

**Welcome to GEMS International School,  
Metropark**

**A PARENT GUIDE 2017-18**

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## Section 1: GIM vision and mission statement

GEMS International School of Tropicana Metropark (GIM) will provide an excellent Foundation stage to Year 13 curriculum programme in the English language to students from Malaysia through an enriched Cambridge Primary/English National Curriculum. Our staff will teach and inspire excellence in both academic and 21<sup>st</sup> century skills by continually reviewing and developing a curriculum promoting student success, modelling integrity and mutual respect, while nurturing a desire for a life-long love of learning. Success will not only be measured by academic achievement, but also by the impact that each student makes on the lives of others. Our vision is supported by placing great importance on a GEMS values-driven education expressed through our four core values, which are woven into every curriculum offered by GEMS Schools and are at the core of our DNA. They are not symbolic: we live and breathe them. We encourage independent learning, empowering students to take on responsibility. Through our values our students become confident, tolerant, resilient people of integrity, capable of both leadership and compassion. Through our own initiatives, GEMS students also develop a social conscience. They are taught the values and responsibilities needed to become active members of the community.

Our teachers and students are encouraged to work hard, to give of their best at whatever they undertake and to behave in a way that shows mutual respect for all members of the school community. GIM expects the highest professional standards and we are ambitious for continued success.

### *Mission Statement*

To be the school of choice for families who seek an academically balanced, demanding, strong and rigorous education that is founded on 'Malaysia first, the world next'.

### *Our Mission*

1. We vigorously strive to achieve excellence in all areas of each student's education;
2. We accept a primary responsibility for attending to the academic and social needs of each student;
3. We promote the desire for, and nurture lifelong learning in our students;
4. We nurture curiosity and help students develop skills of inquiry and initiative along with a predisposition for action;
5. We provide a stimulating learning environment for all students
6. We give priority to the continuing professional development of the teaching staff, to the design of a well-balanced educational programme and to a safe and efficient physical plant in order to ensure student success at all levels;
7. We encourage self-expression within the limits of our school standards for personal behaviour and conduct;
8. All members of the community are expected to respect the rights and privacy of others and to acknowledge responsibility for their own actions;
9. We strive to develop a 'Malaysia first, the world next' perspective and promote national and international understanding in all learning areas; and
10. We celebrate and value the importance of the language, history, traditions, culture and beliefs of Malaysia and its peoples.

### *Core Values*

We know academic performance is important because academic qualifications are the passport to accessing a good university but we believe a **values-based education** is of equal importance. GEMS values-driven education is expressed through our four core values which are woven into every curricula offered by GEMS Schools and are at the core of our DNA. They are not symbolic- we live and breathe them. They are: **Global Citizenship, Growing by Learning, Pursuing Excellence and Leading through Innovation**. Through our values we encourage independent learning, empowering students to take on responsibility. Students learn to celebrate diversity in a spirit of understanding and tolerance and develop a positive regard and awareness of other people.

## Section 2: Education and school highlights

### *Curriculum*

The National Curriculum for England, commonly known as the 'British' curriculum, is extensively used by international schools around the world. It is a detailed, planned and integrated scheme covering a student's whole school experience, from the age of 3 to the age of 18. It is a skills and knowledge-based curriculum, served by many excellent textbooks and media resources, with its own assessment mechanisms. In GIM, we will seek to deliver an enriched British curriculum where Malaysia features significantly as a context or case of interest wherever and whenever appropriate.

This curriculum fits into the English Public Examination system that is accepted by universities throughout the world. The intention is that GIM will offer IGCSE and Advanced Level (A/AS) courses in the secondary school preparing students for entry into Malaysian and international universities around the globe. The GIM curriculum is based on the structure of the National Curriculum for England, which is organised into key stages as shown below.

### *Structure of the National curriculum for England*

The curriculum, organised into five key stages, provides a seamless programme from Early Years to Key Stage 5. There are subjects classified as 'core' and 'other foundation' subjects. The school adopts this framework; it endorses the three core subjects of English, mathematics and science and incorporates foundation subjects to enrich this British curriculum.

