

THIS WEEK'S NEWS

IMPORTANT CONTACTS

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GWA Calendar Event Reminder

19 November - Lunch of Rock

20 November - Sports Day

26 November - Classic Solo &
Chamber Concert

30 November - 4 December -
SY Semester Exams

Message from Head of School

At the recent IB Heads World Conference, Mr Pasi Sahlberg presented an entertaining keynote entitled 'Finnish Lessons 2.0: Myths, facts and ideas for improving your school'. Pasi is a highly regarded educator, author and scholar, having worked as a school teacher, teacher educator, researcher and policy advisor in Finland.

Finland has consistently been ranked highly in the PISA results, a system which ranks education systems from around the world. Known more formally as the 'Programme for International Student Assessment', PISA studies scholastic performance in mathematics, science and reading, reviewing student learning outcomes of 15 year old pupils in countries around the world.

Pasi spent some time in his presentation discussing why and how Finland has ranked so highly. A key premise of his argument was that five key components were culturally embedded into the Finnish education system, impacting the philosophy and role of education in Finnish society. These components are:

1. Collaboration
2. Creativity
3. Trust-based responsibility
4. Teacher professionalism
5. Equity: serving and helping every child

These areas were of interest for the assembled IB School Heads, as we lead organisations that aspire and push towards these features within the International Baccalaureate framework at our schools. At GWA, now in our second year, collaboration amongst teachers, classroom environments which

encourage creativity and teachers who trust their students, are daily features. In our parent and student surveys conducted in June 2015, both groups noted that Teacher professionalism at GWA is significant, as has been their focus on every child at the school, in each of the classrooms.

In reflecting on the current progress of GWA, it is reassuring that the development and execution of the Strategic Plan and various departmental action plans, are in line with best practice with successful systems such as Finland. The IB certainly provides a framework which supports this best practice, however it is our teachers who are the driving force behind the great opportunities that are provided to your children every day.

We have a long journey ahead of us. The GWA of today is quite different to the GWA of last school year. The GWA of the future will leverage off the strong foundations we are establishing, utilising best practice from education systems around the world, to ensure that our children are given every opportunity for success, in a supportive, engaging school environment.

David Edwards

Head of Education

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To learn more about Pasi, Finland Education success and PISA, please visit the following links:

Pasi Sahlberg: <http://pasisahlberg.com>

Finland Education Success: <http://www.smithsonianmag.com/innovation/why-are-finlands-schools-successful-49859555/?no-ist>

PISA: <http://www.oecd.org/pisa/aboutpisa/>

Message from our Deputy Principal

At GWA we believe that academic learning should be accompanied by a strong set of values that help our students make the right choices and decisions at every stage of their lives. Students are expected to respect themselves, each other, and the school community by their appearance as well as their conduct. The school has clear policies regarding the use of mobile phones and school uniforms. These expectations are outlined in our Parent -Student Handbook.

Mobile phones are not needed during the school day as phones are available at Reception and in the Division Office should a student need a phone. If mobiles are out in use during the day without express permission, the student will be asked to put it in their cubby/bag. Upon further use, the phone will be confiscated and picked up by a parent from the teacher/office.

Please also ensure students are wearing the correct school uniform. Students may not wear non-uniform items during school hours.

Many thanks for your continued support of the school and its policies. Please feel free to contact me with any questions or concerns.

Arnelle Grundhoefer - Deputy Principal/DP Coordinator
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SOCIAL GET-TOGETHERS WITH GWA PARENTS



A great time was had on Thursday morning this week at Assembly Ground Cafe, please contact our PRE (Judy Lee) if you would like to attend any of the upcoming November events or if you would like more information.

pre@gwa.edu.sg

ECA and Sport Update

The Cross Country season drew to a close this Wednesday with the running of the JS and MS Championship races. The Jaguars were eager to finish their disrupted season on a high and couldn't wait to hit the track.



Under haze free, blue skies the JS runners were the first to race. With a strong group of parent supporters cheering them on. Charlie Rimmer continued his early season form and was the first Jaguar home in the 11U age group. His efforts earned him a well deserved bronze medal. There were also a number of other runners who recorded personal best times.



