



GIS NEWS

September 2020 issue



HAPPY NATIONAL DAY



SAUDI ARABIA 2020





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September 2020 issue

The latest news and updates
for faculty and staff of Gulf
International School

Contents

**Celebrating the Kingdom of
Saudi Arabia**

Saudi National Day Contest

Distance Learning Survey

Challenges of Virtual Learning

About MS Teams

**Protecting and Monitoring
My Child's Use of MST**

Staying Active

**Academic Calendar for the
Year 2021/2020**

Celebrating the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia




G20
SAUDI ARABIA 2020
REALIZING OPPORTUNITIES
OF THE 21ST CENTURY FOR ALL

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The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has made great advances in the last 90 years. This month, we celebrate these accomplishments and our appreciation to the Leadership of our great nation; His Highness, the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Salman. Saudi Arabia's emergence on the world stage is demonstrated through our being chosen to host the G20 Summit this year. We are recognized and given international praise around the world for our humanitarian efforts.

In addition, the Leadership's response to the Coronavirus Pandemic and their subsequent development of a comprehensive development of the health services is acknowledged globally. From free corona testing too all citizens and residents, to free healthcare for all, Saudi Arabia stands as a nation devoted to the betterment of the lives of its people as well as all visitors and others who live here.

Saudi Arabia, in its 90-year history, has always received praise for its hospitality, protection and assistance of all pilgrims as they are welcomed to the Kingdom to perform Hajj. This year, the Kingdom took additional measures to ensure the health and well-being of all pilgrims of all citizens and residents during this time of the Coronavirus Pandemic. We also want to thank the Kingdoms leadership for the consideration shown to the students, faculty and staff of all our education institution, as well as our Saudi students abroad that the government graciously brought back home when the virus began to spread.

The King's guidance and foresight have led to the school conducting all classes by online virtual learning this semester. It is within this framework that the school recognizes and is grateful to the foresight of the leadership of Saudi Arabia. The protection afforded us by King Salman has been instrumental in keeping the outbreak contained within Saudi Arabia.

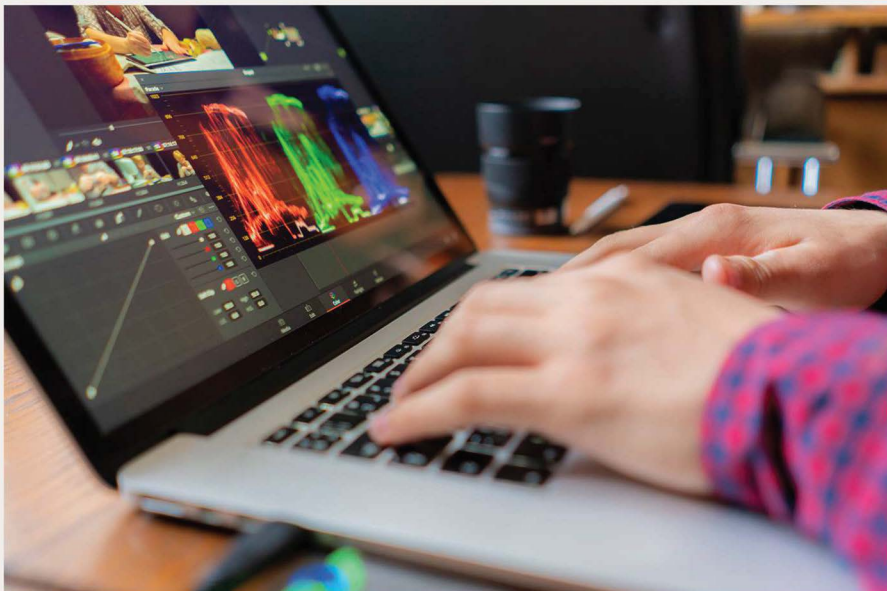
This year, we celebrate not only our rich and diverse history and accomplishments, but we celebrate the future of a country that will continue to prosper and grow with the blessing of the Great Almighty under the historical and wise leadership of His Highness, the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Salman Bin Abdulaziz, may Allah protect him.

SAUDI NATIONAL DAY CONTEST

Gulf International School took pride in virtually celebrating the 90th anniversary of Saudi National Day. In order to commemorate Saudi National Day, GIS created a virtual contest for all of our students.

