

# THIS WEEK'S NEWS

Shaping tomorrow's leaders, thinkers and doers.

## Message from Head of School

### INFORMATION SUPPORT

Please be reminded that the **Homeroom teacher for your child/children is your main point of contact and support for day-to-day school matters.** Should further guidance be needed, the below staff should be contacted:

#### Curriculum Information:

EY/PY: Olivia Burke  
([o.burke@gwa.edu.sg](mailto:o.burke@gwa.edu.sg))  
SY: Mark Gardner  
([m.gardner@gwa.edu.sg](mailto:m.gardner@gwa.edu.sg))

#### General School Matters:

Deputy Principal: Arnelle Grundhoefer  
([a.grundhoefer@gwa.edu.sg](mailto:a.grundhoefer@gwa.edu.sg))

#### Significant Concerns:

School Principal: Neil White  
([n.white@gwa.edu.sg](mailto:n.white@gwa.edu.sg))



### REMINDERS

**21-23 September** - School

Photos

**24 September** - Public Holiday

(Hari Raya Haji)

**7 October** - GWA Parent Coffee morning and GWA-PA meeting

**10 October, 9:30am -12:30pm** - GWA Family Picnic 9:30-12:30

Throughout the past 8 months, the Education Leadership Team (ELT) has been sharing the philosophy surrounding programme development at GWA, and how this philosophy shapes the execution of the various initiatives at the school. The approach has been borrowed from the leadership team at LinkedIn, who in making the move from a start-up to a company with a significant user-base, found that they needed to simplify in order to truly have sustained success.

The approach the ELT uses has the acronym FCS, which is clarified below:

- F**: Fewer 'things', done very well
- C**: Communicating the right information, at the right time, to the right people
- S**: Speed and quality of decision-making

The temptation is to be 'all things' right from the start of the school's existence. With careful consideration, we know that to spread programmes thin and to stretch students and staff beyond reasonable expectations could only damage the quality of our core focus: delivering high quality learning opportunities to our students every day.

To support the execution of the FCS approach, the team at GWA remain resolute in building upon programmes set in place last year in a considered, strategic manner. Provided below are three highlights from the first five weeks of the 2015-2016 academic year:

**STEM:** Our Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics (STEM) programme is very popular with the students. The in-class opportunities have really taken off. The two STEM labs and the hallway outside the library are alive every lunchtime as large numbers of students undertake daily STEM challenges. Mr Burke is doing an outstanding job.

**Teaching and Learning Quality:** Every three weeks each teacher at GWA has a formal classroom observation, aligned to the GWA teaching and learning expectations. To date 34 lessons have been observed. This commitment to constantly reviewing the core focus of the school will continue to push the education standards at GWA.

**Library Services:** Thus far in September, 1511 books have been checked out by students. This borrowing reflects an almost 5:1 ratio of books to PY and SY students. We are grateful to Mr Dempsey and the classroom teachers for driving this literacy focus.

In the second year of GWA our goals remain very clear:

- Strive towards consistently outstanding daily teaching and learning
- Enhance the delivery of high quality programmes across Sports, Arts and Academics, in a strategic manner by focusing on a few key initiatives
- Ensure that every student is provided with outstanding learning opportunities

After five weeks, we have already taken a leap from where we ended last school year. The coming months will see stronger programme delivery, as we strive towards our goals.

David Edwards - Head of Education

[d.edwards@gwa.edu.sg](mailto:d.edwards@gwa.edu.sg)

## Message from our Academic Advisor

### University Visits for September and October

As we enter our second month back at school, there are lots of exciting new opportunities coming up to inform your future university choices.

On **September 28th** we are delighted to welcome Denise Nijhuis from University College Roosevelt in the Netherlands. This small Liberal Arts and Science college offers an incredibly high standard of education. Denise will be available to meet GWA (Singapore) students and parents at 3.45pm to talk about UCR. At 6.30pm she will give a broader presentation on studying in The Netherlands. With a wide range of courses taught in English, Holland looks set to become the next big destination for international students - and for EU/EEA citizens the prices start at just **€1951 per year** making it one of the best value for money education destinations in the world!

At 1.30pm on **September 29th** Aggie Chan from the University of Calgary will be here for a drop in session to which all parents and students are invited.

