

# BEST SCHOOLS IN THE UAE

REAFFIRMING A COMMITMENT TO EXCELLENCE

Monday, January 25, 2021

**+** INSIDE  
Our Listicle  
of Top UAE  
Schools

WELCOME  
BACK TO  
SCHOOL



## BORN TO LEAD

Heads of premier UAE schools  
reveal what it takes to help  
drive their students and staff to  
achieve excellence

A  
B  
C

## A CLASS APART

# INSPIRING LEADERS



## OF THE BEST UAE SCHOOLS

● Leading from the front, these icons of education set the markers for how the sector will mould itself to future demands even as they inspire staff and students to achieve excellence

Special to GN Focus

### MONIQUE FLICKINGER

Superintendent

AMERICAN COMMUNITY SCHOOL OF ABU DHABI

● **How did you motivate staff and students during the transition to remote learning after the pandemic struck?**

At the American Community School of Abu Dhabi, we seized the opportunities the global pandemic presented, making sure teachers and students were prepared with tools to successfully shift online to remote learning. We knew we had to be nimble by supporting teachers with up-to-date technology and digital training and ensuring every student had a device to access their learning. In return, we saw a leap forward in education and innovation.

When 85 per cent of your students are in the top academic quartile among international peers, they have mastered the content. Being able to unleash their creativity online and develop their passions in a digital space becomes the priority. We enhanced technology programs to inspire students to become innovators and creators. Elementary students accessed robotics, coding, podcasting, and more in the new Innovation Lab. Middle School Technology became the most subscribed elective and recently won an International Schools Award. And in High School, we expanded class offerings in computer science.



Connecting regularly with teachers, students and parents through surveys and virtual meetings has been crucial to our success in navigating remote learning. Staying connected has motivated everyone to move forward together.

In a few years, ACS will move to a new, state-of-the-art campus that will reflect the future of education and provide students with the best technology and learning opportunities necessary to successfully navigate a post-pandemic world.

### DR PAUL RICHARDS

Superintendent

AMERICAN SCHOOL OF DUBAI

● **As the head of one of the premier education institutions in the UAE and the region that sets the yardstick on trends, what in your view will be the future classroom look like?**

I believe, from a technical standpoint, classrooms will now become media centres, both with the ability to access digital resources and tools, and also with more ease than we have been able to in the past. Classrooms will also become broadcasting centres, so it's not just what we take in, but what we send out, broadcasting what is happening in the class to either students who aren't there or broadcasting to the world. To support this concept, we outfitted classrooms with cameras, geared up teachers with headphones, purchased promising software licences such as Nearpod, and importantly, we dramatically increased our internet bandwidth.

● **What are the changes in regular training programmes you foresee for your staff keeping the pandemic and similar situations and challenges in mind?**

I feel the biggest potential for change is the relationship between the teacher and the student. I think the pandemic has shifted the

focus away from the teacher as the centre of attention, and put more ownership of learning on to the student. For example, students are getting a lot more autonomy to complete their assignments, more self-direction opportunities, and more control over their time. My own son, for instance, enjoys distance learning as he feels he is able to budget his time efficiently, deciding when and how to get the work done, which then leaves him more time to pursue other learning pursuits. He has thrived with the added autonomy. I believe this moment is an inflection point for schools. I believe that schools of the future will need to adapt and meet the mission of the student, rather than schools selling its own mission to the public. So students will say, here is what I would like out of my schooling. Can you as a school help me deliver on my personal mission? Students will demand what they need, and schools will have to accommodate in order to survive.

● **There is a lot of stress being put by faculty on developing emotional intelligence within the student and peer community in colleges. Does this apply to schools as well, and how do you plan to inculcate the same among your wards?**

The American School of Dubai (ASD) is known for its strong commitment to the social and emotional (SEL) development of its children. We look at SEL like developing a muscle, so it needs to start at the earliest of ages, and over time you can build that muscle and emotional intelligence. It's a key function of our mission. What we are now doing at ASD is starting to develop instruments to measure SEL skills and disposition.

For example, measuring key aspects of our Student Profile: self-awareness, resiliency, and empathy. Emotional intelligence will be as or more important than just IQ, since much of the world's knowledge is now accessible through technology. Also, to provide max-



#### A GULF NEWS PUBLICATION

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SCHOOLS

COMPARED

## TOP SCHOOL AWARDS

Best American School in the UAE

WINNER 2019

# The New Early Learning Center

Introducing the ASD Early Learning Center—now open for 3-year old learners to benefit from our rich history, our engaged and supportive community, our personalized student learning and US curriculum, our

emphasis on extracurricular activities in athletics and the arts, and our world-class facilities that include STEAM and robotics labs, maker spaces, a 630-seat theatre, and a thriving sustainable garden.

*Founded in 1966, ASD is an independent PreK to Grade 12 US curriculum school educating over 1,900 students from more than 77 countries. Now accepting admissions for 2021-2022. Visit [asdubai.org/admissions](http://asdubai.org/admissions) to apply or to book a tour.*

## American School of Dubai



[asdubai.org](http://asdubai.org)

# 4 BEST SCHOOLS IN THE UAE

imum employment opportunities for our students in the future, we use a term called Adaptability Quotient, or AQ, which is essentially about getting students ready for a job that may not even exist yet, so when that job is created, the student, now an adult, is able to adapt and take on the job. It's no longer so much about knowledge anymore, it's about skills and dispositions, qualities that are uniquely human.

**SANGITA CHIMA**  
Principal  
AMITY SCHOOL DUBAI

● **Amity School is one of the select premier educational institutes to partner with the Dubai Expo. What's on the cards and what does the institution seek to achieve for its students through this partnership?**

We are delighted to give our dynamic young learners the opportunity to learn and grow through our partnership with Expo 2020. The Amity School Community will facilitate the ticketed entry, reservations and transport for all students and staff, giving them the opportunity to visit the pavilions. This is an



astounding and future-driven opportunity for students to be exposed to new ideas through a mesmerising experience of discovery that will create an impact and remain a memorable experience for years to come.