Criteria for judging the video submissions included but were not limited to:

- Originality
- Submission was representative of one of the three topics
- Submission was within the time constraints given
- The creativity of the video



Students in grades K-12 were invited to make a 30-second video representing only one of the following:

1. A 30-second video depiction of the culture or heritage of Saudi Arabia
2. A 30-second video celebrating the 90th Saudi National Day
3. A 30-second video acknowledging and appreciating Saudi Arabia for the Saudi Leadership's efforts in combatting Covid-19

The submissions were judged in three different grade categories:

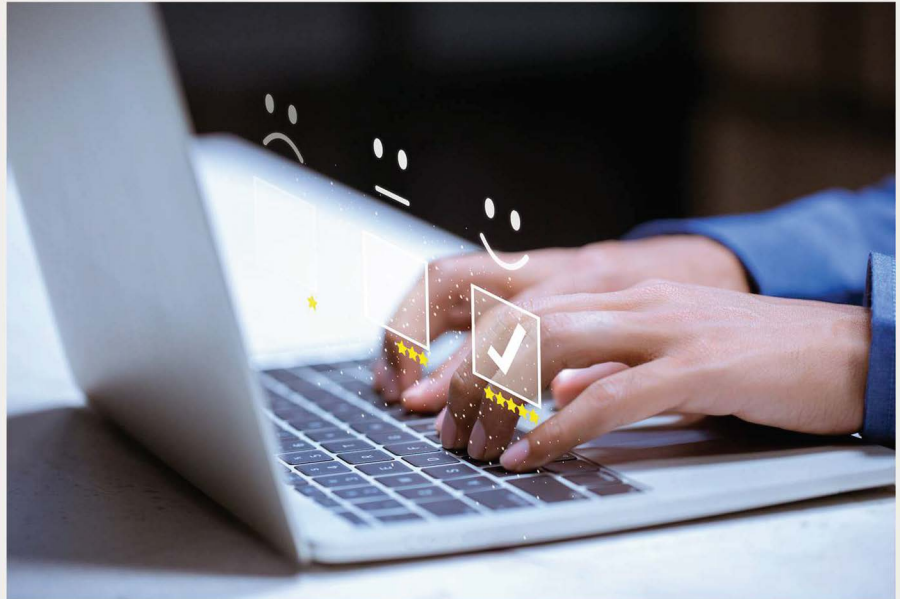
- a. Grades KG3 to Grade 3
- b. Grades 4 to 7
- c. Grades 8 to 12

The winners are:

