

# THIS WEEK'S NEWS

## Message from Head of School

### IMPORTANT CONTACTS

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### CALENDAR UPDATE

**2 May** - Public Holiday: May Day  
**10 May** - G5-6 Transition Evening (6:30pm in the Auditorium)  
**19 May** - G8-9 Transition Evening (6:30pm in the Auditorium)  
**16 May to 20 May** - Arts Week

### REVISED SHUTTLE BUS TIMES

**Yishun MRT to GWA**  
 7:40am  
 8:15am  
 8:40am  
**GWA to Yishun MRT (Mon-Thur)**  
 3:40pm  
 4:35pm  
 5:10pm  
**GWA to Yishun MRT (Fri)**  
 1:40pm  
 4:15pm  
 5:10pm

Singapore continues to go through economic challenges, with many of the indicators pointing towards conditions very similar to that of the down-turn of 2008. Interestingly, whilst traditional roles in industries such as finance, shipping and manufacturing have undergone significant headcount reductions, technology focused roles cannot be filled fast enough. In a report by The Straits Times, at least 15,000 vacancies in the IT sector could not be filled in 2014.

For GWA, a school greatly focused on the future of education, this type of information raises the importance of leading change to the model of how we teach and learn. One goal of the future school, must be to future-proof the development of our students, so that they are always ready for the now, next and later of their careers.

Let's look at three current trends and how we need to utilise them in student development:

#### 1. Social Media

Whilst this topic may put a shiver through the spine of some parents, the reality is that social media has rapidly moved beyond pictures of food and cats, to now being a considerable platform for news, engagement and business development. Understanding this and the manner in which platforms can very quickly be used to enhance messaging and communication, is important. These platforms require new skills, mindsets and conceptual awareness, which schools of the future must address in a significant manner.

#### 2. Globalisation

There can be no argument as to the rapid interconnection we have in our personal and professional lives. Beyond social platforms, schools should be looking at tools which connect experts from around the world to significantly impact the learning opportunities for students. Should a classroom be defined as only the four walls in a defined building? The utilisation of a global network of teachers enables the entire structure of a normal school day to be completely reviewed, empowering students to choose what, when, where and how they learn best.

#### 3. Start-up Mindset

The lean start-up model has been at the heart of many of the most successful businesses in the past decade. It is an approach focused on speed and development based upon direct user feedback. It differs greatly from the older approach of spending months writing a massive business plan, all of which is based upon hope rather than proof-of-concept.

It is an exciting time to be in education and GWA is fortunate. GEMS Education is an organisation focused upon disruption and has an entrepreneurial mindset which constantly asks "Can we do this much better?" We are not afraid to take calculated risks and to disrupt the very traditional education industry. It is with this in our DNA that we push towards our launch of 'GWA: The future school'.

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

## Message from the School Principal

During the month of May, we will be holding the following transition evenings for both parents and students.

On Tuesday 10th May, starting at 6:30pm in the auditorium there will be the Grade 5 to Grade 6 Transition evening. The purpose of the event is to provide information regarding the transition for students from Grade 5 to Grade 6. This will include the similarities and differences of the PYP and MYP curriculum, an overview of students timetable and subjects they will undertake, structure of the school day, and an opportunity to speak directly with individual subject area teachers in the Secondary Years.

On Thursday 19th May, starting at 6:30pm in the auditorium there will be the Grade 8 to Grade 9 Transition evening. The purpose of the event is to provide information regarding the Grade 9 and Grade 10 MYP and IGCSE programme of study, an overview of the course pathways available to students in Grades 9 and 10 and an opportunity to speak directly with the individual subject area teachers in the Secondary Years.

In addition to these evenings, Grade 10 students and families will have the opportunity to meet individually with both Mrs Grundhoefer (Diploma Programme Coordinator) and Mr Cox (Academic Advisor) to discuss in more detail the Grade 11 IB Diploma Programme of study which commences in August 2016.

### Neil White

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

## SY Week-Without-Walls

Through the Experiential Learning Programme our SY students have taken part in activities in very different overseas locations this week.

