 12 to come to School for practical work?

It is not necessary for students of Grades 9 to 12 to come to School for practical work. The School will schedule a series of practical sessions in November 2020 for Senior School students.

Is there a possibility for the School to carry on with 100% remote learning as it was held from April - June instead of the students physically returning to School?

*As per the directive received from the UAE Ministry of Education (MoE) and Sharjah Private Education Authority (SPEA), all Schools in the UAE must **compulsorily** make provision for students to physically return to School. This government directive is based on feedback received through Parent Surveys that were conducted in all Emirates. However, the authorities have taken note of parents' concerns, and have now allowed for parents' to have a choice in the matter.*

Since examinations take up most of September, can returning to school be postponed to October?

The date for School reopening is as directed by SPEA. It is not a decision taken by individual Schools.

Will there be a reduction in the tuition fees for students opting for 100% remote lessons?

The School Tuition fees are as published and approved by SPEA. We are fully committed to providing students the best possible opportunities in the remote learning and onsite learning environments.

COVID 19 Related FAQs

What are the COVID 19 symptoms?

COVID-19 affects different people in different ways. Most infected people will develop mild to moderate illness and recover without hospitalization.

Most common symptoms:

- *fever*
- *dry cough*
- *tiredness*
- *Less common symptoms:*
- *aches and pains*
- *sore throat*
- *diarrhoea*
- *conjunctivitis*
- *headache*
- *loss of taste or smell*
- *a rash on skin, or discolouration of fingers or toes*

Serious symptoms:

- *difficulty breathing or shortness of breath*
- *chest pain or pressure*
- *loss of speech or movement*

What should one do if my child has one or more of the above listed symptoms?

Do not send the child to School. Seek immediate medical attention. Always call before visiting your doctor or health facility. On average it takes 5–6 days from when someone is infected with the virus for symptoms to show, however it can take up to 14 days.

How can I keep my family and myself safe?

- *Protect yourself and others around you by knowing the facts and taking appropriate precautions.*
- *Clean your hands often. Use soap and water, or an alcohol-based hand rub.*
- *Maintain a safe distance from anyone who is coughing or sneezing.*
- *Wear a mask and maintain a physical distance of at least 1.5metres.*
- *Do not touch your eyes, nose or mouth.*
- *Cover your nose and mouth with your bent elbow or a tissue when you cough or sneeze.*
- *Stay home if you feel unwell.*
- *If you have a fever, cough and difficulty breathing, seek medical attention.*
- *Calling in advance allows your healthcare provider to direct you to the right health facility. This protects you, and prevents the spread of viruses and other infections.*

Do ALL students have to do the COVID test before joining School?

No. The COVID test is only for students aged 12 and above, and all School employees including teaching faculty, administrative staff and support staff.

Do parents have to get the COVID test done or will the school arrange it?

The COVID test is being arranged by SPEA in collaboration with the UAE Ministry of Health and Prevention. SPEA will inform the School about the exact date and time allotted to our students. This information will immediately be communicated to parents.

When and where will staff and students be tested for COVID?

- *Schools will be advised about the details – dates and venues*
- *GMS Staff members will be tested on Sunday, August 23, 2020*
- *Students will be tested in the following week. Date and time to be confirmed.*

Do parents have to pay for the COVID test?

No, the COVID test is free and is being sponsored by the UAE Government.

Is there a School COVID-19 Taskforce? What are their responsibilities?

Yes, the School has created a COVID-19 Taskforce. The Taskforce is responsible for all the precautionary measures, and is responsible for handling any emergency health situation, following up and monitoring the implementation of health and safety procedures, conducting all necessary trainings for students and staff, and disseminating awareness information to parents and other concerned stakeholders. The team is also responsible for the designated isolation room and segregation areas within the school premises.

Who are School COVID-19 Taskforce members? How can they be contacted?