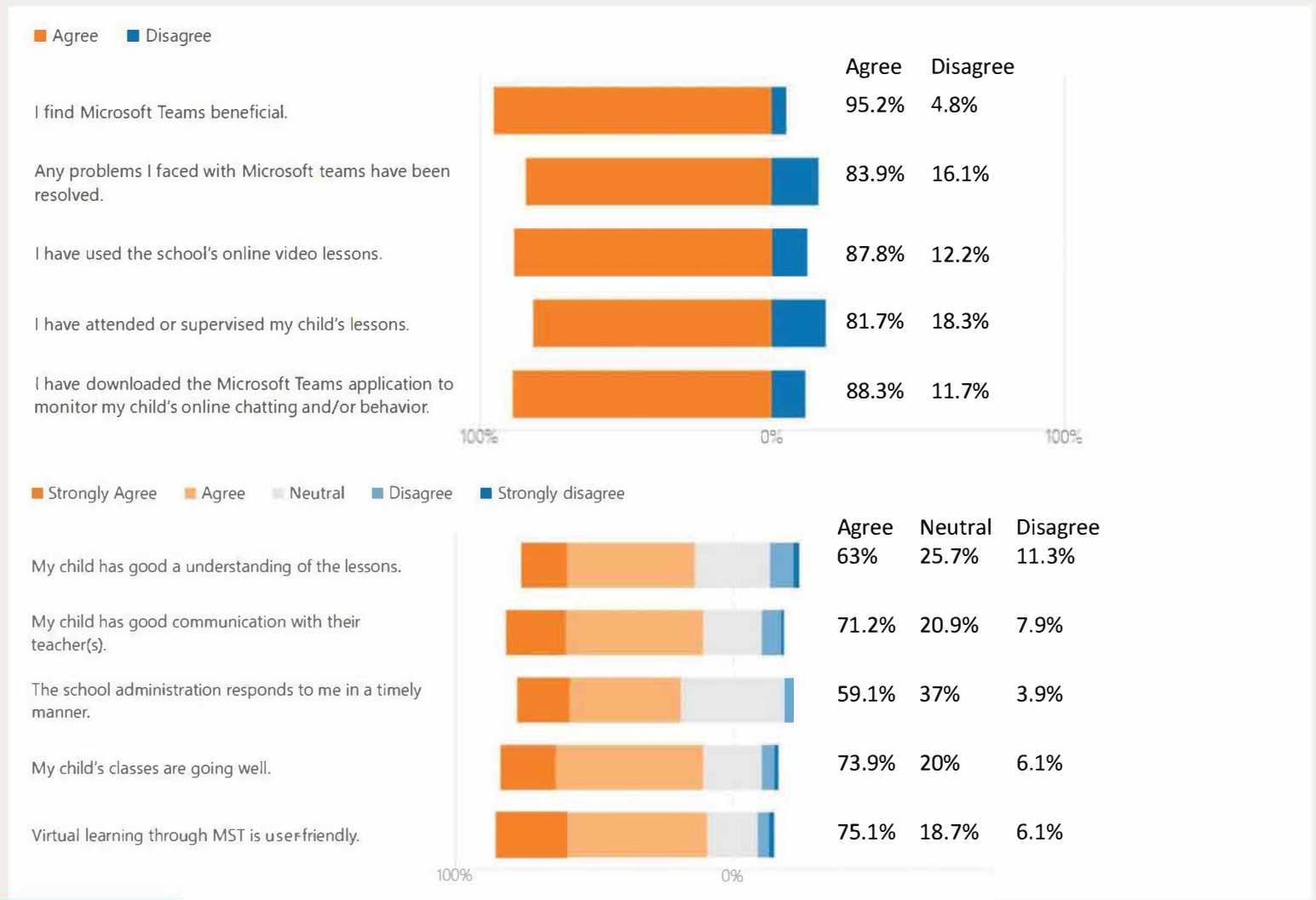
1. Jack Sprat Grade 2
2. Oliver Twist Grade 7
3. Scarlett O'Hara grade 12

Distance Learning Survey

On Wednesday, September 10th, GIS sent a survey to all of our parents asking for feedback regarding Microsoft Teams and **they** and **their** child's experience with online learning. The results were excellent and we are happy to share those **with you**. First of all, nearly **30%** of our parents from grades KG3 to 12 responded and completed the survey. We are grateful for this response. It helps us know what we are doing correctly and it tells us what we need to do to improve.



Here are the graphs showing the results:



Comments:

The personal “thank you”s were wonderful. Those ranged from a simple “thanks” or “thank you” to more detailed responses, such as:

1. I really appreciate the teachers and staff for their hard work in preparing the online learning.”
2. “Great experience! Especially the fact that teams accommodates everything from lessons, slides, and homework to chats and communication with the teachers. I love it!”
3. “we are happy, but it’s difficult to manage my four children...but everything is okay until now. Thank you.”
4. “thank you GIS for your decision to replace zoom with Microsoft Teams. Using teams is smart and a huge upgrade.”
5. “everything is going good, thanks to the school management. Just one wish, if teachers can be



Finally, during this time of seriousness; a little levity can be appreciated. **Several** of our parents expressed their feeling regarding online versus in-school learning:

- “Personally, I find school teaching better than online classes.”
- “Hoping school will resume sooner as we missed that environment.”
- “We wish to re-open school sooner... miss school badly.”
- “We want school to resume as normal... sooner”

And a favorite that speaks to many of us:

“I need my normal life to return. ”

Constructive criticism:

In order to improve, GIS needs to listen to our parents. Below are some of the constructive criticisms we received:

1. “Lessons need sound adjustment as **it’s** lagging some times. Homework and learning materials have to be uploaded at a fixed time of the day to avoid checking for uploads every hour.”
2. “The duration of online classes should be reduced to 40 minutes; less homework should be given; not more than two subjects.”
3. “I don’t agree about the start time from 8 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. because I’m working and his mom not here... we are facing a problem with this... if you can change the time to at least 5 p.m.”
4. “It is too much of a load for students and parents tp watch videos before lessons. This means that students will need to sit for extra time watching the screen and this is too much for their eyes.”
5. “During online classes there are many disturbing voices coming from other students and this is hard to control by the teacher. Whatever she tries her best which makes some students lose their attention.”



