



OUR REF :

TRN: 100483609200003

DATE : Saturday, 19th September 2020

To: The Parents of students in Years 4-13 – DISTANCE and BLENDED LEARNING UPDATE

Dear Parents,

Greetings from Saint Mary's. As we begin week four of this Academic year, we invite you to read through the important updates for the coming week. We pray that all of you and your children are safe and well.

BLENDED AND DISTANCE LEARNING:

We would like to clarify that even if your child has opted for Blended Learning, all Distance Learning Schedules and plans are applicable to your child as well. Attendance is also being recorded per session by each teacher.

BLENDED LEARNING CRITICAL AND EMERGENCY RESPONSE REQUIRED:

If any child who has opted for Blended Learning shows symptoms of Covid-19, they must be kept at home and a diagnosis must be sought from an approved medical practitioner. The parent must email Ms. Lise-Ann on l.pinto-smchs@smgeducation.org and inform her of the status and send a copy of a PCR test that has been conducted. In addition in case a child or a parent, sibling or any family member of a child who has opted for Blended Learning, tests POSITIVE for COVID-19, an email must be sent to Ms. Lise-Ann without delay and the child must be kept at home to self isolate for 14 days. These are critical DHA requirements and as the Health and Safety Officer of the School, Ms. Lise-Ann will then contact the parents of any other child who was in contact with the child in question as well as staff members who will also have to self isolate for 14 days as part of contact tracing requirements. ***A PCR Negative test for a child who previously tested positive is also required in addition to the 14 day isolation in order for the child to return to school.***

UPDATED PARENT CONTACT INFORMATION TO SCHOOL & CLASS TEACHERS:

We have uploaded a link on the school website for you to access and provide us the critical information required without delay. We would like every parent to understand that this information will be urgently needed in emergency situations that are related to the health, safety and security of your child and therefore we urge **ALL PARENTS** to fill the Google Form **ACCURATELY** and **WITHOUT ANY DELAY**. You will need to enter the correct SIMS ID for your child. If you do not know this ID, please send an email to IT SUPPORT on itsupport-smchs@smgeducation.org Please use SIMS ID REQUIRED as the subject of your email. **We are still waiting for many parents to fill in this information. THIS IS MOST URGENT!!**

ZOOM GUIDELINES FOR PARENTS:

WE WOULD LIKE TO REITERATE THAT THE LEARNING SESSIONS IS STRICTLY BETWEEN THE TEACHER AND THE STUDENTS. All previous guidelines have been made available in our PROCESS MAP and we urge you to go through those carefully. We thank you once again for your collaboration with the teachers in supporting your children through lessons. **It is a huge breach of PRIVACY under UAE law to record any live sessions without the permission of all those in a session.** Unfortunately it has been observed that some parents have been doing this. This is in complete violation of both UAE privacy laws as well as laws concerning Child Safeguarding and Protection and must not ever be done in future. The school will be compelled to report any future actions regarding violation of the same to the relevant authorities. Let us all remember to be respectful to one another as this is a key value to teach our children.

WEEKLY LESSON PLANS:

Every Saturday, we will upload the lesson plans for the week so that you will know in advance of the week what your child is going to be learning in the week to come. These plans can be found under the relevant departments on the school website.

REGISTRATION ATTENDANCE:

The daily registration time is **7:10- 7:20am**. Class teachers will post a **DAILY ZOOM LINK** in the **GOOGLE CLASSROOM** and live attendance will be taken during the morning's registration. It is mandatory for every child to be live on camera for this morning registration and this is the attendance that will be logged into SIMS. **Children who miss this morning's registration for attendance will be marked as ABSENT even if they attend lessons post this session.** Kindly

make sure that every child understands the importance of this morning's registration. It will also be a time for daily morning prayer before lessons begin for the day.

ATTENDANCE FOR LIVE SESSIONS:

Your child's attendance is also marked for each Zoom Session. In case your child has missed a session, you need to email the class teacher and inform him/her regarding the reason for the absence. If this is not done the absence will be marked as an 'unjustified absence' and for that particular subject.

SIMS PARENT APP/ ACTIVE LEARN/ ACTIVE TEACH:

Please note that these are still in process and our IT Support will be sending out the invitation and credentials for the same in some time. We will let you know via a circular when that process gets rolled out. Kindly do not email IT Support for this at the moment.

KHDA PARENT-SCHOOL CONTRACT & ADDENDUM WITH LEARNING MODEL CHOICE:

All parents whose children have been studying in our school will have already received the Addendum with the choice of Learning Model directly from KHDA. If you have not already signed this it is crucial that you do so immediately. Parents of students who have been admitted to St. Mary's this year will have received both the KHDA Parent-School Contract and the Addendum with the Learning Model Choice on the email with which you were registered on the KHDA system. When you receive the same, please do not delay in signing it electronically.

ALL PARENTS MUST TREAT THIS AS VERY IMPORTANT AND RESPOND WITHOUT DELAY.

