

Back to School @ GMS

Health and Safety Guidelines

Our most important priority this year is ensuring the health and safety of our students and staff members. We will need to make major changes in our routines and habits, and we all need to work together to succeed in this goal.

There are important rules for us all to know well and to follow closely. However, for us to ensure everyone's health and safety, it will take much more than trying to enforce a series of rules. We will need to work together, support each other, and affirmatively take all the actions necessary to keep ourselves, and our whole school community safe.

The continued advice that we receive from the UAE government and from SPEA is that we must be continually diligent in our health and safety efforts. Constant diligence is the responsibility of each of us: parents, students, and faculty. Our diligence in these precautionary measures is one way we demonstrate our commitment to the health and safety of one another.

We will be taking an extra-cautious approach when reopening school in order to carefully implement the new safety protocols. We want to ensure that we prioritize efforts to create the best learning environment possible in each classroom.

This document describes the guidelines, procedures and the precautionary controls that will be followed to achieve a safe, healthy, and stimulating learning environment for our students when school reopens.

TERESA VARMAN

PRINCIPAL

Testing Prior to Reopening (extract from SPEA guidelines)

هيئة الشارقة للتعليم الخاص
SHARJAH PRIVATE EDUCATION AUTHORITY



Guidelines for Reopening Private Schools in Sharjah



2.2 Testing of staff and students prior to joining the schools

In collaboration with the health authorities in Sharjah, all students, teachers, and staff of all private schools will be tested for COVID-19 in advance of physically joining the school. This very important initiative, which is undertaken by the UAE Government to ensure the safety of students and school staff, might continue at different times during the remainder of the academic year in which regular testing of students, teachers and other staff members will be conducted. SPEA will communicate with all private schools any further related updates from the concerned health authorities in

The primary focus

- No student, teacher or staff member will be allowed to physically join the school before testing negative for COVID-19.
- School principals should be aware of the COVID-19 test schedule, which would impact their operational reopening plan. This might result in teachers, staff and students joining their schools in batches.

Please note: We have not received any update regarding the date(s) for our school. You will be informed just as soon as we receive the notification.

Temperature and Health Declaration

Temperature checks will be conducted prior to a student boarding the bus. This will act as a first layer of control.

Every student and staff member will undergo a temperature check upon arriving at school each day.

Thermal imaging cameras have been placed at strategic entrance points into the school. This includes an entrance point for bus students, and another entrance point for visitors and own transport users.

The school medical teams will conduct additional temperature checks as and when required throughout the day.

A detailed GEMS Medical Manual has been developed and is available at School. The manual complies with all UAE Health Authority requirements.

Students and staff who are unwell or who have adult household members who have flu-like symptoms such as fever and cough **should not attend school**.

Parents are expected to take their child's temperature at home before they depart for school. Please do not send your child to school if they are exhibiting any of the symptoms listed below. If they are showing any of these symptoms, we recommend that you take your child to the doctor at the earliest.

Any student, staff or faculty member found to exhibit any COVID-19 related symptoms during the school day will be sent home. Individuals showing any symptoms from the list below (not exhaustive) will **straightaway** be moved to the Isolation Room and asked to go home. Parents will be asked to collect their children immediately.

Symptoms

- Difficulty breathing
- Cough
- Fever above 37.5°C (99.5°F)
- Loss of taste/smell
- Sore throat
- Diarrhoea
- Body ache
- Runny nose

In order to return to school, students must present a Medical Certificate for the days missed as well as a medical documentation certifying the student's wellness to attend school. The School Medical Team ask for your full cooperation with this protocol. We understand these are unprecedented times for everyone, and we are prioritizing the health and safety of all of our students and school community members.

Masks, Gloves and Face Shields

Teachers and students above the age of 6 are required to wear face masks. This is a **mandatory** requirement.

Students are required to bring their own masks, disposable gloves and face shield (optional).

Students must bring two disposable or reusable masks and one set of disposable gloves to school per day. It will be the responsibility of the students to ensure that they bring the required number of disposable gloves and masks each day, and ensure the re-usable masks are washed in line with the manufacturer's guidelines.

Additional masks and gloves will be available with the Class Teacher in case of damage, breakage or loss.