● **How would you define inclusive learning and what is Amity doing in this field?**

Inclusion is a sublime and seamless acceptance of diversity in learning by the entire school community. We are champions of inclusion and our learning spaces are designed specially as inclusive spaces. At Amity we focus on every child's individual IEP goals. Patience with an emphasis on relationships provides the right conditions for an inclusive classroom environment. We feel that it is important to know each learner, believe in their ability to face challenges and draw out a step-by-step learning trajectory so that all students see growth. Breathing techniques, relaxation exercises, altering curriculum, instructional and assessments methods and engaging with parents as partners ensure a warm, safe and conducive environment.

**MICHAEL LUMMEL**  
Principal  
GERMAN INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL

● **How critical a role does digitalisation play in allowing students at your school as well as the institution itself to be future-secure? How is German International School going about this task?**

The German International School Dubai provides an outstanding and inspiring learning environment. This includes our digitalisation strategy. All students are equipped with iPads. We are implementing our iPad classes with an innovative evidence-based approach. We are sharing a strong vision. Digitalisation helps to individualise learning and to encourage problem-solving and creative approaches with a cooperative spirit. Implementing digitalisation, we need to be a learning school,



**GRAEME SCOTT**  
School Director  
FAIRGREEN INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL

● **How is your institution preparing its students for jobs of the future?**

"Great teachers who love learning, care deeply for their students and build positive relationships with them are absolutely critical to the flourishing of our young people. But what our students learn needs to be re-examined in light of the pace of global change. There needs to be a strong match between what they learn and the needs of global society. Issues such as global migration, climate change, hunger and poverty, and now of course virus transmission are often covered superficially or even not at all, yet they are real issues that we are struggling to understand and resolve. Our students have boundless energy, passion and drive; we just need to ensure that what they learn is relevant and meaningful. It can sometimes be impossible to predict these global changes, so instead of just changing the knowledge that we teach students (traditionally content has been added without taking anything away, leading to unmanageable volumes of content students are expected to memorise) we need to slim down and update this knowledge. We also need to focus more on equipping our students with key attributes such as adaptability, planning, self-management, creativity, and problem identification and solving. This will ensure they are well prepared for the unknowns that lie ahead, as well as supporting their success in those jobs that will still exist."



in which all members are learners, including teachers and school management.

● **How do you read the future of the education system for UAE schools?**

The UAE is blessed with a great variety of excellent schools. And we are proud to be one of them as an Excellent German School Abroad. In the future, the UAE educational system will open up more. Schools will learn to perceive the UAE and the world as its classroom. Schools will be reaching out to universities and innovative firms to inspire their students to become innovators. The Expo 2020 will be a unique opportunity to head into that direction.

● **What does the Inclusion Action Team at German International seek to achieve?**

Let me explain what our Inclusion Action Teams seek to achieve by the help of one example of a SEND (special educational needs) student at the German International School Dubai: She accesses our barrier-free school easily with her wheelchair, participates almost independently in class, follows the regular curriculum with slight modifications and joins sports lessons with her individual talents. And her classmates have this what's-the-big-deal attitude about inclusion. Inclusion is lots of passion and work in the background by our SEND Team. We give our students all the support they need that inclusion feels natural in class.

**ATAULLAH PARKER**  
Principal  
INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL OF CREATIVE SCIENCE, NAD AL SHEBA (PART OF BEAM)

● **How would you best define the value of an Islamic education and what is the role of Creative Science Schools in Dubai in this regard?**

In the UAE, we are fortunate to live in a country whose leadership strategies underpin its education system, to reflect the society it wants to create. While the world was scrambling in the aftermath of the Covid-19 outbreak, the UAE's leadership worked relentlessly with educational and academic institutions in the country to apply a distance learning approach as a seamless alternative to regular schooling.

At Beam, when it comes to the scope of education, we believe an Islamic education offers students solid foundations and values upon which they can build their lives.

Islam places a high value on education. Over time, education has become an important channel in shaping a universal and cohesive social order.

The Prophet Muhammed (Peace Be Upon Him) highlighted the importance of several daily habits that were instilled in Muslim generations and are practised across the world today by people of diverse cultures and religions.

Such practices include understanding the importance of hygiene, being truthful, and being respectful, particularly towards one's parents and grandparents.

An Islamic religious education can also significantly enhance students' righteous behaviour and provide them with a sound moral compass. Students learn valuable lessons in obedience to parents and teachers, politeness,



and humility to all, and helping one another without an ulterior motive. Parents and educators must encourage the learnings of Islam and good moral behaviour for students to prioritise these learnings and apply them in their daily life.

● **How important are ethical and aesthetic virtues to the education system sculpted by Creative Science Schools?**

We promote the learnings gleaned from a guidebook that we call the Integrated Virtues Curriculum and that specifically provides an overview of the values and virtues that underpin the school's curriculum. Being integrative in nature, these virtues help provide depth, context and real-life application for students rather than just theoretical knowledge. These include both ethical and aesthetic virtues. While the former is necessary to enable students to empathise in situations that require ethical responses, the aesthetic virtues look into deeper connections with the physical world and spiritual world.

It is important that students can link their physical experiences with spiritual growth. This is important when reflecting on the natural world and studying art and science especially. The most important of these sciences however is the constant reflection on the virtues of the heart, that is the compass with which our students should be directing their lives.

# EXCELLENCE ROOTED IN VALUES



## Bukhatir Education Advancement & Management International (BEAM)

Bukhatir Education Advancement & Management International (BEAM) represents the convergence of Bukhatir Group's cumulative experience, attained over 20 years of developing successful educational institutions and implementing advanced educational management systems in the UAE. BEAM operates its schools under the banners of American School of Creative Science (ASCS) and International School of Creative Science (ISCS), which are accredited by the UAE Ministry of Education, along with being the only Promethean Innovation Hub in the world and Promethean Centers of Excellence in the Middle East.

**20**

**YEARS  
OF EXCELLENCE**

### KHAS

KHAS follows ASCS' example by merging the US and MOE Curriculum and employing the best pedagogical practices, providing students with a strong academic background, whilst nurturing modern-day skills.