Designated Health and Safety Officer	Mr. Manoj Scaria, MSO	Email Id: manoj.s_gms@gemsedu.com
Building and Facilities	Mr. Devanand Chandu, AMSF	Email Id: devanand.c_gms@gemsedu.com
School Clinic Medical Staff	Dr. Samia Noury	Email Id: samia.n_gms@gemsedu.com
	Dr. Suzan Karam	Email Id: suzanabdelma.k_gms@gemsedu.com
	Sr. Riya Jomon	Email Id: riya.j1_gms@gemsedu.com
	Sr. Smitha John	Email Id: smitha.j_gms@gemsedu.com
	Sr. Sona Paul	Email Id: sona.p_gms@gemsedu.com
School Academic Affairs - Ms. Vinita Gupta, Headmistress		Email Id: vinita.g_gms@gemsedu.com
Partnership with Parents - Ms. Madhulika Varma		Email Id: MADHULIKA.V_GMS@gemsedu.com
HR – Ms. Parvathy Premkrishnan		Email Id: parvathy.s1_gms@gemsedu.com
School Transport – Ms. Daania Shaikh		Email Id: daania@bbt.ae

Will School nurses and Taskforce members receive training?

- *Yes. All school staff, including teachers, must present evidence of having completed a Covid-19 Safety Training before School starts.*
- *It will be offered by SPEA and is a mandatory requirement.*

Is there a hotline we can call for questions about COVID-19?

- *Yes, a hotline has been designated to contact the UAE Ministry of Health and Prevention to answer questions about COVID-19 and school reopening plans. Hotline No. 80011111*

The guidelines refer to isolation and segregation areas. What is the difference?

- *The isolation room is for a student or a staff member who is likely to be a COVID-19 positive case. Only the school medical staff are permitted to enter the isolation room wearing full PPE.*
- *The segregation area is for a student/staff member who begins to show one of the symptoms of COVID-19. The use of a segregation area is consistent with the school's policy of "staying at home if unwell" for students, teachers or school staff with symptoms; i.e. there may be some doubt, but it is best to be safe.*

Do we need to inform the School if someone at home or my workplace tests positive for COVID 19?

If a family member has symptoms or comes in contact with a confirmed case, please do not send your child to School. Practice self-quarantine and closely monitor for symptoms. Kindly inform the Class Teacher via email immediately.

Are parents allowed on the School campus?

Parents are allowed to pick up and drop off their child but will not be allowed to enter the main School building. Parents/guardians are allowed a maximum time limit of 10 minutes in the designated area to pick-up / drop-off with no crowding. They must maintain a distance of 1.5 meters, and must wear a mask at all times.

Only one family member or a guardian is allowed to enter the school campus for drop-off and/or pick-up of his/her child. People with compromised medical conditions, including the elderly, should not come for drop-off and/or pick-up.

If there is an exigent circumstance requiring parents to come to School, they are expected to make an appointment with the Teacher, Supervisor or department, and will be required to follow all safe distancing protocols.

How will the school communicate with me during this time?

At the School level, email will remain our main form of communication but we will also utilize our website, SMS messages and social media.

Your best point of contact for information related to your child will be your child's teachers and Supervisor.

What happens if a faculty/staff/student tests positive for COVID-19?

The situation will be managed as guided by the UAE Ministry of Health and Prevention and SPEA.

How do I talk to my young child about the Coronavirus?

- *Talk to your child directly and in a calm way. A calm adult encourages a calm child.*
- *Answer questions in a way that reassures and not scares them.*
- *Ask them what they know about the coronavirus and give them the correct facts. Schools and homes are safe, and adults are there to help keep them healthy by being vigilant about handwashing, and covering coughs and sneezes.*
- *Gently correct misinformation. Separate imagination from reality.*
- *Allow your child to express feelings.*
- *Remind them that all students should treat each other with respect, and not jump to conclusions about who may or may not have the coronavirus.*



مدرسة جيمس ميلينيوم الخاصه
GEMS Millennium School
Sharjah