



Whole School Newsletter: 26 March 2020

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2. From the Principal



Dear GRDS Parent community

Firstly, thank you for all your kind messages of support and for your constructive feedback. I know the whole GRDS community: students, parents, teachers and digital support staff are working incredibly hard - together we continue to grow and succeed. With the uncharted territory that COVID-19 brings, we are taking the opportunity to grow and learn in these challenging, but also exciting times. Your continuous feedback is helping us reflect on what is going well and providing us with insightful responses to improve.

Thank you, to you, GRDS parents for committing your time and energy to Remote Learning whilst also continuing with your own personal and professional responsibilities. The teachers and leaders at GRDS are thankful for our partnership. I am sure you will agree that the GRDS teachers have been truly outstanding this week, adapting to a new approach and ensuring they are able to reach out to their classes. We are all learning so fast with plenty still to learn in relation to stamina and pacing ourselves (all of us!).

The consistent message we are receiving is that the quality of the lesson provided by the teachers are of a very high standard, although we need a moment to reflect on the expectations set when balanced with the current commitments parents are facing when supporting their children at home. Additional common threads we noticed from the parent survey sent were:

Positives:

1. The children love seeing their teachers, especially the morning messages (This was also a strong feature of the student survey)
2. Informative, well delivered instructional videos from the teachers (This was also a strong feature of the student survey. Students appreciated they could work at their own pace and pause the videos)
3. Gratitude for continuing to use the platforms that the students, parents and teachers are familiar with
4. Strong IT and digital support

Further improvements which we have acted upon and amendments will be introduced next week:

1. Providing parents with a simple overview grid of the lessons for the upcoming week. Additionally, resources will be shared in advance (by 7pm for the following day)
2. More opportunities for the children to see and interact with their teachers
 - I. FS will be adding an end of day message with stories/songs
 - II. Specialist teachers will create screencasts
 - III. Year 1-3 will begin to use Microsoft teams from next week to review their day 'live' with their teacher
 - IV. Year 4-6 will extend their use of Teams to offer more 'live' support sessions
3. Teaching staff are mindful of the need to remain balanced in the support that parents can provide

Additional notices:

1. **Register** – Please don't forget to complete the online registers. The school will be expected to maintain the high attendance expectation of KHDA through the remote learning period.
2. **Revised Timetables** – Following the information shared above, teachers will share a revised timetable with updated information and guidance for next week by Saturday. We appreciate your patience whilst we continually evolve.
3. **Technical issues** – for support with See-saw or Microsoft Teams, please email Mr. Oakden (j.oakden_rds@gemsedu.com) or Mr. Champsey (g.champsey_rds@gemsedu.com).

We have created a Remote Learning feedback email rl_rds@gemsedu.com so that we can ensure your queries are shared with the appropriate member of the support team and to further track trends from comments, compliments or queries. This new email address will be available from Sunday 29 March 2020.

Please do also continue the two-way contact with your child's class teacher as they know your children best. Additionally, currently, we are receiving a greater amount of 'online' traffic. I would therefore ask that you follow the usual system of addressing any queries or concerns using the usual pathway to ensure responses in a timely manner:

1. Class teacher/ Specialist teacher
2. Year Leader/ Department Lead/PRE to support
3. Senior Leader/PRE
4. Principal

Finally, I have shared with you in the past that I strive to maintain a regular gratitude diary. I was delighted that a GRDS student in Year 4 took the time to share a page from his gratitude diary with his teacher this week. I have included an image below where he gave thanks to:

The medical profession during COVID 19 (including those in his own family), his teachers for their support with Remote Learning and his parents "for giving him everything he needs". Wise words from a delightful young person.

I will continue to write to you at the beginning and end of the week and will send continuous updates through the Social Media channels. Please do make sure you are 'following' us.

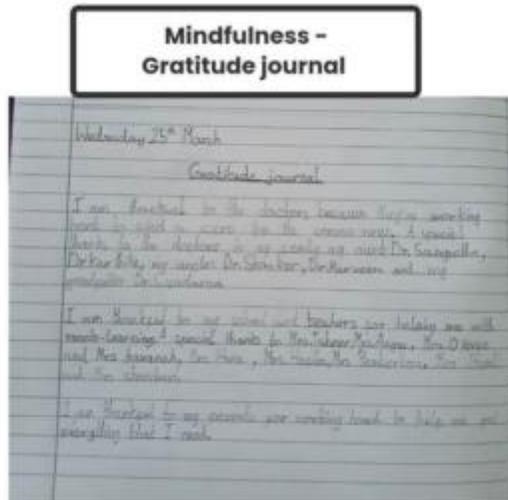
Finally, once again, thank you for the great sense of community and 'GRDS family' which is being created outside of the GRDS building. We appreciate the support across all stakeholders #inthistogetherdubai. Stay safe and healthy.

Yours in Education

Vicky Martin

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Principal/CEO



3. ICARE Weekly

HPL Weekly

Here is an example of how our students could use ICARE to become High Performing Learners

Connection Finding: *The ability to use connections from past experiences to seek possible generalisation*

Ask your child have they found any connections between topics this week? Have they used the work from one lesson and have taken this into another? Why is it important to be able to connect between topics?