Students will be required to replace their masks following break time. Gloves should ideally be worn only while travelling to and from school.

Hand sanitising stations have been set up throughout the school, with clear instructions and signage available. Students will be encouraged to wash their hands and sanitise at regular intervals through the day - in particular, on arrival, pre and post-break time, and before dispersal time.

Teachers, Teaching Assistants and Support Staff will monitor the younger students to ensure they are following the required hand washing procedures.

Special no-touch waste bins have been provided for the safe disposal of masks and gloves.

The groups that can wear face shields are:

- Children 12 years old and below, who may have difficulty wearing and keeping face masks on for a prolonged period of time;
- Students who have health conditions that may result in breathing or other medical difficulties when a mask is worn for a prolonged period of time.

Promoting General Good Hygiene Practices

- The School will operate on a 50% alternate day rotational model from KG1 to Grade 12 in two shifts. Shift 1 - KG to Grade 2 (7:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.) Shift 2 - Grades 3 to 12 (7:30 a.m. to 1:35 p.m.)
- A Travel Declaration Form will be collected from all staff and students.
- Students are strongly advised not to wear their blazers, sweaters and ties.
- Students will be allowed to carry only their water bottles, lunch boxes, stationery pack and one notebook to school. In addition, they are advised to carry a hand sanitizer, two spare masks and one set of disposable gloves. No devices are to be brought to School.
- It is mandatory for all staff and students on campus to be wearing their mask and/or face shield. Students must bring the spare gloves and masks in a re-sealable or Ziploc bag, labeled with their name.
- Kindergarten students are encouraged to use face shields instead of masks, as they are easier to handle.
- For older students, masks need not be worn while eating and drinking but they should be worn at all other times.
- Students must bring their own water bottles to school since water dispensers are not permitted.
- Students will be reminded to wash their hands at regular intervals through the day.
- Cleaning of the restrooms will be considerably enhanced.
- Regular additional cleaning will be carried out of all frequent touchpoints (for example: handrails, door handles, light switches, taps, washbasins, etc.).
- Regular additional cleaning of common seating areas will be carried out.
- A COVID-19 cleaning and support pack will be available in every classroom containing hand sanitizer, disinfecting wipes, and other support materials.
- A thorough cleaning and sanitization of the school will be conducted every day. The cleaning will be carried out by an approved vendor, using Municipality approved chemicals.
- Frequently used electronic devices will be disinfected after each use.
- The swimming pool, showers and changing facilities will remain closed.
- Special events will be held virtually.
- Equipment in classrooms such as teaching aids, books, and lab equipment will be disinfected after each use.

Medical Support

- Two full time Doctors and three Nurses are available on-site to assist any student with any symptoms or sickness.
- An Isolation Room is available for students who are unwell.
- The Medical Team has been provided with the required medical PPE.

School Task Force

The School has created a COVID-19 Task Force. The Task Force 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. This team is also responsible for the designated isolation room within the school premises.

Designated Health and Safety Officer – Mr. Manoj Scaria, Manager School Operations

Building and Facilities – Mr. Devanand Chandu, AMSF

School Clinic Medical Staff – Dr. Samia Noury

- Dr. Suzan Abdelmahmoud Karam

- Sr. Riya Jomon

- Sr. Smitha John

- Sr. Sona Paul

School Academic Affairs - Ms. Vinita Gupta, Headmistress

Communication and Partnership with Parents - Ms. Madhulika Varma

HR – Ms. Parvathy Premkrishnan

School Transport – Ms. Daania Shaikh

School Transport Service

- There will be fixed allocated seating for students
- Students must wear masks and gloves whilst on the bus
- Drivers and Bus Guardians will undergo health checks including temperature checks twice daily
- Buses will be cleaned fully after every journey and equipped with full sanitizing equipment including UAE Government approved disinfectant spray and cloth provided by the bus office to enable them to wipe down the bus before each trip.
- For detailed information on the school bus transport service COVID-19 provisions, please [click here](#)
- For questions on school transport please contact Ms Daania Shaikh @ daania@bbt.ae