### ASCS & ISCS

The American School of Creative Science and International School of Creative Science, blend Ministry of Education Curriculum of Arabic, Islamic, Social Studies and Moral Education, with US Common Core Standards and UK's National Curriculums, respectively, providing true American and British education, imparted in faith-based environments, along with a unique and rigorous "Qur'an Memorization Initiative".



**Baraa Farid**

#### HIGHEST MARK IN THE UAE

IGCSE Physics & Further Pure Mathematics

**Memorized  
the Quran**

## WHY BEAM SCHOOLS?



### International School of Creative Science

Muwaileh, Sharjah

- ▼ Distinguished School & Distinguished Teacher by Sharjah Award for Excellence in Education
- ▼ Highly Effective with Distinction - MOE
- ▼ Outstanding Pearson Learner Awards - Highest Mark in the World for Math & more



### American School of Creative Science

Maliha Road, Sharjah

- ▼ Accredited by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC)
- ▼ Third place in the Think Science National Competition
- ▼ American University of Sharjah's Sharakah Program



### International School of Creative Science

Nad Al Sheba, Dubai

- ▼ "Good", with "Outstanding" in Health and Safety
- ▼ First Stage Bronze: UNICEF UK's Rights Respecting Schools Award (RRSA).



### American School of Creative Science

Nad Al Sheba, Dubai

- ▼ Candidate by NEASC
- ▼ Shortlisted by SchoolsCompared.com for Best Arabic Blended Curriculum



### Khalifah Al Hamzah American School

Al Madam, Sharjah

- ▼ Managed by BEAM, in partnership with Sharjah Education Council

**800 BEAM  
2326**

[iscs.sch.ae](http://iscs.sch.ae) | [ascs.sch.ae](http://ascs.sch.ae) | [khas.sch.ae](http://khas.sch.ae)

## 6 BEST SCHOOLS IN THE UAE

**MARGARET HAYNES**

Principal

LIWA INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL -AL MUSHRIF (LISM)

● **Liwa International School Al Mushrif prides itself in doing things differently. Could you shed some light on initiatives that pushed the envelope?**

Despite the massive impact of Covid-19 on everyone and everything, LISM was well placed to meet the demands and manage the impact on our learners and families. As a new school, we designed our curriculum to meet the needs of young people now offering a holistic approach without the use of textbooks. Digital approaches to learning were already central to what we do and that helped make the transition a lot smoother; it also ensured that we had many excellent platforms and apps to use with which our learners were familiar and gave us a strong foundation to further develop the impact of technology on learning. The LIWA Cares initiative, working in partnership with our sister schools in Al Ain, gave us the opportunity to provide support sessions to children, parents and teachers on topics ranging from coping with stress to helping our children learn at home as well as calligraphy and cooking. This really helped us to keep our sense of community and partnership over the past year.



● **How prepared is LISM in meeting the demands of Generation Alpha?**

Our C21 curriculum has, at its heart, technology-driven learning coupled with the development of the whole child. Our aim is to ensure that this technology-savvy generation develops genuine digital literacy alongside the social and emotional skills everyone needs to succeed and be happy in today's globalised world. Independence and genuine resilience are characteristics we strive to foster in all.

● **How are you prepping your staff to deal with students in a post-Covid world?**

Throughout this period, our staff have been in constant contact with students providing social and emotional support as well as academics. We have engaged students in home-room, check-ins and social sessions, as well as specific sessions on dealing with the issues and feelings the pandemic has raised, to meet our students' emotional needs and keep social connections firmly established. Our teachers and support staff still know their students really well and will provide the tailored support they need when they return to campus.

*More information on the school can be found at [Lism.ae](http://Lism.ae)*

**DR JAY TESTON**

Principal

NIBRAS INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL, PART OF INTERNATIONAL SCHOOLS PARTNERSHIP

● **With schoolchildren today being digital natives, how is Nibras revising its education structure to meet this requirement**

At Nibras International School, our students have grown to be true digital natives. The way and speed in which they access and demonstrate learning using multiple platforms is

**BILL DELBRUGGE**

School Director

DUNECREST AMERICAN SCHOOL

● **How is Dunecrest managing the changing dynamics of imparting education in a post-pandemic world?**

The urgency of the Covid-19 crisis demanded overnight innovations and adaptations in education.

Although this has been a difficult period for schools, there are a number of changes to how we deliver education that we should retain.

To begin, Covid-19 has pushed a more harmonious relationship with technology. Teachers have come to understand that on-line learning has a different cadence to the classroom. Where a group activity would have taken place in person, a cooking assignment or garden investigation is now required.

As a project-based learning school, we have been delighted to see others now embracing real-world problems as a way to succeed in both environments.

Educators have also come to understand the wealth of experts that are available via zoom. During a recent lesson on velocity, students at Dunecrest had the good fortune of having a zoom call with a NASA scientist to discuss rocket propulsion! The possibilities are limitless!

Finally, the pandemic has underscored the importance that community plays in education. During this period, students and teachers have really come to cherish our campus as a beacon of support and positivity.

Wellbeing has taken centre stage. This is something we will continue to nurture and grow.



remarkable. We've encouraged and supported such type of learning through our different modes of instruction and have even ensured that our school values have been modified to be digitally relevant. As Nibras students navigate digitally, they are challenged to demonstrate how to be tolerant, organised, respectful, caring, and honest in their digital surroundings.

● **As the head of one of the premier education institutes in the UAE, how do you seek to inspire your staff in imparting education differently?**

New knowledge is constantly being generated by students who are thirsty for learning. This is how the new leadership at Nibras International School sees its students, and I've had a conversation with the staff on how we too, need to redevelop this thirst for knowledge and become learners again. We have to approach teaching and learning through the eyes of our students, and experience this all together.

● **What are your takeaways from Covid-19 and 2020, how will the education landscape change in the UAE in the next five years?**

The Covid pandemic and the move to online

learning in 2020 forced education in the UAE to be highly personalised. Students have learned to be self-reliant in demonstrating their learning and highly creative so that they can find ways to collaborate with their peers regardless of the distance between them. These are skill sets that would be hard to measure, but will have a significant effect on the UAE's future. These conditions have forever changed the education landscape and the personalised approach should be further developed.