For any queries related to the KHDA Parent-School contract, please email Ms. Mary Fikry on arabicsec-smchs@smgeducation.org

DL SECTION ON OUR SCHOOL WEBSITE:

We would like to remind ALL parents to kindly visit the DL section on our school website as we have been updating it with many useful links , documents, vital information for keeping your children safe online, tips on well-being and mindfulness to name a few. We are sure that you will find these useful and we will keep updating this section as often as we can.

DAILY CLASS GROUP EMAIL:

The class teacher will continue to update parents daily with an easy to follow schedule for the next day as well as any other important school updates and circulars. In addition on Saturdays, parents of children from years 4-11 will receive a weekly schedule of Zoom/ Google Classroom lessons. For years 4-8 we have also created one single spreadsheet that the class teacher will

post every evening in the Google Classrooms that will carry all the Zoom meeting codes and links for all lessons for the next day. It will be like one single reference space and will simplify the process for parents and students.

BOARD EXAMS:

Please note that Pearson Edexcel Board Exams fees are due in the month of November 2020. Please keep this in mind as you budget accordingly. We would like to remind all students who will be sitting Board Examinations this year to be very mindful of how a very unique situation unfolded with the previous batch of Board Exam students due to the Global Pandemic caused by Covid-19. In this very unique situation, schools had to send Centre Assessed Grades for students in the absence of Board Examinations. This made many children realise albeit too late the true value of being consistent with their study habits and not waiting until the last minute before exams to prepare and study. Although we do not know if the same situation will present itself and we hope that it won't, it is always best for every child to be **CONSISTENT AND HIGHLY REGULAR** with their study and ensure that they maintain a good level of attainment across all their assessment opportunities.

FIRST TERM FEES:

A reminder to all parents that the First Term fees must be paid in full only via the Skiplly App **no later than the 30th of September 2020.**

STATIONERY PACKS WITH NOTEBOOKS:

Please note that the stationery packs and notebooks that your child usually receives at the beginning of the Academic Year will now be delivered by Iris International when the textbooks are delivered to your homes. Even if you ordered only for the Active Learn, this comes with some textbooks and so stationery packs will be delivered with these books. Book deliveries commence from tomorrow. The courier will contact you on the phone number you provided to Iris International.

COMMUNICATIONS POLICY:

We have uploaded our communications policy and we would urge all parents to please go through it. All teachers email contacts are available in the CONTACTS SECTION of the school website. We believe that most matters and concerns can be resolved by writing in to the concerned teacher and clearing any doubts or queries you might have. For more serious concerns or issues, you are requested to kindly send an email to our Vice Principal, Ms. Lise-Ann who is in charge of Communications. Her email ID is l.pinto-smchs@smgeducation.org Kindly provide your mobile phone contact when you write to her as she might require to call and speak to you. She will apprise the Principal of all related issues that require attention.

ASSESSMENT SCHEDULES OCTOBER 2020:

Please note that assessment schedules will be prepared and sent in the last week of September with an explanation of how assessments will take place for each subject. Teachers will continue to use formative assessments in lessons to track students' progress. Some summative assessments for senior cohorts have already been carried out and these will be included as part of the assessments.

GL EXAMINATIONS IN ENGLISH, MATH & SCIENCE CARRIED FORWARD FROM MAY-JUNE 2020 YEARS 4-10 (CURRENTLY YEARS 5-11 in the Academic year 2020-2021):

Please note that the GL examinations that were to be held in MAY-JUNE 2020 have been carried forward by GL to September-October 2020. You have already paid for these examinations and we would like you to find the schedule for the same herewith. GL Examinations will be based on concepts covered last year in English , Science and Math and children have already covered up the same through the year. When exams have been scheduled on Saturdays we would be grateful for parental supervision as well.

GL EXAMINATION SCHEDULE YEARS 5 through 10

SUBJECT	TEST DATE
MATH	Thursday, 24th September 10:00 am to 12:00 pm
ENGLISH	Saturday, 26th September, 9:00 – 11:00 am
SCIENCE	Saturday, 3rd October, 9:00 – 11:00 am

GL EXAMINATION SCHEDULE YEAR 11

SUBJECT	TEST DATE
MATH	Thursday, 1st October 10:00 am to 12:00 pm
SCIENCE	Thursday, 8th October, 10:00 am – 12:00 pm
ENGLISH	Thursday, 15th October, 10:00 am – 12:00 pm

Please go through these TEST PROCEDURES with your children:

GL INSTRUCTIONS FOR STUDENTS :

- 1) Open the GL website in your browser : (www.testingforschools.com/code)
- 2) Your class teacher will send to your individual email your specific code for each subject in advance. Keep this code very carefully and do not share it with anyone else. Your teacher will also send you a Zoom link so that you will be present in a live session with your class and teacher. It might be useful to connect on Zoom via a mobile phone so that your laptop is used only for the test. You may use your parent's phone to connect as well.
- 3) Enter the subject (**English, Math, Science**) **access code** sent in your email. (Only the code for the particular subject)
- 4) **CHECK YOUR NAME** in the right hand side of the test window. If your name does not appear inform your class teacher.
- 5) **Wait** for the test to begin.
- 6) **Open the test** and answer the questions. Duration for each subject is 1 hour. **Complete all the parts of the test.**
- 7) After you have answered all the questions, please **recheck** your answers (**click back button**) and then click on **SUBMIT**
- 8) Click on your name on the **right hand side and logout.**

PRACTICAL ENDORSEMENT FOR GCE BIOLOGY, PHYSICS and CHEMISTRY- Parents of Year 13 students -Important:

The basic requirements for the Practical Endorsement are unchanged. Students still need to complete a minimum of 12 practical activities, covering both the CPAC requirements and all apparatus and techniques. A minimum of 15% of marks in the written examinations will still cover indirect assessment of practical skills.