The GIM curriculum structure is outlined in the diagram above and explained by each section below.



### *Enrichment Studies*

All learning whether academic or applied in nature and whether formally or informally assessed, develop skills and competencies, which collectively prepare our students to be successful prosperous citizens in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. In GEMS schools, we refer to them as personal learning and thinking skills. They fall into six categories which we intend to focus on not only in the curriculum but also through our enrichment activities:

- Creative thinkers
- Independent enquirers
- Effective participators
- Team members
- Self-managers
- Reflective learners

In our school, enrichment activities or co-curriculum transcend the curriculum of the school. This co-curriculum is organised around four strands, namely, Sports and Games, Art, Design and Technology, Music and Performing Arts and Environmental and Community Service.

*For a full breakdown of our curriculum see our 'GIM Curriculum Handbook'*

### *Our learning spaces and facilities*

Our facilities are excellent and inspirational. The total learning experience at GIM is supported by superior facilities which include, air-conditioned classrooms, art rooms, black box theatre/drama room, dance studio, design technology workshop, ICT/digital learning spaces, libraries, music rooms, science laboratories, sports halls and outdoor sporting facilities - archery, basketball courts, climbing wall, futsal court, netball court, sepak takraw court, soccer pitch, swimming pool and learner pool. In addition, a counselling room, Health Office and prayer room is provided. A well-connected (fully Wi-Fi enabled) environment will be provided and all classrooms are well resourced and have interactive whiteboards/iLED screens and ICT systems to help provide the visual stimulus that assists students to learn. The school has shared and individual both indoor and outdoor learning spaces accessible for all students.

## **Technology**

Technology items are key resources to support enhanced teaching and learning opportunities. They do not replace interactive classroom environments, but do allow for instant access to a great variety of suitable information. All hardware and key curriculum applications are provided by the school. GIM will also support a GEMS global Bring Your Own Device (BOYD) policy for secondary students and this will be phased in over the next two years. There will be some restrictive measures on the use of mobile phone devices. Parents and students will be expected to sign a Digital Device Acceptable Use Agreement (DDAUA).

## **Parental engagement programme**

GIM offers parents many opportunities to get involved in school life. From fundraisers to trash clean-up or tree-planting, adults are welcome into the school to help or further improve the school environment. Involvement is important to help people feel connected to the school, and it's an excellent way to build a sense of community among parents, teachers and students.

Different from involvement, however, and with more direct impact on student achievement is parent's engagement in their son or daughter's learning at home. International research shows that parents who are actively and consistently engaged in their children's learning can add the equivalent of two to three years of formal education to that student over their school career. The children of engaged parents do better at school, have better social skills and behaviour, and make better life choices. To be 'engaged' means to support and encourage learning beyond the school walls - at home, anywhere, anytime. Engaged parents are strong role models of learning and send the message that they value education. They demonstrate respect for education by making time for home learning, *and believing that their child can learn.*

Regardless of culture, language or experience, every parent has something to offer their child, and conversation is at the heart of this positive parental engagement. As partners in the education process, parents can reinforce learning by discussing a variety of topics, asking clever questions, listening, doing activities or reading together, and perhaps most importantly, encouraging their children with praise and direction.

Parents can leave everything to school, but their children would miss out on thousands of hours of potential learning that could be going on at home. This is especially true when you take account of evenings, weekends and holidays spent outside of class, that amount to as much as 85 per cent of students' waking hours.