**JASON KING**

Principal

REGENT INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL, PART OF FORTES HOLDINGS

● **How have you rallied the faculty at Regent and keep their morale high during 2020 and going into 2021?**

Prioritising staff well-being as well as that of our students and parents during this time has been crucial to ensure sustaining the high quality of learning, teaching and continued students' outstanding progress and attainment. Communication has been and is the key, being clear, transparent and consistent. No one, students, staff or parents should feel alone. At the heart of our approach is our embrace of Positive Education. We all understand that our children will face many daunting challenges in the future and that academic excellence alone will not be sufficient to ensure their success or happiness. The pandemic and its impact have highlighted this.

We have endeavoured to cultivate a sense of purpose, character strengths, positive emotions and supportive relationships to enable all of our school community to become happier, healthier, more resilient and successful individuals during this challenging time and going forward. In short, Regent's community together as one family with support for each other's wellbeing and happiness is equipped for life's challenges in 2021 and beyond.

● **How do you see the education landscape changing this decade keeping all that transpired in 2020 in mind?**



During the pandemic despite the increase and use of digitised learning platforms, people are still the key in the next decade. We just have to look at different ways of working to continue to use technology to enhance our education processes with the global changes. The game and end goal have not changed. As educators we still need to empower our young people to become innovative thinkers, creative problem-solvers, socially confident and inspired learners. At Regent, we are committed to every child achieving their dreams and ambitions. We are a school that is genuinely restless in our pursuit of excellence and the phrase Inspiring Minds. Building Character is a live, real achievement and not merely a strap line.

To ensure that we are at the cutting edge of educational change, at Regent, powered by our unique Signature Programmes, we are a character-building and ambitiously innovative school with an inspirational, engaging, and dynamic learning environment at the

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core. Our education delivery is highly ambitious and innovative using a project-based learning combined with our STEAM programme; augmented by a next-generation AI learning platform to enable self-paced problem solving; an inspirational creative and performing arts programme; and a rich variety of extracurricular activities to excite, inspire and challenge our curious and open-minded students with a desire to learn. Regent's immersive AR/VR programme makes learning truly transformational and enjoyable enabling students to experience and visualise science, art, history, culture, and academics like never before.

**DR NEIL HOPKIN**

Executive Principal  
SUNMARKE SCHOOL, PART OF FORTES HOLDINGS

● **As a prominent institution that sets education benchmarks in the UAE, how successful has Sunmarke's Active Minds Programme been in promoting social interaction among students and peers?**

The Active Minds programme at Sunmarke School has proven to be an empowering step in the children's journey of learning and understanding. Based on the latest psychological research, we have shown that it enables students to develop and leverage precise communicative, collaborative and cooperative skills while focused on specific tasks and projects. We all know that these are real-world and lifelong skills, but our Active Minds programme allows us to foster and nurture these skills at a very early age, giving our students a competitive advantage in their future university and work experiences.

● **Sunmarke prides itself on doing things differently. Could you shed some light on your initiatives?**

This approach to innovation is reflected in our initiatives, such as our Signature Programmes, including our mini-MBA, our world-renowned Positive Education programme and most recently a world-class STEAM curriculum and facilities that set the benchmark globally for this most sought-after skillset. Drawing on leading experts



globally and with inspiration from MIT and the UK STEAM programmes, we have created an unbeatable learning experience for our students from primary age upwards. Sunmarke's next generation Artificial Intelligence online learning platform

augments learning through self-paced problem-solving while our immersive AR/VR programme truly transforms student experience in visualising science, art, history and culture like never before.

● **As the head of Sunmarke, how do you envisage the future classroom?**

This is just one aspect of our future-ready approach to teaching and learning. Our classrooms are highly digitally enabled and our teachers and students use the very latest technological innovations, including AI, which has enabled us to stay ahead of the curve during this period of online learning that students are experiencing.

● **How would you define a successful teacher in a post-pandemic world?**

**BRAD FLICKINGER**

ACS MS Technology Teacher and ES Innovation Lab Creator  
AMERICAN COMMUNITY SCHOOL OF ABU DHABI



"The most successful teachers in the post-pandemic world must be nimble and willing to change direction in a moment's notice. Whatever it takes to connect with our students, even if that means throwing out the past and learning anew, there

is no going back. There is only forward. It is the dawn of a new and exciting day in education when we combine the new things teaching during a pandemic has taught us with in-person personal connections with our students. It will not be easy, but it will be worth it."

**JENNIFER RICKS**

Ed.D. - ACS Director of Learning  
AMERICAN COMMUNITY SCHOOL OF ABU DHABI

"In the past year, the best teachers displayed flexibility, a growth mindset, and grace. Flexibility allowed them to respond, often daily to changing instructional settings. A growth mindset showed their willingness to always keep learning, try new things, and excel. And finally, grace allowed them to be kind to themselves and others when the situation might not go as planned."



Whatever time it takes for the world to recover from Covid-19 our students will have developed a uniquely agile approach to the use of technology to continue and enhance their learning journey.

**BEN ROTHWELL**

Assistant Head  
VICTORY HEIGHTS PRIMARY SCHOOL

● **As the head of a prominent UAE-based educational institute, what are your prime takeaways from the year of Covid?**

That adaptability and being an organisation that has an agile operating model are critical to success in the modern world.

The ability to adapt to circumstances quickly, without compromising our ethos and beliefs, while empowering employees across the company to make decisions, have been hallmarks of our approach to the Covid-19 pandemic.

We have not always got things right the first time, but where we have made mistakes - or rather, where our approach has been suboptimal, we have quickly iterated and improved.



● **Lifelong learning is a trait many aspire to but few achieve. Victory Heights stresses on its importance through its Effective Lifelong Learning Inventory (ELLI) programme. Can you elaborate on this strategy?**

The ELLI programme is an effective method for assessing and implementing Guy Claxton's Learning Power, a research-informed approach to identifying the seven key learning dimensions that underline 17 habits and behaviours of learners.