Arrivals and Dispersals

- Students will arrive and leave the school at the determined start and finish time.
- Arrivals and dispersals will be staggered over a 15-minute period to further reduce the risk of larger groups. Students will be permitted to disembark from buses only after the teachers are in their classrooms.
- Students will be asked to complete a sanitization routine on arrival, during break, and before dispersal.
- The School has a clear traffic management plan to ensure the safe drop off and pick up of students. Access to the rest of the school will not be permitted. Trained personnel will be present to support the flow of traffic, and ensure health and safety measures are being adhered to.
- Upon arrival at school, students will pass through designated entrance points. The entrance points will be fitted with thermal imaging cameras, which will record the temperature of every student and staff member.
- Persons with a temperature above 37.2°C will be moved to a dedicated medical room where further temperature and medical checks will be carried out.
- Entry to the campus will be restricted.
- Own transport users will be allocated rooms while they wait to be picked up.

- Parents will be allowed to pick up and drop off their child(ren) but will not be allowed to enter the main School building without an appointment. All visitors will be expected to have an appointment.
- 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.
- The family member/ guardian is allowed a maximum time limit of 10 minutes in the designated area to pick-up / drop-off with no crowding, maintenance of a 1.5 meters distancing, and must wear a mask at all times.

Student Movement on the Campus

- When students arrive they will move directly to their classroom.
- Students will have specific areas where they will be able to play.
- Students will remain within a single section or area of the school throughout the day.
- Break times have been staggered.
- Students will be allowed to use the restroom in smaller 'bubble groups'. Washrooms will be assigned to specific classes and sanitized regularly. Students will be permitted to go in a 'bubble group' of not more than 3 students.

School Prayer Rooms

- Muslim teachers and students must bring their own personal prayer mats.
- The Prayer Rooms may only be used by students.
- Teachers and school staff are advised to pray in their own offices.
- A safe distance of 2 meters should be maintained in the prayer rooms.
- Students should be wearing masks while in the Prayer Room.
- The Prayer Rooms will be cleaned after each use.
- Instructions for using the Prayer Room will be updated according to guidelines from the concerned authorities.

School Library

The teachers will supervise the process of book viewing and selection to minimize children's touching of the books and library equipment.

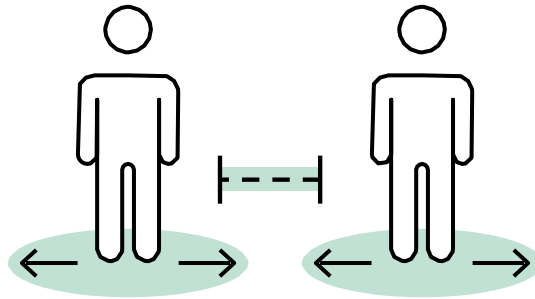
All used books will be placed in a clearly labeled designated container for disinfection before re-use.

Canteen Services

There will be no canteen food service on the campus. Students should bring their own food and drink from home.

Physical distancing procedures

Physical distancing procedures are an integral part of managing the risk and spread of Covid-19.



Physical distancing in classrooms

Classrooms have been set up to accommodate reduced capacity. There will be a maximum of 10 students in a Kindergarten classroom, and 15 students in Grade 1 and above.

Desks have been set at a safe distance apart of 1.5 meters, with physical markings to ensure desks remain in the correct locations.

Teachers will be positioned at the front of the classroom area, at a distance of 1.5 meters from the front row desks.

Physical distancing in corridors

Safety markings have been set up throughout the corridors to indicate safe distances of 2 meters. Students will be monitored to ensure adherence.

One-way pedestrian flows will operate and have been marked out accordingly.

Water dispensers are not permitted to be used.

Social distancing norms being followed are as per the Ministry and GEMS guidelines. Sanitization and safety measures are in place as outlined by the MoE and GEMS. This reopening plan has been drafted based on feedback received from all stakeholders.

The health, safety and welfare of our students, staff and parents is of utmost priority at GEMS. We have 60 successful years of experience in delivering the highest health and safety standards not only in the UAE, but globally.

This document has established the health and safety procedures and standards that will be followed. This is a dynamic document and will evolve based on further instructions and guidance provided by the UAE authorities. We have a dedicated team of trained and experienced health and safety professionals who will ensure that the highest health and safety standards are delivered across all our schools. We look forward to the safe return of our students and staff to the school premises.



EDUCATION

We see **genius** in every child