

# GEMS American Academy Qatar

## Online Learning Plan

2020-2021

Updated 4/5/21



## Purpose of This Document

The purpose of this document is to outline the actions and approach GEMS American Academy Qatar (GAAQ) will put into action in the event of a school closure. We will continue to offer an effective and outstanding education through an Online Learning Plan (OLP).

At GAAQ, we are committed to delivering our high-quality education for our learners even in the event of a campus closure. This OLP outlines the experience that students, parents and teachers will have when school remains in session, but when students are unable to physically attend school because of campus closure. While an OLP cannot replicate onsite learning, our teachers can deliver powerful instruction that allows students to meet expected standards in an online environment. The aim is for our learners to continue to be inspired, passionate, and intrinsically motivated to reach their learning goals.

The success of our OLP rests in the partnerships we have already formed as a learning community. Our dedicated teachers will commit to careful planning, maintaining an online presence, and providing regular feedback. Our students will need to show their leadership and purpose by completing their online work with tenacity. Our families will need to support this alternative mode of instruction in the home environment. While this is a challenging time, these circumstances also provide an opportunity to explore innovative learning opportunities for our learning community.

This OLP will be grounded in our vision and values.

### **GAAQ Vision and values:**

At GAAQ, we have developed our core values and learning principles to empower students to attain their goals and to become successful citizens of our global community.

Our Core Values are: Respect - Innovation - Leadership - Purpose - Tenacity

Our Learning Principles are:

1. Developing healthy connections
2. Goals first
3. Authentic assessment and constructive feedback
4. Effective use of time
5. Nurturing independence and inquiry

**Please note:** This is the current version of our OLP as of April 2021. Our goal is to simulate as closely as possible the same quality of learning our students would receive during a regular school day. As a community we will most likely learn ways to improve upon this plan in order to accomplish this goal. Therefore, we will edit and update this living document and communicate any changes to our community as needed.

## **Important definitions:**

Synchronous learning refers to a learning event in which a group of students are engaging in learning at the same time. For the purposes of this OLP synchronous learning will take place on zoom during daily class schedules.

Asynchronous learning is a general term used to describe forms of education, instruction, and learning that do not occur in the same place or at the same time. For the purposes of this OLP asynchronous learning will refer to online videos and assignments that students will complete on their own.

## **Leadership Expectations**

First and foremost, GAAQ leaders set the tone and model what is expected for every member of our learning community. Administrators' daily support and on-line presence and responsiveness are essential. The list below outlines some of the commitments our leaders are expected to make but is not all-encompassing.

- Share and monitor OLP with learning community.
- Communicate with staff on a daily basis.
  - Daily SLT meeting in person or via zoom.
  - Daily bulletin.
- Monitor daily attendance of staff and students.
- Contact parents of students if they are absent both synchronous and asynchronous. assignments.
- Ensure OLP is successful by monitoring student progress.
  - Admin will be joining online classrooms.
- Support the OLP with technical issues.
  - Follow up with teachers' IT questions.
- Respond to emails within 24 hours as usual.
- Continue to hold regularly scheduled virtual meetings with teams.
  - Grade level leaders and Head of Department meeting.
  - Ensure teachers are available for meeting students' needs.

## Teacher Expectations

We recognize how much more difficult lesson planning and conducting lessons will be in an online format. Nevertheless, we know that our team of professional and dedicated teachers will do their very best to continue to foster healthy relationships, use time effectively, provide authentic assessment and constructive feedback and nurture independence and inquiry. As a result, we have outlined the school-wide expectations for teachers below. There may also be division specific guidelines below.