At Victory Heights, we use ELLI as a toolkit to teach children these learning dimensions - we believe that Learning is learnable. ELLI uses languages and characters that are familiar with young children, to distill learning power into an easy-to-understand framework - for example we teach about 'Changing and Learning' (aka a growth mindset) through the Chameleon, who is able to change his colour to adapt to his environment.

● **Generation Alpha is turning out to be a handful with a whole new learning metric. How are you tackling this new generation of schoolchildren while imparting education?**

Generation Alpha (those born post-2010) are the most materially endowed generation ever to have lived, extremely technologically savvy, born into the iPad era. They are often described as digital natives, yet it would be remiss to confuse consumption with meaningful creation. It is therefore imperative that schools use technology effectively, and move away from technology as a pacifier.

**WAYNE HOWSEN**

Principal  
THE AQUILA SCHOOL, PART OF INTERNATIONAL SCHOOLS PARTNERSHIP

● **How is partnering with Dubai Expo helping and supporting the students at The Aquila School?**



In our school we continue to be excited about the unique learning opportunities that Expo will provide our pupils and we can't wait to visit the exhibition when it opens. Our school will focus on the Expo theme of Mobility, and the entire school will engage in activities that are connected to this theme.

● **As the head of one of the premier schools in Dubai, how do you see the future of education being tweaked in the country?**

Nothing can replicate the value of face-to-face learning in school, interacting with each other and having immediate feedback from a teacher. However, we acknowledge that technology will have an increasing role to play in connecting pupils with others within and beyond the school.

● **How is the Strategic Governance Group at Aquila helping mould school policy for the long term?**

The Strategic Governance Group at Aquila acts as a critical friend to the school, holding us accountable and challenging us to provide the very best outcomes for every child in our care.



THE AQUILA SCHOOL



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# Keep that curve on the up



## Communicate with your child

“Children have demonstrated great resilience through the pandemic, and switching to a new mode of learning for a large proportion of the 2019/20 academic year. While in some areas, children have not made the same level of progress as we would have expected, for the most part, attainment remains outstanding,” says Choytooa. “One area that we do feel the children have fallen behind, is in their ability to communicate their learning. A key focus for our school is the development of children’s oracy skills – and moving out of the classroom environment removed some of the structures that enabled them to do this as freely.



**Identifying students that need an extra hand by tracking achievement data, attendance and behaviour is key.”**

**Sangita Chima**  
Principal, Amity School Dubai

Picture courtesy of Aquila School

## ● UAE schools share strategies to help mitigate learning loss among students post-Covid

BY SANKAR SRI PILLAI  
Head of Content

A study conducted in the US by global consultancy firm McKinsey within the school community during the fall months in 2020 revealed an acute sense of learning loss among students after they started their classes close to three months behind schedule. And while the study results were endemic to the US, the effects of the pandemic on students and resulting learning loss have been keenly felt across the globe.

The UAE education sector has always monitored global trends and tried to assimilate best practices as quickly as possible post-observation. The pandemic and the sense of learning loss felt by students and conveyed by their parents to staff was quickly analysed therefore, resulting in a host of individual premier UAE schools putting steps in place to mitigate the effects.

### Student-teacher connect critical

At the Amity School Dubai, Principal, Sangita Chima says that despite the overnight disruption and abrupt move

to a digital classroom environment, the learning process continued almost without a hitch, and believes that maintaining the connection between teacher and student is the first vital step in addressing learning loss. “Much like a ‘don’t give up’ mission, we believe in using all available means of communication in order to stay connected with the families in our school community,” says Chima. “We have altered our strategies and modified our learning programmes to ensure that learning loss is reduced to a considerable extent. Identifying students that need an extra hand by tracking achievement data, attendance and behaviour is key. These data driven indicators give teachers a heads up. Intensive tutoring within smaller targeted groups helps improve a student’s foundation skills. Accelerated learning in groups with ample time, instead of remedial teaching is another great way to support students that may have fallen back.”

Moving into smaller targeted groups also means improving the scope of free communication that acts as a learning enabler, something Michelle Choytooa, Inclusion Champion, Victory Heights Primary School in Dubai, stresses upon.