GIM believes very passionately in helping all of our students reach their full potential. We see our parents as central to that aspiration, and seek to give them the information, tools and resources to help their children be the best they can be. Each GEMS school is unique and develops Parental Engagement activities tailored to meet the needs of their community, but certain elements are expected from every school. These may include:

- recognition of parents as central to the teaching and learning process
- 2-way communication informing parents of the study programmes in advance so they can support, and opportunities to report feedback or concerns
- tools, resources and guidance to support their children's learning
- consultation or face to face contact opportunities for teachers, students and parents to discuss progress, set targets and explore how parents can support further progress
- a parent's association which will help promote the '3-a-day' approach and best home learning practices to other parents
- opportunities for parents to attend school events including sports, prize days, assemblies, prize days and cultural fairs, to interact with the staff, students and community
- expert speakers to help parents understand learning and child development
- parent workshops or meetings (coffee hours, focus groups, info sessions etc.) on helping children to learn and succeed
- guidance for students to engage their parents in learning at home and in the community through 'talk, share, encourage'

## **After School Activities**

In our foundation year we will gradually introduce After School Activities (ASAs) as our staff and links in the community grow. GIM staff and outside providers will combine to deliver a range of clubs that extend, develop and enrich the student's

experiences. Activities may be chosen from across the arts, sports and academics as well as further cultural and community opportunities.

### *Learning community*

GEMS International School Metropark is an education community that works together to uphold the school's high standards by:

- inviting support for the school's mission, vision and values
- hiring and retaining the highest calibre staff
- providing opportunities for professional growth
- maintaining an efficient and effective organisational structure
- ensuring clear communication
- maintaining a school spirit characterised by open, positive and respectful relationships and a sense of belonging
- helping an active Parents Association that encourages new families to feel welcome, arranges social events, and funds and supports school initiatives
- working with academic organisations to ensure quality education

## Section 3: GIM Regular school times

### *School timing*

Morning staff supervision for primary/secondary students	7.45 a.m. -8.00 a.m.
Buses arrive on campus	7.45 a.m. – 7.55 a.m.
Little GEMS/Primary/Secondary school	8.00 a.m. – 2.50 pm. (Friday 2pm)

Time is allocated for breaks and lunch during the school day. Buses will leave at 3.15 p.m. It is very important that if your child is not using school transport that they are picked up at 3.00 p.m. Please inform the school office in advance if someone different is collecting your child or if you are going to be late. We will not give any child to an unknown adult unless they have authorisation. If we do not know the person collecting, we will have to telephone you before allowing your child to leave with this person. \*Please note we can only let your child be taken home by an adult (18 years and over).

### **Note the Friday session ends at 2.00 p.m. for all GIM students.**

The regular school week is Monday through to Friday, with occasional weekend special events, focused upon continued enrichment learning.

ASAs will be usually from 3.00 p.m. – 4 p.m. (when delivered). To increase the choice and expertise of ASA offerings to our community, GIM may use private vendors to provide additional activities. These vendors will charge parents a service fee.

A schedule of school events will be included in our newsletters, which are also emailed on a regular basis. We will post reminder signs throughout the school to announce events such as concerts, exhibitions or parent coffee mornings. A parent information board will be located in the main reception along with an LED screen.

## Section 4: GIM school services

### *Transportation*

For parents who will be bringing their child(ren) to school in private vehicles there will be designated points, depending on which section of the school (Little GEMS or Primary/Secondary) they should be dropped off and these will be made clear when the school opens. A map of the routes will be made available.

GIM offers a school bus service to the school covering specified routes. Information is available from our business and administration office.

### *Catering Services*

Our mission is to provide our students the opportunity to learn independence as well as confidence in making good and healthy decisions. We do believe that food is an integral part of the total educational programme and care is given to promote good eating choices and habits. A monthly menu with a meal plan will be provided online for parents to preview and they are designed to be healthy, appetising and culturally varied.

Our school canteen operates on a cashless system. Parents can purchase meal plans at the school office.

The children have access to water fountains and are able to refill their own bottles when necessary.

GIM will have a parent self-service coffee/tea shop on campus. Opening hours: 7.45 a.m. – 2.45 p.m.

### *School Supplies*

The school provides a list of required texts and exercise books for each Year group in the school. Students are required to have these before the school academic year begins. They can be purchased at the Business and Administration office at school.

