

# THIS WEEK'S NEWS

Shaping tomorrow's leaders, thinkers and doers.

## CONTACT NUMBERS

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## REMINDERS

**7 October** - GWA Parent Coffee morning and GWA-PA meeting  
**10 October** - GWA Family Picnic 9:30-12:30  
**15 October** - PY Strings Lunch time concert  
**19 October - 23 October** - School holiday  
**29, 30 October** - Parent Teacher conferences

## GWA FAMILY PICNIC



We welcome you to join the GWA family and staff community for a fun-filled event:

**Date: 10 October, 2015**  
**Time: 9.30am - 12.30pm**  
**Venue: GEMS World Academy (Singapore)**

E-invite will be sent out to families today. Please RSVP to [rsvp@gwa.edu.sg](mailto:rsvp@gwa.edu.sg) no later than Wednesday, 1st October 2015

## Message from Head of School

Whilst there are many different value-added programmes at GWA (Singapore), it is teaching and learning opportunities that lay at the heart of our ongoing development and review sessions. As an international school, we are certified by a range of organisations, ensuring that our programmes are externally validated as rigorous and appropriate against national and international standards.

In the 2015-2016 academic year, GWA will undergo a minimum of nine external evaluations of our teaching and learning, benchmarked against specific standards and expectations. The evaluations will finalise the layers of certification we are putting in place for your children, ensuring that there is no limitation to the opportunities available to them with regards further academic pathways.

To ensure teaching and learning is strong, every teacher at GWA shares daily lesson planning and overall scope and sequence documentation for review by the Education Leadership Team (ELT). Formal classroom observations occur for each teacher every three weeks. This observation opens up excellent professional dialogue, aligned to the agreed GWA (Singapore) Teaching and Learning Expectations. These expectations cover learning environments, lesson planning, student engagement, homework and assessment practices, as well as teaching strategies.

Thus far, the ELT have conducted more than 50 lesson observations and have been incredibly excited to observe excellent teaching practices in place at the school. The range of strategies being used and the very strong relationship between students and their teachers have been two of many areas of great strength. After each classroom visit, there is a feedback and discussion session with each teacher, the goal being to confirm the great things we are doing each day in every class, as well as how to further enhance what we deliver to children.

This ongoing review of teaching and learning is yet another reflection of the GWA commitment to our mission and vision. We are certain that you will continue to see your child strengthen their learning skills and conceptual understanding, as well as deepening their knowledge within subjects and in making connections across academic domains.

Do take the time to talk with your child each day about what has been happening at school, as well as exploring the information available on our ManageBac and Google Classroom systems. For further clarification, information or support, reach out the teachers of your child. It is the partnership between home and school which contributes powerfully to the development of your child.

David Edwards - Head of Education  
[d.edwards@gwa.edu.sg](mailto:d.edwards@gwa.edu.sg)

### Message from our School Principal

During October, students will undertake the Measure of Academic Progress (MAP) standardised assessment. This tool provides additional external information related to current skills development in reading and mathematics. The goal is for teachers to then use this data to differentiate and adjust instruction so that all students work at levels appropriate for each individual. Testing will take place as follows:

Primary Years (Grades 3 - 5):

Week commencing **October 12-16**

Secondary Years (Grades 6-10):

Week commencing **October 26-30**

Further information will be provided to families over the coming weeks.

Families will also receive the Quarter One Academic Progress Report at the end of October. This Progress Report supplements the ongoing feedback provided by the teachers of your child.

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

### UNIVERSITY VISIT UPDATE

September 28th, 6.30pm - Study in the Netherlands GWAS presentation

September 29th, 1.30pm - University of Calgary (Canada)

October 5th, 1.30pm - University of Bristol (UK)

October 7th, 12.20pm - University of Durham (UK)

October 12th, 3.30pm - Hong Kong University of Science and Technology (**PLEASE NOTE CHANGE OF DATE**)

October 14th, 3.30pm - Leeds College of Music (UK)

October 27th, 3.45pm - ie University, (Spain)

Please contact Jonathan Cox for further details  
[j.cox@gwa.edu.sg](mailto:j.cox@gwa.edu.sg)

### ECA and Sport Update

ECAs continue to roll on despite the persistent haze that envelops Singapore. Our cross country team, swim squad and 9U footballers have had to make alternative arrangements. Our GWA coaches are certainly expanding their repertoire of indoor activities as they continue to hone the skill and fitness levels of their teams.

Unfortunately, many of the ACSIS inter-school competitions have been affected. To date, the majority of the scheduled cross country meets have been cancelled. The 9U footballers were fortunate enough to strike a clear day for their round of matches.

Regardless of the conditions and despite the lack of competition, the GWA coaches have vowed to continue training. To date, no team has missed a training session. However, we are all hoping that things can get back to normal soon.

For the remainder of the indoor ECAs it has been business as usual. ECA teachers are continuing to report consistent high attendance levels. We encourage all students to maintain their commitment in order to maximise their learning and development.

We do understand that there will be times when missing an ECA session is unavoidable. In these circumstances, may we please request that parents advise the homeroom teacher in advance. This is particularly helpful if a student is a regular ECA bus rider. Prior notice enables the transport company to quickly account for all students and avoid bus departure delays.

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

STEM LAB FUN



## EY/PY Curriculum Update

The PYP supports the view that students learn best when the learning is authentic, transdisciplinary, and relevant to the real world; where the learning is not confined within the boundaries of traditional subject areas but is supported and enriched by them (*Making the PYP happen: A curriculum framework for international primary education* (2009).

Assessing students' prior knowledge and experience as well as monitoring their progress during teaching, enables teachers to plan and refine their teaching accordingly. Upon summation of a unit teachers conduct summative assessments. Effective assessments, either summative or formative allow students to share their learning and understanding with others, demonstrate a range of knowledge, conceptual understanding and skills. It must be reflective and should allow for students to analyse their learning, understand what needs to be improved and master the skills required to do so. In the PYP, such assessments aim to give teachers, students and parents clear, evidence-based insight into student understanding of the essential elements of the unit of inquiry.

Ask your child what they discovered during their current unit of inquiry. What did they know before and what do they know now? What was challenging for them and what did they discover about themselves as a learner? Most importantly, celebrate what they have discovered.

**Olivia Burke** - PYP Coordinator  
[o.burke@gwa.edu.sg](mailto:o.burke@gwa.edu.sg)

## SY Curriculum Update

Assessment is an integral part of teaching and learning at GEMS World Academy (Singapore) and all of our Secondary Years students are assessed with a range of both formative and summative assessments through the framework of the International Baccalaureate Middle Years Programme (MYP).

Formative assessments can take the form of homework, class tasks or other activities with the purpose of guiding our students and giving feedback on their progress. Summative tasks are assessed against the prescribed subject group objectives from the International Baccalaureate in which student achievement is measured against four distinct criteria in each subject group. These criteria allow our students to use their knowledge, develop skills of enquiry and planning, show the application of skills and techniques and reflect upon and evaluate their learning.

Over the first six weeks of our academic year all students in the MYP have undertaken a variety of both formative and summative assessment tasks across their subjects and are using the feedback from these to track, evaluate and review their progress and plan future targets.

If you have any questions about assessment in 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.