**Michelle Choytooa**  
Victory Heights  
Primary School



**Wayne Howsen**  
The Aquila  
School



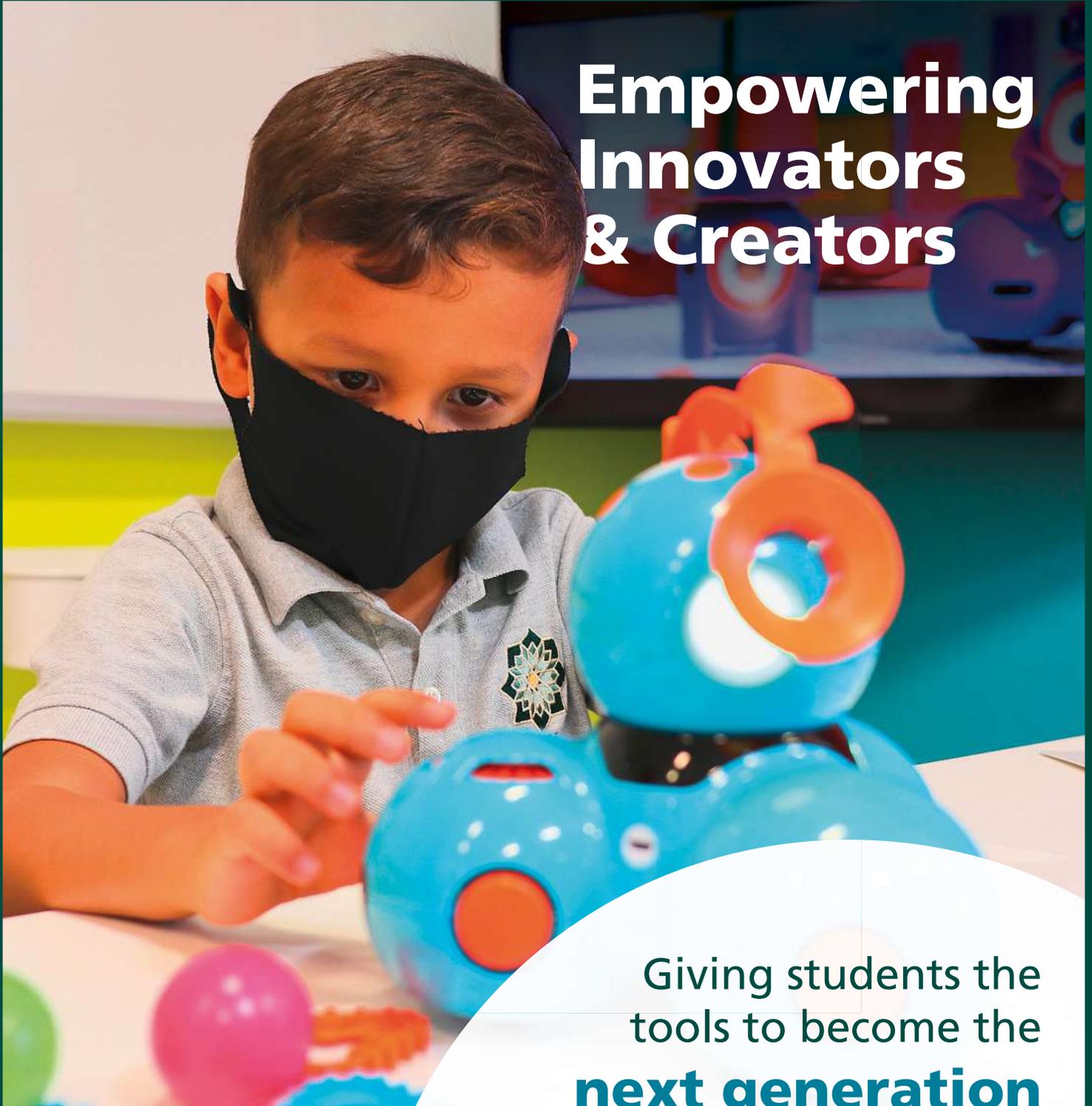
**Dr Paul Richards**  
American School  
of Dubai

So talk to your child – ask them about their learning – delve in depth into their answers, don’t accept closed responses – question them and challenge them.”

The powers of a challenging yet relevant curriculum to engage young minds cannot be underestimated either, feels Wayne Howsen, Principal, The Aquila School, part of the International Schools Partnership. “We are proud to be a genuinely inclusive school and as such, regardless of their starting points – teachers are skilled and empowered to teach the children what they need to know right now. Through a well-pitched, active, engaging and relevant curriculum, we ensure every child makes as much progress as possible.”

Dr Paul Richards, Superintendent, American School of Dubai, is a confirmed optimist who believes a lot was learned from the pandemic on coping with and mitigating learning loss within the community, while allowing students to become true well-rounded global citizens. Rounding off the discussion, he states, “There has been much attention on learning loss, and much debate. When using traditional measures, such as standardised tests, some loss in achievement or slowed growth rates may be identified. Direct intervention by teachers, using targeted literacy strategies, will help remedy any losses that are identified through a data analysis. However, much has also been gained during the pandemic, in the development of social and emotional skills. Let’s not lose sight of this silver lining.” ■

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# SPARKING A STEM REVOLUTION

- Innovative practices in STEM education through technology and collaboration are expected to help promote path breaking modes of imparting education going forward

BY SANKAR SRI PILLAI  
Head of Content – Supplements and Contract Publishing

It's an oft repeated narrative within education circles and by virtue of repetition is also deemed to be fact that the emphasis on knowledge economies has never been more vigorous than it is at present. Since, for nations with the right knowledge and skills, digitalisation and globalisation will be liberating, but those unprepared to reap the benefits will also, in fact face a vulnerable and insecure life without prospects. Content on the UAE Vision National Agenda 2021 envisages major economic changes with the UAE at its heart. As a result, it focuses on the UAE becoming the economic, touristic and commercial capital for more than two billion people by transitioning to a knowledge-based economy, promoting innovation and research and development, strengthening the regulatory framework for key sectors, and encouraging high value-adding sectors.

This transition stage has been expedited and complemented in part by the rapid move towards innovation in STEM-education practices undertaken by UAE schools in the last few years, allowing UAE students to receive a more well-rounded education that keeps pace with the nation's aspirations and global requirements for jobs of the future.

As early as 2016, a consolidated report on a vision for innovation in STEM education (science, technology, engineering and mathematics), titled STEM 2026 - Vision for Innovation, released by the US Department of Education, in collaboration with the American Institutes for Research, highlighted six interconnected components for SEM and the challenges and opportunities in innovation that could oppose or aid these components in widespread practice. They included engaged and networked communities of practice; accessible learning activities that invite play and risk; the scope for educational experiences helping in solving grand challenges; flexible and inclusive learning spaces; access to societal and cultural environments



● Students attend the CyberMentor.de programme at German International School, a programme that promoted STEM principles

that promote diversity and opportunity in STEM, and innovative and accessible measures of learning.

Continuing in the same vein of innovation in STEM, Lisa Gibson, Elementary Principal & Director of Teaching and Learning at the Dunecrest American School in Dubai, recognises that the future will see the application of technology to create, innovate and find solutions to global problems. "Future leaders will require technological fluency, problem-solving skills and the ability to collaborate and communicate

in order to navigate these ever-changing times," says Gibson. "Our STEAM curriculum has been designed to present children with authentic problem solving contexts that draw on all aspects of the curriculum simultaneously. Students work collaboratively to develop skills to solve the problems of today and of the future."

In fact, UAE schools have been constantly innovating, trying to find ways and means to provide new processes to imparting STEM education, even during the pandemic lockdown, reveals Jason King, Principal, Regent International School.

"Covid-restrictions have not stopped innovation at Regent," says King. "Our Applied Innovation Department has re-defined the 'T' in STEM, innovating new

learning opportunities for students to use and apply STEM beyond the classroom. Our newly proprietary Regent Universe & Galaxy were born during lockdown as a result of trying to solve real-world problems: hosting an inclusive and interactive talent show, hosting virtual project-based-learning days for our Year 7 students to create their new secondary community as well as sparking off a whole range of real-life learning activities.