For **October**, here are some dates for your diaries (more information to follow):

**October 7th** - David Thornber of The University of Durham.

**October 13th** - Harriet Ng of the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology (HKUST).

**October 14th** - Benjamin Whitehouse from Leeds College of Music.

**October 27th** - ie University from Spain (Castille, Segovia, Leon and Madrid).

For further information on any of the above or to reserve a place, please contact me directly.

**Jonathan Cox** - Academic Advisor  
[j.cox@gwa.edu.sg](mailto:j.cox@gwa.edu.sg)

## Sport Update

Thursday afternoon signalled the beginning of GWA's participation in the Athletic Conference of Singapore International Schools (ACSIS) competition. The 9U boys team travelled to Overseas Family School to kick off their season, while the 11U girls basketball began their season on their home court.

There was a chatter of excitement as the Jaguar girls prepared for their first game of competitive basketball. Despite their inexperience, our girls impressed with their skill and determination. In the first game against a more experienced St. Joseph's team, the Jaguars fought valiantly but went down by the smallest margin. Applying the lessons they learned from their first game, our girls came out victorious in their second game against Nexus. However, the most impressive aspect of the team's performance was the sportsmanship that they displayed. All the girls and Coach Burke left with big smiles on their faces, eagerly anticipating their next game.

The 9U boys football team travelled to Overseas Family School to begin their season. The boys were full of enthusiasm and were excited about kicking off the season in style. With four matches in one afternoon, it was a challenging way to begin the competition. Like the basketball team, the boys' spirits and sportsmanship was the highlight of the afternoon despite the fact that the team had mixed results. Coach Rimmer was full of praise for his team and the attitude that they displayed in all games.

**Tony McMullen**  
 Activities Coordinator  
[t.mcmullen@gwa.edu.sg](mailto:t.mcmullen@gwa.edu.sg)



Meanwhile at home our Cross Country ECA Team worked up a sweat with Mr Edwards and Mr Gilmour.

## EY/PY Curriculum Update

The mission of the IB is to develop active, internationally-minded, inquiring and compassionate young people, who want to make a difference in the world. One of the five essential elements that helps contribute to this is **Action**.

We encourage every student to think about their place in the world, what is happening and what they can do to contribute to it. Action can take many forms from bringing in a book from home that is linked to what students are inquiring into in class. We encourage students to recognise that people of any age can make a difference in the lives of others to make this world a better place.

Please talk to your child or children about things that are happening in our world. If you hear or see them taking action please inform your child's class teacher about what they are saying and doing as a result of what they are inquiring into at school. Encourage them to bring in books or resources from home. All of these help them to make a better connection to the world in which we live.

**Olivia Burke** - PYP Coordinator

[o.burke@gwa.edu.sg](mailto:o.burke@gwa.edu.sg)



PICTURE OF THE WEEK  
Feel the beat! Our Pre-K students with their Music Teacher, Ms Rodnite.

## SY Curriculum Update

Experiential learning is a key aspect of the International Baccalaureate Middle Years Programme (MYP) in which students learn through a cycle of inquiry, action and reflection.

The MYP at GWA (Singapore) encourages students to reflect on their learning and the outcomes of their work. These are key skills that prepare them for success in further study, the workplace and the community.

The personal project in the final year of the MYP provides an important opportunity for our students to be involved in a self-initiated and self-directed learning process over an extended period of time to further develop their independent learning skills.

Our Grade 10 students have recently begun the process of the personal project in which they will decide what they want to learn about, create proposals, plan their time, make decisions, solve problems, create a product or outcome and evaluate the entire process. We look forward to supporting our inaugural Grade 10 class through the project over the coming months and seeing them develop a deeper understanding of themselves as learners through their involvement in this aspect of the MYP.

If you have any questions about the MYP please do not hesitate to contact me.

**Mark Gardner** - MYP / IGCSE Curriculum Coordinator

[m.gardner@gwa.edu.sg](mailto:m.gardner@gwa.edu.sg)

## HAZE MONITORING AT GWA (SINGAPORE)

With the current haze enveloping Singapore, please do note the following school procedures:

- The Education Leadership Team conducts hourly reviews of the government PSI readings for the north of Singapore
- Should there be a clear trend of the PSI rising to 101 or above, all outdoor physical activities are brought indoors, as appropriate
- In the event that an activity cannot be brought indoors, it is cancelled and an alternative proposed, should it be suitable
- The above approach relates to all PE classes, morning and lunch break times, as well as after-school activities

Please rest assured that the health and well-being of students and staff remains at the heart of any action taken in response to the current haze issues in Singapore.