Externally imposed limitations, such as localised school closures, may make meeting the usual Practical Endorsement requirements difficult for some centres. In such cases, students may still be awarded a Pass in the Practical Endorsement if they have demonstrated competence in all of the CPAC, even if they haven't completed the usual minimum requirement of 12 practicals. In all circumstances, it's important that students are still taught about any apparatus and techniques they are unable to cover, as they will still be expected to answer questions about these in the examinations.

Practical activities will be carried out either virtually (since children are on Distance Learning for the first term) or physically if the learning model changes and depending on the situation and **ONLY WITH THE PRIOR CONSENT OF THE PARENTS.**

All practicals should be addressed during the teaching of the specification, as they may be assessed in written examination papers. However, some practicals may not be carried out by students, as they only need to carry out the minimum number of practical activities required to demonstrate competence.

Students should still engage with practical activities – either by carrying them out in the laboratory or by other means – in order to develop these skills, which will be assessed in written examination papers

All the techniques could still be assessed in written examination papers. Although centres are encouraged to complete sufficient practical activities to cover the 12 practical techniques in Appendix 5c, the essential requirement is to demonstrate routine and consistent competency in CPAC statements.

In order to ensure that students meet all the requirements of the Practical endorsements even though virtually and considering the additional challenges this brings to the whole process we have set aside **TWO VIRTUAL HOURS 9:00 – 11:00 AM EVERY SATURDAY COMMENCING 26TH SEPTEMBER 2020 FOR THE GCE SCIENCE PRACTICAL ENDORSEMENT. ATTENDANCE IS MANDATORY AS THESE WILL COVER THE MANDATORY CPAC PRACTICAL ENDORSEMENT FROM PEARSON EDEXCEL. A MEDICAL CERTIFICATE WILL BE REQUIRED FOR ANY ABSENCES**

Teachers will inform students the previous week depending on the science they have chosen. Your collaboration in stressing how important this is to your children will be greatly appreciated. This is extra time being made even by the teachers for the best intentions of the children and their board exam year.

CORE PRACTICALS FOR PEARSON EDEXCEL GCSE (9-1) BIOLOGY, PHYSICS and CHEMISTRY- Parents of Year 11 students -Important:

It is now permitted for students to observe demonstrations / simulations in place of carrying out practical work themselves. Centres will still need to confirm that students have completed the mandatory core practicals, but this can be by observation of demonstrations / simulations in place of carrying out practical work themselves.

In order to ensure that students meet all the requirements of the Core Practicals even though virtually and considering the additional challenges this brings to the whole process we have set aside **TWO VIRTUAL HOURS 9:00 - 11:00 AM EVERY SATURDAY COMMENCING 10TH OCTOBER 2020 FOR THE GCSE (9-1) SCIENCE PRACTICALS . ATTENDANCE IS MANDATORY AS THESE WILL COVER THE MANDATORY CORE PRACTICALS FROM PEARSON EDEXCEL. A MEDICAL CERTIFICATE WILL BE REQUIRED FOR ANY ABSENCES**

Teachers will inform students the previous week depending on the science they have chosen. Your collaboration in stressing how important this is to your children will be greatly appreciated. This is extra time being made even by the teachers for the best intentions of the children and their board exam year.

ADMISSION TO YEAR 12 FOR THE ACADEMIC YEAR 2021-2022 -PARENTS OF YEAR 11 STUDENTS:

We would also like to bring to your attention that under the British system, a student completes high school with the completion of his/her O-Level. **Hence the admission to A-Level is then a process of a 'NEW ADMISSION'.**

We would like to point out very clearly , that admission to A-Level is not automatic. The conditions for a student to be considered for a place in A-Levels are as follows.

- **SHOULD HAVE AN EXCELLENT BEHAVIOURAL RECORD**
- Must opt for 4 subjects with a high grade average in the subjects opted for.
- Admission will be merit-based.
- Hold a high grade average in ALL SUBJECTS (Internal Exams) in Year 11
- Should have not had any serious or repeated disciplinary issues over Years Nine through Eleven.
- Should not have engaged in activities, in or out of school, which tarnish the reputation of the school.
- **Hold a minimum attendance record of 95%**
- **Be prepared for an entrance exam in the subject opted for that has not been taken at O-Level.**

We would like to thank all of you, dear parents for your continued support and collaboration and above all for your prayers during this most challenging time of our lives. Let us continue to hold one another in prayer and be hopeful for better days ahead. We assure you that we shall keep you up to date with all important information as we journey through this season. Stay safe and healthy!

Yours sincerely,



Mr. Paul Asir Joseph
(Principal)

