



9 August 2020

Dear BIS Community,

I hope this letter finds you and your families doing well and staying safe and healthy. It has been almost two weeks since my last letter to the community and I thought I would share some important updates as we get closer to the start of the 2020-2021 academic year. You can expect frequent updates from me moving forward along with school specific updates from the school principals as they start work officially on August 11, 2020.

Communication is a top priority at BIS and in order for school and home to be on the same page, we must be able to share information but also receive information from you as parents. This year we have dedicated two additional email addresses for parents to reach us and we have our admin assistants and receptionists constantly checking those addresses to ensure we get back to you in a timely fashion.

For KG/ES families, you can reach us at: kges@bis.edu.kw

For MS/HS families, you can reach us at: mshs@bis.edu.kw

Each school level will have a dedicated tab on our website as well, which includes up-to-date information, we will continue to post information on our social media outlets and you will continue to get regular updates from the school levels and myself when applicable. Please make sure to bookmark our [KG/ES](#) and [MS/HS](#) E-learning Plan pages to stay up-to-date on the new information.

School Principal Introductions

As BIS continues to grow, I am delighted to introduce to you our two new principals that will be leading our respective school levels.

[Mr. Todd Gribbon](#), our new KG/ES Principal is joining us from North Bay, Ontario - Canada. Mr. Todd has 27 years in education and has served as a teacher, assistant principal and most recently a principal in Canada. Mr. Todd has also worked overseas as a teacher and administrator.

[Ms. Lorraine Hirakawa](#), our new MS/HS Principal is joining us from Seattle, WA - USA. Ms. Lorraine has 26 years of experience in education and has served as a teacher, instructional coach, assistant principal and most recently a principal in the US.

You can read more details about both of our new leaders on our website or clicking their names that are hyperlinked above. They are both excited to start their work at BIS and are eager to arrive in Kuwait.

Re-Enrollment for Next Year

BIS is complying with the general circular from the Ministry of Education dated 14/5/2020 regarding the payment of the “deposit fee” of KD 100 and is not requesting parents to pay this deposit for the next academic year 2020-2021 in advance. However, it is extremely important for us to know, as precisely as possible, what our returning student population will be. Thus, we appreciate sharing your plans regarding your child(ren)’s re-enrollment at BIS for the academic year 2020-2021. Kindly let us know **immediately** only if you **do not wish to re-enroll** your child(ren) in BIS for the next school year by emailing our Admission’s Office at: admissions.office@bis.edu.kw. You may also reach them Sunday - Thursday from 9 am to 2 pm at 22052800/11.



School Start and Calendar

As of right now, the information that we received from the Ministry of Education is that we will commence all classes online, KG 1 - Grade 12. Below are important dates for the start of the school year:

| Date | School Level |
|--------------------|--------------------------------------|
| September 9, 2020 | First day for Middle and High school |
| September 10, 2020 | First day for Elementary school |
| September 13, 2020 | First day for Kindergarten |

As we get closer to the actual start dates, you will receive information about our orientations that we will do to give you an opportunity to meet your child(ren)'s teachers, meet our counseling department and learn about services that they can provide your child(ren) and families, and learn more about our e-learning program and the enhancements that we have made - some of which are highlighted below for you. As per the Ministry guidance so far, we will start online, all school levels will have some type of orientation so that you can get your questions answered and we start the school year with school and home on the same page.

E-learning Updates

Over the summer a lot of our staff members and school leaders conducted extensive research, attended webinars and read about safe return to school models and online education. Just recently we surveyed our staff asking them about what they have learned, and we also took the information we received in the spring from the parent, staff and student surveys to improve our e-learning program and policy. We formed a committee which has a variety of BIS staff members.

Some of the enhancements to our e-learning program that we have made based on the feedback are:

1. We will be providing you most of the instructional materials ahead of time for you to collect from the school to avoid excessive printing at home.
2. Staff have worked on the "essential standards" for each content area and grade level to ensure that those standards are focused on and covered during the e-learning period.
3. All Staff will receive training during our pre-service on high-yield strategies, specifically designed for online education.
4. Middle and High school students will be assigned "advisory" teachers that will be available to assist students with planning and organizing.
5. We will continue our counseling services and provide support to families and students who are in need - more specific information will be coming from our wonderful school counselors.
6. We will continue our inclusion program and meet the student's individual education plan (IEP).
7. We will have dedicated afternoon/evening office hours for students/parents to seek assistance.
8. We will incorporate other online activities for students to be able to socialize with their friends and peers.

Just as a reminder, this past spring BIS continued to offer elective classes like PE, Music, Art and IT as a part of the weekly schedule and will continue to offer those as well.



I will be sharing our “BIS whole school plan for e-learning” with your families very soon, in order for you to have all the general information in one place and can plan accordingly as you prepare your child(ren) to continue learning.

Subsequently, each school level will share school specific information as we get closer to the start dates listed above. Finally, after all staff return back to work on August 23, 2020 you will receive additional information that is specific to your class.

Please note that the above information is based on the information that we have received thus far from the Ministry of Education. Should that information change, then our plans will be adjusted accordingly, as we have planned for a variety of scenarios given that the circumstances that we are in are constantly changing and evolving.

May God bless Kuwait and the BIS Community. Stay safe.

In Partnership,

Dr. Zak Palsha
Director