Challenges of Virtual Learning

Our school counselor, Mrs. Rasha Bahjat, attended a webinar presented by Dr. Hanan Al Sheikh from John Hopkins Hospital Aramco on the challenges of virtual learning. The process of virtual learning can be quite new and challenging for schools, students and parents.

Dr. Al Sheikh explained that the common problem is the anxiety of adapting to the new system of learning. There are different ways to combat these challenges for an overall smoother experience during remote learning.



Things to remember:

- 1/Every child will have different abilities to deal with anxiety.
- 2/Not all children will have the same intellectual level or IQ.
- 3/Try not to create a stressful environment for yourself or your child.
- 4/Try to use simple language as a means of communication.
- 5/Understand the reaction of each child in adapting to online learning classes may differ.
- 6/Adapt yourself or familiarize yourself with technology and the learning platform your school uses

Challenges for Parents:

- a) Having two or more children attending virtual class
- b) Unable to monitor their children
- c) Working parents are unavailable
- d) Lack of technological knowledge

There are various challenges one may face through virtual learning. The goal is to combat these challenges by using different techniques and positive approaches.

Parents and schools can use various teaching tools and activities to keep their students' interests. Group studying for higher grades can build social relationships for interacting and motivating each other. Finally, it's important to create a positive environment for learning. At GIS, our parents are always welcome to speak and discuss with our School Counsellor, Mrs Rasha, regarding any challenges their children are facing through virtual learning. Parents or students can arrange an appointment Sunday through Thursday from 8 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. to meet Mrs. Rasha at school by contacting the main reception or they or may email her at: rasha@gis.edu.sa

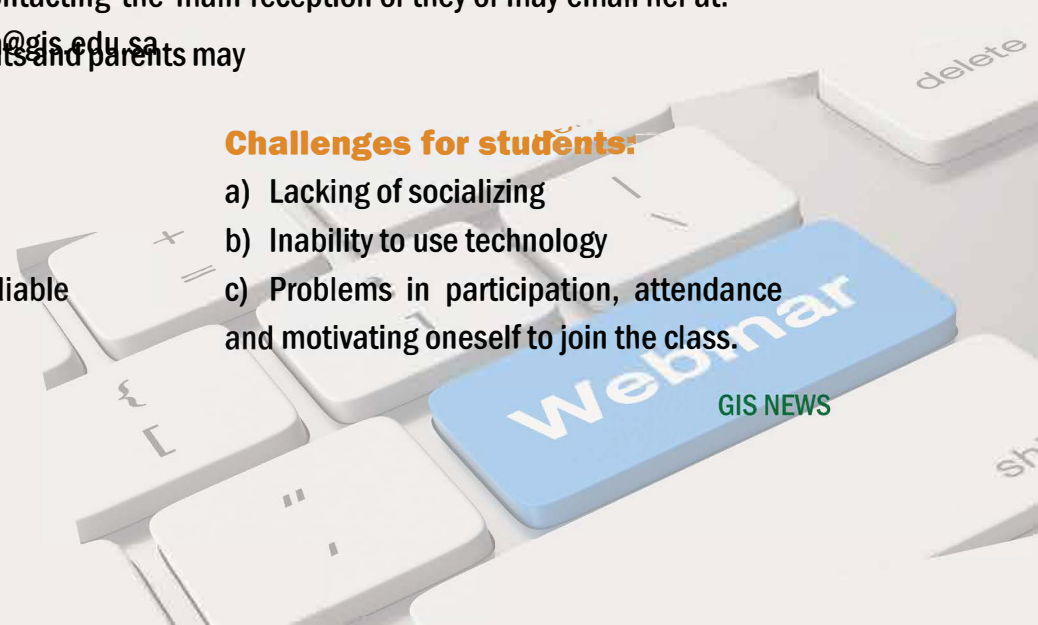
Here are some of the challenges that schools, students and parents may face:

Challenges for schools:

- a) Implementing new ways of E-learning
- b) Systematic introduction of online curriculum
- c) School must have upgraded IT resources and a reliable learning platform as well as strong internet service

Challenges for students:

- a) Lacking of socializing
- b) Inability to use technology
- c) Problems in participation, attendance and motivating oneself to join the class.



About MS Teams



What is Teams?