### *Identification Cards*

A GEMS student ID card and link is a single means of identifying each student and contains information such as the students name, photograph, year group, class, transportation and meal plan details, as well as parent contact information. The card also contains a barcode unique to each student, which can be used to access school facilities such as transport, catering and library (where applicable).

Note: parent ID cards are required to be admitted onto campus. The cards will be provided by the school prior to opening in September.

### *GIM Health Office*

A registered School Nurse will be present and available during the school day in the Health Office. The nurse is responsible for dealing with first aid and any accidents that occur during the school day. Students are encouraged to visit the Nurse for minor complaints e.g. headache, upset tummy, scratches and scrapes and 'mystery aches' during their own time at break and lunchtimes and not during lesson times. If your child has an injury at school or is involved in an incident during the day we will always attempt to speak with a parent in person. The decision to send a student home or to hospital will be taken by the Health Office and the Principal, who will inform parents.

If your child is ill, please do not send them to school. If the child is sick, he/she should remain off school for 24 hours from the last bout of sickness or diarrhoea. This is very important to stop illness being passed on to other students or teachers.

Please inform the school before 9 a.m. in cases of any absence. You can call the office during office hours (8.00 a.m. - 4.00 p.m.) or send an email if you need to provide information regarding your child's attendance.

## Section 5: GIM Expectations

### *Student Care*

We are committed to the development and growth of the whole child, and do not see a divide between the student's intellectual progression and their development as a caring member of the school community.

The school places a very high value on the partnerships developed between staff, parents and students to ensure that progress is as successful as possible. Success is based upon the premise of creating a well-ordered environment in which learning can flourish and where responsibility for one's own actions and having respect for each other is clearly understood. We strive to ensure that our students develop as moral, self-reflective members of the school community.

We believe in the right balance of control and freedom by the use of a firm but fair reinforcement system, which emphasises good behaviour. We set high standards for student work, behaviour and attendance in an atmosphere, which is warm, friendly and caring. Classroom relationships, communication systems, after school activities and the many forms of discussion between teacher and teacher, and teacher and students are as much a part of our pastoral care as the formal teacher to student contact.

On entry to school each student is placed in a class under the care of a personal classroom teacher in primary or Home Room Teacher (HRT) in secondary. They will be in regular contact with the parents of their class to communicate activities and events happening in school regarding their child.

There is a clear line of responsibility to ensure student progress and care is maintained. All staff will be responsible for ensuring students are appropriately dressed and behaved as is expected. If there is an issue regarding behaviour or progress, the Home Room Teacher (HRT) may contact you the parent to help deal with the problem.

In secondary, parents are encouraged to contact the subject teacher first regarding a curriculum issue or the Home Room Teacher regarding a pastoral care issue. All HRT's will monitor the progress of their group through weekly mentoring sessions built in to their timetable.

### *What do we expect from a student?*

GIM has a positive and inclusive approach to managing behaviour. We believe in encouraging good behaviour through a range of positive behaviour management strategies. Through this positive approach we aim to pre-empt inappropriate behaviour, thus enabling us to focus on good behaviour. We believe strongly in the importance of promoting and praising good behaviour. We put great emphasis on the importance of interacting with others in respectful ways through speech, actions and relationships. We aim to provide care and support for our students and support them to learn how to manage their behaviour appropriately. We give students choices and make it clear as to the consequences of the choices they make. We believe that students have rights and responsibilities, have the right to be safe, treated politely and to learn without disruption. Students have the responsibility to care for themselves, other people and their school:

1. Show **respect** for yourself, other students, and adults.
2. Be **prepared** by wearing your uniform correctly, having your materials, and having your homework completed.
3. Be **courteous**, polite, and listen to your teacher and other students.
4. Put your **best effort** into each class.
5. Take **pride** in our school and participate in extracurricular activities.

