

Dear Parents,

Over the last few weeks, it has been so exciting to learn all about DIS and I must pay thanks to Mrs Burke for the time she has spent assisting. I am enormously excited about meeting more of the community over the coming weeks and months, and very much hope I will be able to meet with you soon.

I am writing to you today to provide some initial information about the opening of the school in September. I am fully aware that this is a priority for parents, and I will be writing regularly over the next few weeks to provide updates. We are delighted that the schools are being allowed to open, as we fundamentally believe that the best learning takes place in the classroom. However, we must also be mindful that this should not take precedence over all of our safety needs which will always be our foremost priority.

In a recent round of government announcements, the regulators in Dubai have confirmed that schools will be reopening to students from 30th August, 2020. However, conditions will need to be in place to ensure the health, safety and wellbeing of everyone at the school. To achieve this, the KHDA have issued a set of guidelines to schools which can be found here. As you will see, these relate to social distancing and the provision of learning environments, but also allow schools flexibility in suggesting their own structure, in respect of their current space, facilities and resources.

We have recently surveyed families and were delighted with the response rate. The survey results indicate that most families are happy to return to the campus while some families are understandably still concerned about returning their children to school due to underlying health concerns for family members, but at the same time were keen for the children to return to their lessons. We fully understand these views and we will continue to ensure that a full provision of elearning will be in place for the students who wish to remain at home at the start of the new term, with a combination of synchronous (live) and asynchronous (flexible) learning. This will allow the students to remain closely connected to their peers and remain part of Deira International School. The purpose of the distance learning is to support our community with vulnerable family members and the 'back to school' offering will be the same, with the same quality of learning and fees will be in-line with those already listed for 2020-21.

With health and safety of primary importance, we have already undertaken a number of important safety measures to ensure a safe return, including:

- Installation of seven thermal imaging cameras at students and visitors entrance points
- Total sanitization of the school prior to opening and Increased sanitisation frequency of all learning spaces as per Dubai Municipality cleaning and disinfecting guidelines
- Appointment of a full-time Health and Safety in charge for the school
- Social distancing measures for all learning and used spaces
- Contactless entry and exit for all students, staff and visitors
- Continuous health and safety training for staff

*"Forever learning, forever achieving"*

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- Teachers and students above 6 will be wearing masks all the time
- Buses temperature screening before and after the journey with a 1.5 m distancing seating plan as per RTA guidelines for transportation

With the current social distancing measures being recommended by the regulators, we have submitted a plan to the KHDA to be fully open in September to all students with the regular school timings. To achieve this, we have proposed the following approaches to teaching and learning:

1. The student community will be spread across the entire campus using all of our flexible spaces, such as specialist labs, the DIScovery Centre, Libraries and newly appointed blended learning plaza.
2. For FS1 – Year 1, students will be allocated to stable groups no more than 10 students. Each stable group will have its own classroom and adult and each group will have equal time with class teacher and LSA. Year 1 specialists will come to the classrooms.
3. For Year 2 – Year 6, primary classes may be split across two rooms however the teaching remains together.
4. In the secondary school, (Years 7-9) all students will be taught in their tutor groups for all lessons/subjects. They will remain in the same classroom throughout the day; the teacher will move to the students. Students will be split 50/50, in order to maintain the 2m social distancing.
5. The only exception to this will be during PE lessons where the students will move to the PE facilities for lessons but adhere to the 2m social distancing rule and engage in appropriate physical activities. Those not taught directly by the teacher for 50% of the time, will have access to well-structured online (flipped) learning.
6. For Year 10 - Year 13, groups greater than 18 students will be split 50-50. Groups under 18 will be learning in the larger classrooms, maintaining social distancing of 2m.
7. As part of the curriculum children will be reminded about regular handwashing and hygiene practices

#### Provision for students who wish to continue with e-learning

1. Class teachers, Teaching Assistants and Learning Specialists will continue to provide a blend of synchronous (live) and asynchronous (flexible timing) learning for students in every class.
2. Through a combination of live streaming, recorded learning segments and use of our digital platforms, we will expect each e-learning student to follow the same curriculum content and assessment structure, including external benchmarking assessments.
3. Enrichment content and some live-streaming will also be shared as part of the home learning experience

Alongside the learning provision proposal there are also a range of other important operational aspects that have to be considered, including pick-up and drop-off, bus provision, lunch arrangements, site movement and school dress procedures. We are currently reviewing all of these attributes, as a School and with our providers including Maverick and Abela. These attributes also form part of our submission to KHDA. We will keep you regularly updated on the latest directives from the regulators.

In summary, the fabulous news is that we intend to be fully open for learning as usual at the start of the new academic year and will be able to provide a safe learning environment on site for every student at Deira International School. You may still have many questions at this point and, if so, please do not hesitate to contact us with any concerns. As will always be the case, we remain fully committed to providing the best possible learning experience we can.

Finally, the next few days sees the celebration of Eid Al Adha. I hope you are able to have a break and spend some time with those you love, and may I wish you all Eid Mubarak.

Yours faithfully,



Simon O'Connor  
Director  
Deira International School