Grade 6 students have spent the week in Australia and have participated in physical activities such as zip lining, developed communication and social skills through team challenges, experienced Aboriginal culture and learnt about wildlife preservation and conservation during a visit to the Australia Zoo. They have also developed awareness of environmental challenges through a study of coastal dunes and engaged in tree planting as part of a volunteer programme to protect the Australian shoreline from erosion. Photographs from the week can be viewed on the following Tumblr link:

<http://gwa-oz2016.tumblr.com/> Password: [gems](#)

Grade 7-10 students travelled to Northern Thailand to participate in service programmes to support the local community. Through the week our students have been supporting the local community by building fish farms, painting to improving conditions in a local school, preparing fields for planting to support food production for the local community and have also found the time to experience the Thai food and culture. To view photographs of students taking part in these activities login to the following Tumblr link:<http://gwa-thailand2016.tumblr.com/> Password: [gwa](#)

All students return to Singapore today, ready to share their experiences and enjoy the long weekend back with their families.

**Paul Rimmer** - ELP Coordinator  
[p.rimmer@gwa.edu.sg](mailto:p.rimmer@gwa.edu.sg)



## EY/PY Curriculum Update

At GWA we are very fortunate to have talented and passionate Early Years educators. All of our EY staff are highly experienced in this very specialised area of education. Every day the teachers and TAs are creating new inspirational experiences and opportunities for our students. Early learning in the PYP is a holistic learning experience that integrates socio-emotional, physical and cognitive development.

In the PYP classroom, it takes place in dynamic environments that promote play, discovery and exploration. Learning through play has been researched over many years. Research and evidence all point to the role of play in children's development and learning around the world (Shiple, 2008). Many believe that it is impossible to separate children's play, learning and development. Young children's play allows them to explore, identify, negotiate, take risks and create meaning. The intellectual and cognitive benefits of playing have been well documented and researched. Children who engage in quality play experiences are more likely to have well-developed memory skills, language development, and are able to regulate their behaviour, leading to enhanced school adjustment and academic learning (Bodrova & Leong, 2005).

We know that young learners are intelligent, resourceful and creative individuals who grow, develop and learn at different rates. They explore their environment and learn about their world through play and relationships with peers, teachers, family and community members.

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

## SY Curriculum Update

This week has been an exciting and rewarding one for all SY students as they have taken part in the Week-Without-Walls programme. The overseas trips have maintained their communication through the feeds to keep parents and family informed through the week and all involved look to be having a fantastic experience.



The in-country students have spent the week exploring ideas around sustainability and working together to provide realistic proposals to make changes in the environment around

them. Through the week students have met with inspirational guest speakers, engaged with organisations and volunteers in Singapore to evaluate approaches to sustainability, and worked together as a team to develop and present their ideas. The activities through the week in all of the experiences are indicative of the skills and attributes the Middle Years Programme strives to develop within our learners, with students actively leading their investigations through the week, working together to identify issues and problems, and thinking critically and creatively to provide solutions.

For further information about the Week-Without-Walls programme please don't hesitate to contact the ELP Coordinator, Mr. Paul Rimmer ([p.rimmer@gwa.edu.sg](mailto:p.rimmer@gwa.edu.sg))

**Mark Gardner** - MYP/IGCSE Coordinator  
[m.gardner@gwa.edu.sg](mailto:m.gardner@gwa.edu.sg)

## MATHLETICS

Daksh Arya in Grade 3.1. was awarded a gold certificate on *Mathletics*, a fantastic achievement because in order to receive a gold certificate a student needs to achieve over 1000 points per week for 20 weeks!



## GWA Parent Events

Lunch at Gardens by the Bay



Next event: 3 May, 9am-11am  
 Wellness Talk @ GWA Training Room

Parent Relations Executive, Judy ([j.lee@gwa.edu.sg](mailto:j.lee@gwa.edu.sg))  
 GWA-PA ([gwapa.singapore@gwa.edu.sg](mailto:gwapa.singapore@gwa.edu.sg))