These expectations are displayed in every classroom

### *Dress code and uniform*

All students are expected to present themselves in a manner that is mature, responsible and maintains the good name of GIM both within the school campus and in the local community. Below are our expectations from students on uniform, sports kit and personal appearance:

#### **Primary**

**Girls:** School light chequered skirts and white polo shirt with school logo, grey, black or white ankle socks and plain black shoes with a low heel and black sole.

**Boys:** School beige shorts and white polo shirt with school logo. Grey, black or white ankle socks and plain black shoes with a black sole.

### **Secondary**

**Girls:** School grey skirts and white shirt with school logo, grey, black or white ankle socks and plain black shoes with a low heel and black sole.

**Boys:** School grey trousers/Bermuda shorts and white shirt with school logo. Grey, black or white ankle socks and plain black shoes with a black sole.

### **Sports kit**

School House coloured T-shirts (red, blue, yellow, green) with school logo and black shorts.

Mainly white trainers with light, non-marking soles and white sports socks.

### **Personal appearance**

#### **Hair Style:**

Hair for both boys and girls should be neat, tidy and of natural colour. Neither shaved nor extremes of fashion are acceptable.

Boy's hair should be of reasonable length (above the collar). Girls with long hair must keep it tied back whilst at school.

#### **Jewellery:**

In general, jewellery should not be worn at school for reasons of safety and to prevent loss. The only exception is that students may wear one pair of simple studs or sleepers in their ears.

No other jewellery should be worn. Students will be asked to remove anything in excess of the above, and the item(s) may be confiscated.

#### **Make-up and nail varnish:**

Make up and nail varnish should not be worn in school. Fingernails must be kept clean, neat and short. Body piercing and tattoos are not allowed.

### **Student Planners**

Students in primary Year 1 upwards are issued with a professionally produced Student Diary at the start of the year. Secondary students receive a Student Planner. Home Room Teachers must check and sign these daily. There are pages for staff and parents to communicate with each other e.g. parents can report if a child is struggling with their homework, or a teacher could indicate that a detention is given for not doing homework or that the child has visited the nurse. It is therefore expected that parents will sign these once a week.

If a student loses their diary/planner then they must pay to replace them.

### **Home learning**

Homework is set in order to reinforce learning from the classroom, practise new skills, inspire new ideas, to find information, to develop independent study and to enhance learning. It is not set for its own sake and its purpose will always be made clear to students. A homework timetable is published to identify evenings when the particular homework should be done or details of longer pieces of work. Students will also be given guidance on timings appropriate for each year group.

Students are provided with a Student Diary (Primary) or Planner (Secondary) and will be guided to ensure homework is written down accurately into this.

It is a school expectation that:

- where appropriate, homework will be given during the lesson
- when appropriate, homework is written on the board for students to copy with an appropriate amount of time given to write it down
- a homework schedule shall be provided for all primary and secondary students
- teachers check that students have written the homework in their planners or have the details pasted in their communication books

Such a record is helpful to students, to their parents and to staff in checking whether and when homework was set, what is expected and the date by which it is to be completed.

Feedback from homework tasks is important in order to help the students value their work and to provide information of the steps required for future progress.

The following is a general guide for homework. A variation in this schedule may be made at the discretion of the classroom teachers.

#### Year Level Suggested Time Allotment for Homework Assignments

LG	Learning extensions on occasion
Year 1	10-20 minutes – 3 days per week
Year 2	10-20 minutes – 4 days per week
Year 3	20-30 minutes – 4 days per week
Year 4	30-40 minutes – 4 days per week
Year 5	40-60 minutes – 4 days per week
Year 6	60-80 minutes – daily as assigned
KS3	90-120 minutes – daily as assigned

Projects and portfolios may carry over weekends and extended day/weeks of time. This becomes the personal responsibility of the learner.

The teacher will write any messages to you and you are requested to respond to the teacher. Please feel free to write in any queries or messages that you have for the teacher. Comments about how your child has managed to complete their homework are also helpful to the teacher.