Microsoft Teams (MST) is a software application developed by the Microsoft Company and is a part of Microsoft office 365. Companies use the software to communicate and collaborate, and now Microsoft has designed a learning platform for schools and educational institutions to develop and deliver lessons for teachers to present and continue teaching to their students virtually. MS Teams is a Learning hub for both teachers and students. It was created as a virtual classroom environment used to communicate and collaborate with the teachers, attend meetings, sharing files, home works, and vice versa.

Using my MST account

Once you have accessed MST, now it's time to sign into your account. The School's IT Department provides all students a Username and Password.

- MST advises all users to change their password once logged in for the first time.



How to access?

User has to have user ID (email address).

MST Support

Gulf International School has provided, and continues to provide support to our parents and students on using Microsoft Teams.

- During the orientation held in the beginning of the year, we offered an introduction on MST and how to use it. The orientation was done online via Microsoft Teams.
- On September 2, 2020, we allowed parents to visit us at the school from **5 p.m. to 7 p.m.** to answer any questions and help parents gain a full understanding on MST.
- We had, and continue to offer, a service where parents can send in their queries regarding MST from **9 a.m. to 12 p.m.** on WhatsApp.

The number in which you can contact regarding any questions about MST is

+966 50 410 8147

Please be informed that in order to receive a response, you must include the following information:

- 1. Students name**
- 2. Students ID**
- 3. Students grade and section**
- 4. The concern/question**

All of these must be sent in one message

How to access MST?

MST is accessible in three different methods:

1. Mobile Application
2. Desktop Application
3. Web Browser – MST can be accessed through the office 365 portal to Login into the MS Teams.
4. It is possible to get access to teams through www.office.com or the MS TEAM word's application.

- **To use Teams on the web, it is only possible on Chrome or MS-Edge.**

Protecting and Monitoring **My** Child's use of MST

Protecting your child

It's always best to prevent problems from happening before they happen. As parents and as educators we must do our best to ensure the safety of our children and students.

This can best be done by monitoring students online. In addition, prevention is worth a pound of cure if parents:

- Speak to their children about online behavior and whom they chat with.
 - Encourage responsible behavior
 - Build digital resilience so that your child will know how to react when something happens that is dangerous or inappropriate
- All of the above are essential points and the basics of what parents can do to protect their child.

In conclusion

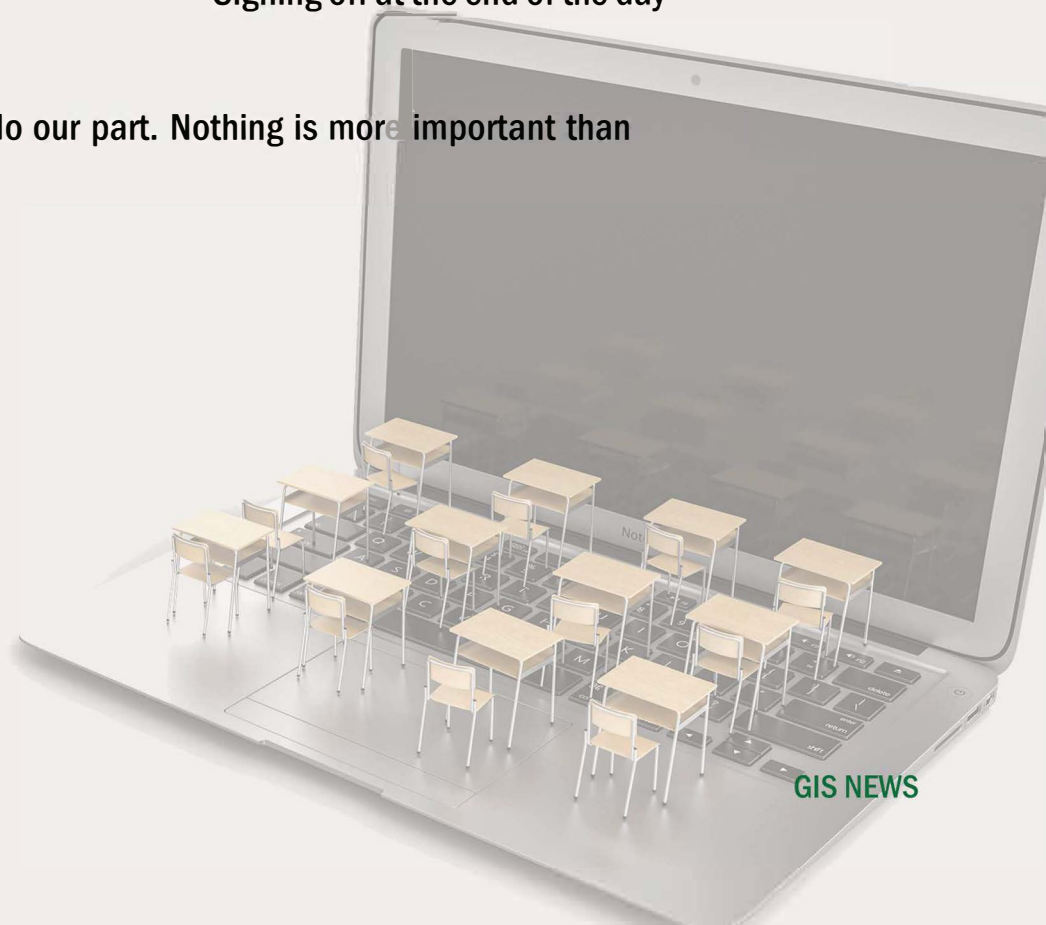
On-line learning is a collective effort. We must all do our part. Nothing is more important than protecting our students.