A rushed trip to the race and with little time to warm up, our MS runners were next to hit the trail. Despite the less than ideal preparation the GWA team performed strongly. Emma Middleditch scorched the trail and her competitors on her way to collecting the gold medal in the 14U age group. She clocked an amazing time of 12:13 for the 3.2km course.

Unfortunately, the weather prevented the 12U girls from contesting their event. They were on the starting line ready to run when the event was cancelled due to lightning.

Congratulations to all runners for a stellar season and for the sporting manner in which they performed. A huge thank you must also go to our coaches: Mrs. Rimmer, Mr. Gilmour, Mr. Gardner and Mr. Edwards for their dedication and perseverance throughout a trying season.



ECA Update

Monday signalled the start of the second round of ECAs. Registration was strong for most activities.

Please note in order for GWA to maximise participation in all ECAs, an attendance policy has been introduced for this block. Essentially, the policy states, "a student who misses two activity sessions in a row or three over the duration of the ECA block, without a compelling reason, will be removed from the activity."

Tony McMullen - Activities Coordinator/PE Teacher
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Sports Day

The focus for Sports Day is teamwork and cooperation. Students will engage in a variety of activities on the field, in the gym and in the pool that require them to work together as a team. All parents are welcome to attend. This is a great opportunity for you to celebrate your children's skills and witness their sportsmanship.

Please ensure that your child:

- Wears sunscreen and a hat.
- Comes to school in PE uniform and comfortable sports shoes.
- Packs their swimmers/swimsuit, goggles, towel, and swim cap (as necessary).
- Packs an extra set of dry clothes in case their clothes get wet during the field events.
- Brings a water bottle and a healthy snack*.

**Please note that students will not have the normal break to purchase snack items.*

Please feel free to contact any member of the PE department should you have any questions or concerns.

We look forward to seeing you on Sports Day!

GWA SPORTS DAY SCHEDULE - 20 NOVEMBER

TIME	PREK-KG1	KG2-GR2	GR3-GR5	GR6-GR10
9am	ALL STUDENTS GO TO CLASS FOR ATTENDANCE			
9:15-9:50	Class	Pool	Gym	Field
10:05-10:40	Field	Field	Pool	Gym
10:55-11:30	-	Gym	Field	Pool
11:45-12:20	Lunch	AUDITORIUM FOR AWARDS PRESENTATION		
12:20-12:50	Class	Lunch	Lunch	Free time
12:50-13:20	Class	Free time	Free time	Lunch
13:20-13:30	Class	BACK TO CLASSROOMS FOR DISMISSAL		

PE Department

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Mika McMullen m.mcmullen@gwa.edu.sg

PY Musical

It Rumbled! It Grumbled!

Mrs. Rodnite and Mrs. O'Rourke have been working with our talented cast to prepare for our upcoming Primary Years Musical.

We will be performing on **Thursday, December 10th at 09:00am** during both the EY/PY Assembly time and also an evening performance at 6:30pm where we would like to invite everyone to join us.

This colourful, atmospheric show takes inspiration from a traditional Kenyan folktale. The animals of the plain are fearful of a strange distant rumbling. "Something terrible is coming this way! It will destroy us and take over our plains." The animals quickly seek the advice of Ghubari, a wise old man who lives at the top of the umbrella thorn tree. But his wise and cryptic words confuse them, so the animals find enough courage to seek out and confront the terrible danger that is coming closer. It's an Animal Rumble Grumble!

Keriann O'Rourke - Drama

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Grade 6 trip abroad

When: April 24th - 29th, 2016

Where: Luther Heights Youth Camp, Coolum Beach, Australia

What: A service action and cultural based experience in Australia. This will be the second year that we have visited this location. The programme will feature team building challenges, community service experiences and support the development of the Learner profile attributes.

Initial parent information session:

Wednesday 2nd December, 6:30pm, auditorium

Grade 7-10 trip abroad

When: April 24th - 29th, 2016

Where: Rustic Pathways Ricefields Base, Udon Thani, Thailand

What: A service action and cultural based experience in Northern Thailand. This experience will support student's understanding of action service learning, and allow them to feel a strong sense of community here as they bond with their schoolmates and new Thai friends through team building activities, deep conversations and immersive community service!

Initial parent information session:

Thursday 3rd December, 6:30pm, auditorium

Paul Rimmer - ELP Coordinator

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