Please check your child's Homework diary/planner each day/week and sign.

#### *Library*

The purpose of the Library is to support students' learning, especially independent learning. GIM will eventually have two main libraries in the school but during this academic year there will only be one operational for all students. The purpose of the Library is to support students' learning, especially independent learning. It is also a platform for reading and researching in English. The librarian is responsible for all the books and will use the student's ID code to register a book with them. In order to encourage the children to experience a wider range of books they are asked to choose a book from the library on a weekly basis to take home to share and read with parents and family. This gives them the opportunity to extend the variety of books they read and to be able to offer reviews of stories back in class. Please encourage your child to take care of library books and to return them to school each week on the designated day. GIM may charge parents for lost or damaged books.

#### *Physical Education (PE) arrangements*

Students have PE sessions each week. On PE days students should arrive in school in uniform but have their GIM PE kit to change into. No earrings, bracelets or watches should be worn. Should students have PE outside they are required to bring water and sun protection if so needed.

All students are expected to participate in all PE activities, including swimming. Children who are not well enough to participate in PE should not really be in school, but if there are exceptional circumstances please write a note in the diaries/planners or inform the nurse. They will still go to games, but will sit and read, or watch or be involved in activities in other ways e.g. refereeing, scoring etc.

#### *Trips and Visits*

Continuing a child's education outside the school environment is often one of the most productive forms of education. Hence we actively encourage trips and visits in the local community and beyond. Residential trips will be sanctioned either totally within holiday time or for a maximum of three school days. The school will also monitor which students go on trips throughout the year to prevent examination students losing too much time.

The trips will be placed on the school calendar and parents will be contacted in advance whether it involves any additional cost. Money for trips will be paid through the Business and Administration office.

### ***House System***

The House system encourages healthy competition in a variety of activities. Each House is led by a House Captain. All staff and students are allocated to one of the four Houses. Siblings will be assigned to the same house. The Houses are to be named with a 'Malaysian theme' in mind and allocated a primary colour – yellow, green, blue and red. House colour T-shirts will be available as part of the uniform. Our House Points reward system supports achievement in the widest sense - academic and pastoral.

### ***Student Voice (Student Council)***

Our core values are supportive of students exercising leadership and team work skills which enables them to become engaged in driving the school forward as well as being active in creating a forum for student issues. Each class has one Representative (peer selected) and each year has one Student Council Representatives (selected through interview) and a Journalist (to help promote and celebrate student achievements). The structure will change when the school gets larger.

### ***Student Rewards***

Achievement Certificates will be awarded by classroom and subject teachers for achievement or positive behaviour (these will be awarded at assembly) *House Points* - are also awarded for exceptional work, homework achievement or for positive behaviour. Each week House Points will be counted and a tally chart updated. These points will go towards the final House Trophy. This is currently being developed.

### ***Absences and Holidays***

If your child is going to be away from school or has been away, it is important that you notify the registrar and your child's class teacher by calling the office. You should provide the following information:

- ✓ Your child's full name and class;
- ✓ The date(s) your child was or will be away;
- ✓ The reason for your child's absence;
- ✓ Any other important information.

## Section 6: Parent contact information

School address	GEMS International School, Tropicana Metropark
Telephone number	
Fax number	
Principal	Mr Simon O'Grady <a href="mailto:Principal_git@gemsedu.com">Principal_git@gemsedu.com</a>
Head of Primary	Mr Craig Lewis <a href="mailto:c.lewis_git@gemsedu.com">c.lewis_git@gemsedu.com</a>
Principal's Secretary	
Registrar	
Parent Relations Executive	
Administration Officer	
Head of Operations	Mr Murali Taharan Gingan <a href="mailto:m.gingan_GIM@gemsedu.com">m.gingan_GIM@gemsedu.com</a>
Deputy Manager of Operations and Facilities	
Website	<a href="http://www.gem.edu.my">www.gem.edu.my</a>