- Arrange to meet with students synchronously during scheduled class times.
- Post assignments regularly.
- Grade/give feedback regularly.
  - The goal of this regular feedback is to ensure students understand assigned tasks and are working on them from home daily.
- Take daily attendance.
- Set up office hours for students.
- Help students establish a daily routine.
- Attend virtual team meetings.
- Read the daily bulletin between 9 am and 10 am each day.
- Answer emails within 24 hours as usual.
- Make it clear to students when assignments are expected to be collaborative or individual.
- Make learning individualized, differentiated, relevant.
- Ensure lessons continue to follow our curriculum maps, pacing guides and standards.
- Ensure lessons and content are culturally appropriate and respect the traditions and beliefs of our host country of Qatar as well as those of our other families.

### **Tips to help teachers:**

- If you plan to record a video of yourself and share this with students via an online learning platform, it is essential that you follow the protocol below.
  - *Ensure that the video recording has an acceptable background and that there is nothing visible that could be deemed culturally insensitive or offensive.*
  - *Ensure that nobody other than you can be seen or heard in the video.*
  - *Ensure that you are in professional dress.*
  - *Ensure that students know how to access the video*
- Share ideas and resources with other teachers.
- Ensure assignments are able to be accomplished by students in a reasonable time.

### **Student Expectations ([Class Expectations Link](#))**

We recognize that this situation will significantly impact our students. However, we also know that our GAAQ Raptors are tenacious and have the purpose and leadership skills necessary to innovatively approach this new learning opportunity respectfully. We encourage our students to show the same level of commitment to their studies as they would in school. We also encourage them to reach out to their teachers and parents about any difficulties they may be having academically, socially or emotionally based upon this situation. Below are a list of guidelines developed to help students succeed during this OLP:

- Establish a daily routine.
- Attend all synchronous lessons. We recognise this may be more difficult for some students and families than others. Exceptions will be granted if parents have communicated their circumstances with teachers.
- Complete all asynchronous assignments on time.
- Identify a quiet workspace.
- Monitor your online learning platforms daily.
- Meet all posted due dates.
- Complete assignments with academic integrity.
- Work collaboratively when assigned by teacher or work individually when specified by a teacher as you would in school.
- Communicate proactively with your teachers.
- We suggest that students consider having learning partners. A learning partner is a friend or group of friends who they can call to ask questions or work collaboratively with when allowed by the teacher.

## Parent Expectations (can share Student Expectations Infographic from above)

We recognize that each family's situation, ability to provide a quiet and supervised space and ensure adequate access to technology will differ. We also realize that with the transition to remote learning, parents in partnership with teachers, will need to think differently about how to support their children; how to create structures and routines that allow their children to be successful; and how to monitor and support their children's learning. Some students will thrive with remote learning, while others may find it challenging as this is a new way to access the curriculum. The guidelines provided below are intended to help parents think about what they can do to help their children find success in a remote learning environment.

- **Try to establish a routine.** We recommend keeping normal school bedtimes and encouraging students to do school work during regular school hours.
- **Know your child's online learning schedule** and encourage them to conference with their teachers during office hours.
- **Ensure your child has downloaded and understands how to use zoom and any other division specific online learning platforms.**
- **Computers with keyboards are more effective learning tools for this OLP than tablets.** Tablets are more effective learning tools for this OLP than cellular phones.
- **Try to make a "school" space for your child** at home where they can do work independently but also be easily monitored.
- **Take an active role in your child's online learning.** We know this will be potentially challenging time for our families as they try to maintain their normal work routines but also support their children's learning. We recommend you work in conjunction with your child and their teacher and check assignments and progress daily if possible.
- **Monitor your child's stress, physical activity, social media** etc. We also recognize that this will possibly be a difficult and frustrating time for some families as children spend an extended period of time at home. GAAQ will do all we can to support our families by providing high quality online learning opportunities and maintaining close contact with our students and parents.

## Upper School Specific Information

Upper School Teachers will meet their normal class of students, by period, each day, where attendance will be taken and students will then have opportunities to discuss questions or concerns they have through “Zoom” conferencing. In addition, teachers will be meeting with classes using the modified block schedule Sunday through Wednesday and following our regular Thursday online schedule.