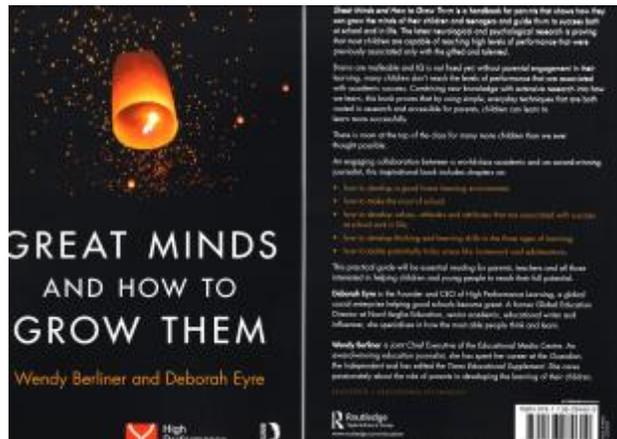
Don't forget to follow @rds_hpl to see HPL in action at home.

Great Minds and how to Grow Them

As a HPL school RDS are delighted to share with you information on a book written by Wendy Berline and Deborah Eyre, called **Great Minds and how to Grow Them**.

The book helps parents guide their children to success in school and in life and is an essential read for parents who are interested in helping their children reach their full potential.

To view a copy of the book please see Shelley. If you wish to order, please make the payment of Dhs 95 to Shelley, she will order the book through Bookworm. Orders will be placed at the end of each week and will take 3 weeks from order for delivery.



4. PE Department

While working at home, staying active is extremely important. It helps students focus, relieves stress, as well as providing an opportunity to use up energy!

The RDS PE Department strive to inspire our students to stay fit and healthy. Our weekly PE grids provide daily opportunities to take part in exercise and next week our PE lessons are designed to allow students to develop their physical skills while at home.

Parents, please don't forget to keep yourselves active too. We encourage the whole family to use the PE activities to help stay fit and healthy!

Joe Wicks @thebodycoach is streaming live PE lessons from Monday – Friday at 1pm (UAE Time) this week and 12pm (UAE time) next week! The PE staff have enjoyed taking part in Joe's sessions that last around 30 minutes. The classes follow his usual HIIT format, with a warm-up followed by a variety of body weight and cardio movements, and a quick cool down!

We have really enjoyed seeing our students videos and photos on SeeSaw – we can't wait to see everyone keeping active next week!

Stay fit and healthy and keep on exercising!

5. Notifications

Temporary Office Closure

In an effort to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 all offices within the School building, including the Accounts Department and Admissions, are closed until further notice.

Please be reassured that our admin staff will continue to support all our families remotely and the below members of staff are available on their emails:

Shelley Cain (PRE) - s.cain_rds@gemsedu.com¹

Laura Barroso (Admissions) - admissions_rds@gemsedu.com²

Hanan Sabri (Registrar) - registrar__rds@gemsedu.com³

Tijo Scaria - t.scaria_rds@gemsedu.com⁴ or finance_rds@gemsedu.com⁵

Deepa Muraleedharan - d.muraleedhara_rds@gemsedu.com⁶

MSO - mso_rds@gemsedu.com⁷

Our School switchboard has been redirected to Shelley between the hours of 8am to 4pm Sunday to Thursday. Should you have any concerns please do not hesitate to contact her and remember updates will be shared with all our families as they are received, through GEMS Connect and by email.

Payment of tuition fees can be made through GEMS Connect, if you need assistance please email our Accounts Department. Forgot your username and password? Just let Shelley know and she will reset it for you.

Whilst FOH are out of the building we will continue to follow up with the re-enrollments for Academic Year 2020-2021.

¹mailto:s.cain_rds@gemsedu.com

²mailto:admissions_rds@gemsedu.com

³mailto:registrar__rds@gemsedu.com

⁴mailto:t.scaria_rds@gemsedu.com

⁵mailto:finance_rds@gemsedu.com

⁶mailto:d.muraleedhara_rds@gemsedu.com

⁷mailto:mso_rds@gemsedu.com

Whilst we fully understand there is uncertainty at this time, it would help us greatly if we knew of your commitment. Mrs. Martin has recruited some new teachers to complement our well-established staff and we are beginning to look at the number of classes required for each year group. Your positive response to this email would allow us to accommodate your child in a class for the new school year, an invoice would be generated and sent home on 31 March, the payment of which need only be made by 12 April 2020. Of course, should your situation change by this date our system can be altered to reflect this.

Should you have any questions or need any support in this process please email Mrs. Sabri (h.sabri_rds@gemsedu.com) or Mrs. Barroso (admissions_rds@gemsedu.com⁸) both of whom are in our Admissions Department.

Remote Learning at RDS

Please see the wonderful video message to all of our GRDS families on our School Facebook page, which compliments this message and survey.

Sending sincere thank you to the GRDS community for their support and engagement during our first week of Remote Learning. We are incredibly impressed with the high quality learning which has been shared via our online platforms and it has been a joy to watch the relationships between students and teachers continue as they share this new learning experience together.

Please could you complete the attached survey, detailing what is working well (we need to know that this should continue) and also anything additional which you feel would support the Remote Learning experience for both students and families.

https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=3Kez0n7Vf0GQrRSbhy6aoYcQIm2uFJhKqa-xEg7ZC_pUQk1JNTA1Q0tITlhIWjBaV1k0WTY0Mk9lWS4u

Wishing you continued good health. Best wishes from the GRDS family to yours.

⁸mailto:admissions_rds@gemsedu.com