Schools such as the German International School bring a little bit of patriotism into the mix as well, carrying forward the mantra of entrepreneurship and industrial finesse that Germany is known for by encouraging students to participate in STEM events and competitions on a regular basis. Michael Lummel, Principal, German International School, says, "The German International School Dubai fosters the unique German engineering spirit, which is a major pillar of our mission statement. We aspire STEM excellence from kindergarten to the graduating classes, achieving this through explorative and research-based learning, which includes partners like Henkel Forscherwelt in Dubai. We encourage our students to participate and win in renowned STEM competitions like "Jugend präsentiert" (Germany). Further we provide fascinating programmes for gifted students through collaborating with universities and renowned STEM global players. Hereby we instill a spirit of research and entrepreneurship in our students. From this school year on we are part of the Junior Engineer Academy by Deutsche Telekom and also part of the programme, CyberMentor.de for girls."

For Margaret Haynes, Principal, Liwa International School – Al Mushrif, however, it's all about using the right tools at the right time to for STEM to work in real-world scenarios.

"Our integrated, multi-disciplinary curricular approach relies upon the effective use of technology to both impart knowledge and engage students' in collaborative learning. The embedding of Science and Technology Apps and platforms throughout the curriculum and across the age range ensures that students are equipped with age appropriate research, analysis and synthesis skills. Every term, a focused STEM project provides a goal for students to develop their problem-solving, real world application skills - with their design and thinking process part of the final presentation." ■

“Our proprietary Regent Universe & Galaxy were born during lockdown while solving real-world problems.”

Jason King

Principal, Regent International School



Lisa Gibson

Dunecrest American School



Jason King

Regent International School



Michael Lummel

German International School



Margaret Haynes

Liwa International School



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# THE UAE'S BEST SCHOOLS

- From school curriculum to rewards structure, innovations in education and more, here's all you need to know, and a little more on the schools of choice in the UAE



## AMERICAN COMMUNITY SCHOOL OF ABU DHABI

**E**stablished in 1972, the American Community School of Abu Dhabi (ACS), is a non-profit, US accredited college-preparatory school. ACS offers a comprehensive, American standards-based educational curriculum for 1,200 students ages 4-18 representing more than 62 nationalities.

ACS is recognised as a leader among its international educational peers around the world, providing students with a balanced learning programme to foster excellence in academics, the arts, athletics, and service-learning. Service learning is a unique and emphasised pillar at ACS providing opportunities for students to participate in projects that have a positive impact within the school, our local community and the world. For its commitment to innovation, ACS won the 2021 Future-Thinking Innovators Award presented by the International School Awards.



## AMERICAN SCHOOL OF CREATIVE SCIENCE, NAD AL SHEBA (ASCS NAS), PART OF BEAM

● **Curriculum** Awarded Outstanding by the KHDA for Personal Social Development, Parent Relations and Health and Safety, ASCS NAS is also the only American curriculum school in Nad Al Sheba.

● **Rewards structure for gifted students** Students' achievement is celebrated in the school by awarding merit-based medals, certificates and trophies, at various presentations and ceremonies held throughout the year.

● **Innovations in education** The school moves beyond using technology as a substitution and is optimised as a learning tool where it embeds the Apple Elements of Learning, to enhance feedback, foster teamwork and develop critical thinking, along with targeting each students' unique learning gaps through personalised assignments provided via our online platform.

● **Extra-curricular activities** ASCS provides various extra-curricular activities such as educational field trips and fairs, academic, sports, art and cooking competitions, cultural days and a unique Qur'an memorisation program to support the overall academic, physical, social and psychological development of students.

● **Modes of inclusion** The highly qualified Inclusion Team serves students with special needs and whose proficiency in English acts as a barrier to them accessing the curriculum. It also works with specialist centres across Dubai to ensure that therapy and expertise are available to parents at discounted rates.



## AMERICAN SCHOOL OF DUBAI

● **Curriculum** PreK-12, US Curriculum

● **Total number of students + no. of students per class** 1,950 (Class size 14-24)

● **Rewards structure for gifted/talented students** ASD organises recognition, awards, and graduation ceremonies to honour individual students and teams for their achievements (including international achievements) in academics, athletics, arts, community services, and more. ASD provides students opportunities to pursue their passion and participate in local and international activities, conferences, competitions, and festivals.

● **Innovations in education** Flexible learning spaces in the elementary school, design thinking and inquiry-based learning in the middle school. The high school offers 25 advanced placement (AP) classes, AP Capstone, and global online learning programs.

● **Extracurricular activities** Students can pursue their interests with numerous extracurricular opportunities in the arts, athletics, aquatics, and campus recreation — as well as help to support their community through student organisations.

● **Awards and recognitions** Middle States Association's Program of Distinction in Service Learning 2020; Zayed Sustainability Prize (ZSP) Global High Schools Category (MENA Region) Award 2019; SchoolsCompared.com Best American Curriculum School of the Year 2019; Winner of the Expo 2020 Sustainability Champions Competition 2018.

● **Modes of inclusion** An international community of nearly 80 nationalities, the culture of inclusion is founded on a personalised approach to meeting students' social, emotional, physical, and academic needs so that every student is challenged and inspired, and so that every student has access to the education they deserve.



## AMITY SCHOOL DUBAI

● **Curriculum** CBSE Indian curriculum that includes

creative arts, STEAM, performing arts and music. Mindfulness, sustainability, innovation and reading are other key areas that are embedded in the curriculum.

● **Total number of students** 700

● **Total number of students per class** 25 in KG and 30 from grade 1 upwards.

● **Reward structure for gifted/talented** Extra challenging activities beyond the scope of the syllabus and exemptions from classes for students with talents in particular fields.

● **Extra-curricular activities** Football, athletics, badminton, table tennis, basketball, music, performing arts, creative arts, ICT and STEAM are some of the extra-curricular activities.

● **Awards and recognition** Positioned as the highest 'developed', by KHDA while evaluating the distance learning programme.