Monitoring your child

Children will be children as the saying goes; and parents not only need to speak to their children regarding safety issues and online expected behavior, they also need to monitor that their child is following the rules and that they are safe and protected. This can only be done through watching your child online. This often cannot be done at home (for example for working parents), but parents can download the MST Application and watch their child during the lessons.

Here are a few of the behaviors that parents should monitor:

- Your child's online language (as well as that of other children that should be reported to the teacher)
- Chats between children of the opposite gender
- Posting of personal information
- Chatting during class
- Signing off at the end of the day



Staying Active

The impact of the pandemic does not change the goal and importance of physical education. GIS has begun **its first virtual P.E class led by Coach Ahmed**. The class begins with some stretching and warm ups exercises to enhance the flexibility of our students. Our goal is to focus on the overall health of our students. Exercise routines are sent daily for students to practice at home.

By participating in sports, children are exposed to various mental, social, emotional, physical and educational benefits. This also helps students learn to trust their own abilities and push themselves in their pursuits. It also helps them to build their self-esteem.

There are several other benefits to participating in sports and exercise; such as a healthier life style, and fitness. At this time, one of the most important benefits is to give students physical activity opportunities to combat the effects of sitting for long periods of time in front of a computer, laptop or **tablet or iPad**.

All of these benefits address the health and welfare of the students, so let's get moving.

Visit Coach Ahmed at www.streamonlinevidoes



Academic Calendar for the Year 2021/2020

This year's Academic Calendar was sent through Teams during the second week of classes. It is presented again below with a small reminder that our Mid-term tests will begin on October 4th for auxiliary tests. Core subject tests will be the follow week, beginning October 11th. We will provide you with more information soon regarding testing.

Event	Date
First day of first semester	Sunday, August 30, 2020
National Day Holiday	Wednesday, September 23, 2020
Auxiliary Mid Term Tests	October 4 th – 8 th , 2020
Mid Term Tests	October 11 th – 15 th
Parents Meeting and Report Cards	Saturday, October 31, 2020
Revision Week and Auxiliary Exams	December 13 th – 17 th , 2020
First semester exams	Sunday, December 20, 2020
Mid-year vacation	Thursday, December 31, 2020
Beginning of second semester	Sunday, January 17, 2021
First Semester Report Cards	Sunday, January 17 , 2021
Auxiliary Mid Term Tests	February 21 st – 25 th , 2021
Mid Term Tests/ Mock Exams G10 – G 12	February 28 th - March 4 th , 2021
Parents Meeting and Report Cards	Saturday, March 6 th , 2021
Revision Week and Auxiliary Exams	April 25 th – 28 th , 2021
Eid holiday	Thursday, April 29, 2021
Returning from Eid holiday	Tuesday, May 18, 2021
Second semester exams	Sunday, May 23, 2021
Summer vacation	Thursday, June 3, 2021



Gulf International School Alkhobar



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P.O. BOX 31437 - Al-Khobar 31952 - Kingdom of Saudi Arabia



Gulf International School ,2814 Naiyrah Street, Al Hamra, Al Khobar 31952