### Upper School Daily Schedule:

| Regular Times | Ramadan Times | Sunday Block | Monday Block | Tuesday Block | Wednesday Block | ThursdayTimes | Thursday Block |
|---------------|---------------|--------------|--------------|---------------|-----------------|---------------|----------------|
| 7:30-8:40     | 8:00-8:55     | 1            | 6            | 1             | 6               | 8:00 - 8:30   | 1              |
| 8:40-9:50     | 8:55-9:50     | 2            | 7            | 2             | 7               | 8:30 - 9:00   | 2              |
| 9:50-11:00    | 9:50-10:45    | 3            | 8            | 3             | 8               | 9:00 - 9:30   | 3              |
| 11:00-11:55   | 10:45-11:10   | Break        | Break        | Break         | Break           | 9:30 - 10:00  | 4              |
| 11:55-12:05   | 11:10-12:05   | 4            | 9            | 4             | 9               | 10:00 - 10:30 | Break          |
| 1:05-2:15     | 12:05-1:00    | 5            | Office Hours | 5             | Office Hours    | 10:30 - 11:00 | 5              |
|               |               |              |              |               |                 | 11:00 - 11:30 | 6              |
|               |               |              |              |               |                 | 11:30 - 12:00 | 7              |
|               |               |              |              |               |                 | 12:00 - 12:30 | 8              |
|               |               |              |              |               |                 | 12:30 - 13:00 | 9              |

### Upper school teacher expectations:

- At the start of every class a lesson plan should be posted.
- Read “Daily Bulletin” after 9am at some point during the day (planning)
- Additional expectations will be developed and discussed on Sunday the 11th.

### Upper school student expectations:

- Students must use their school Gmail account
- Students must comply with all individual teacher instructions and rules.
- Students must follow behaviour policies as normal as stated in the Upper School Handbook.
- Cyber bullying that is recorded will be reported immediately to Administration and your parents.
- Students are expected to access Zoom to log their attendance in the first period class, by making a visual appearance to be logged as present.
- Students must complete assignments by due dates, normal late policies for each subject apply.
- Failure to comply with class instructions may result in being removed from the class for the rest of the lesson.

### Lower School Specific Information

Teachers will post their assignments and learning objectives and meet their normal class of students on Zoom several times throughout the school day based on their Daily Schedule. Teachers will send parents their child's Daily Schedule via Class Dojo.

#### ***Tips for parents:***

- Please identify a caregiver that will help your child at home with accessing the technology as specified on their Daily Schedule, sent via Class Dojo.
- We recommend families/students download the “Zoom” application now so they are ready for digital learning on Sunday, April 11th, 2021.
- Set up expectations that students will be learning as on a normal school day. We have built-in breaks and specials classes to reduce the unavoidable screen time. Please be sure students attend Zoom classes and complete their assignments on-time and with considerable effort, as these activities will count toward overall grades and progress.
- We recommend that each of your children have their own device so that they can attend all of their classes and complete their asynchronous work.

Please anticipate regularly updated communication from your teachers as they will explain more details of how assignments will be given and the expectations they have. Please plan for online learning and synchronous classes to officially commence **Sunday, April 11th**. We truly appreciate your flexibility as we work through this adjustment to provide the best learning experience for your students.

#### Lower School Daily Schedule:

Teachers will endeavor to follow their grade levels normal schedule as closely as possible. However, some adjustments have been made to make online learning and transitions more effective for students working from home. All core subjects and most elective subjects will have both synchronous and asynchronous learning opportunities daily. Teachers will communicate each child's weekly schedule for this OLP directly to students and parents via classroom dojo.



Lower School required software: Seesaw (KG2 to Gr 5), Dojo and Zoom (PreK-Gr 5)

Lower school teacher expectations:

- Teachers will post their zoom links on their weekly schedule and share via Dojo (SeeSaw).
- Teachers will be clear with lessons and assignments posted on SeeSaw (KG2-Grade 5). PrK and Kg1 will be using Dojo.
- Weekly schedules for learning will be published.