● **Modes of inclusion** The Amity School Dubai Inclusion practice aligns effectively with KHDA's Inclusive Education Policy Framework. A team of specialists and mainstream teachers guided by an Inclusion Champion creates multiple ways of representing content to students. The learning spaces are designed to facilitate inclusive learning seamlessly.



## DUNECREST AMERICAN SCHOOL

● **Curriculum** American Curriculum. Grades 11 and 12 have the option of pursuing the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme.

● **Total number of students:** Third year of operation, 400 students. Average class size of 15 with 1:7 student/teacher ratio.

● **Class size** Class sizes range depending on age.

● **Reward structure for gifted and talented** Dunecrest offers differentiated learning in-class for talented students, learning support and English Language Learners (ELL).

● **Modes of inclusion** The school operates on a philosophy that we are all part of the Dunecrest family and that our experiences and learning is richer because we are all different.

● **Innovations in education** The school infuses our innovative, project-based approach to learning with our distinct "CREST" values in order to develop happy, thoughtful, successful citizens of the world.

- STEAM-led, cross curricular units
- Authentic, real-world problem solving
- Million Solar Stars Science and Service
- Green Bronx Machine – hydroponic productive gardens
- Visiting MIT graduate students for computer science
- Grade 11 Symposium
- Dunecrest XL service-led, week without walls

● **Extra-curriculars** 100 teams, lessons and activities

including fine and performing arts, languages, robotics, student council, Model UN, gardening and technology clubs International, competitive and intermural sports across three seasons.

● **Awards and recognition** Candidate school for the National Honors Society; Accredited by MSA-CESSE IB World School



### FAIRGREEN INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL

● **Curriculum** International Baccalaureate (PYP, MYP, DP & CP).

● **Total number of students + no. of students per class** 485 total students, 12-22 students per class.

● **Rewards structure for gifted/talented students** The three basic ways of meeting the needs of these students are through differentiated learning, enrichment and extension. Differentiation consists of enabling students to access work which is more challenging. Teachers, through differentiation, proactively adjust teaching and learning methods to accommodate each child's learning needs and preferences in order to help them achieve maximum growth as a learner. At Fairgreen we also focus on enrichment and extension as the two main strategies for meeting the needs of gifted and talented students. Enrichment consists of broadening a student's education. This can consist of enabling a student to study multiple topics with the purpose of making connections and building new knowledge, or making connections to other subjects. Extension occurs when students are encouraged to develop more sophisticated thinking and reasoning skills.

● **Innovations in education** Fairgreen is a pioneering education community with a mission to embrace and promote sustainability in all its forms, emphasising care of self, care for others and care for the planet.

● **Extracurricular activities** During a typical school year, Fairgreen offers a roster of 25+ sports and after school activities.

● **Awards and recognition** Common Sense School for Digital Literacy recognition, Dr Jane Goodall's Roots & Shoots Award, SchoolsCompared.com Winner of Best Use of Technology Award.

● **Modes of Inclusion** Fairgreen International School provides a standard service of one head of inclusion/ learning support teacher, one learning support teacher and one learning support assistant. We also have one head of school counseling. Additionally the school has processes in place to enable initial screening of needs, to develop Individual Education Plans (IEPs) and to provide one-to-one or small group support. The services of these professionals is free of charge to the Fairgreen community. The school provides support Graduated Response Model. The Inclusion Team works in collaboration with classroom and specialist teachers to provide differentiated support for students. Scaffolds and accommodations are developed to offer students access to the curriculum appropriate for their learning

needs. Targeted and intensive support is co-ordinated with all relevant parties and personalised to meet the needs of individual learners.



### GERMAN INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL

● **Curriculum** German Curriculum leading to the Abitur, which is accepted in the top tuition-free Universities in Germany and in Universities worldwide. DISD is an "Excellent German School Abroad" recognised by the German government. Its diverse student body holds 750 students from Pre-KG to grade 12, with classes averaging to 18 students.

DISD fosters the unique German engineering spirit and aspires STEM (science, technology, engineering and maths) excellence. It is equipped with modern science labs, two libraries and state-of-the-art sports facilities to provide an inspiring learning environment. These are well complemented by extra-curriculars, including successful sports teams and a holistic approach towards art and culture.

DISD is an inclusive school community of educators and families that works together to create an outstanding learning environment, focusing on the well-being and progress of every student.



### LIWA INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL AL MUSHRIF

● **Curriculum** American Curriculum

● **Total number of students + no. of students per class** 428 – Average 22 students/class

● **Rewards structure for gifted/talented students** Student highlights on social media, appreciation ceremonies, and field trips as incentives.

● **Innovations in education** We encourage creativity and opportunities through a flexible curriculum, open-ended questions, and relating to real-world problems. We have long incorporated technology in our curriculum, which made for a smooth transitioning to online learning.

● **Extracurricular activities** Public speaking, environment, charity, national identity, STEM, math, cooking, drama, art, and IT Clubs.

● **Modes of inclusion** Students of determination are fully integrated in our classrooms with the help of TA's where needed. We have sensory rooms for students with sensory issues and we support the development of fine and gross motor skills.

## AMERICAN SCHOOL OF DUBAI Student-centred approach for the new early-learning programme

The new Early Learning Programme (PreK and K1) at the American School of Dubai is based on the principles of Reggio Emilia – a play-based, student-centered approach with a focus on enquiry-based learning – and housed in a new purpose-built learning environment predicated on flexible learning spaces.

The September 2020 launch of the programme was put to a challenging test right from the start: To open a successful and

modified classrooms and materials, adjusted school schedules to accommodate sanitising and physical distancing, and the implementation of necessary cleaning regimens.

With the health and safety precautions in place, students have authentic opportunities to work, play, socialise, negotiate with others, and make sense of their world.

K1 teacher Hiba Najm says, "The classroom space plays a major role in promoting relationships, communication, collaboration, experimentation, and exploration through play. The open space, transparent doors, outdoor spaces, and common areas all play a role in building a great sense of community and belonging. Students learn best when they feel welcomed and safe, are actively engaged, and have ownership over their learning."

ASD administration, faculty, and staff continue to be deliberate on creating a learning experience that is calm, safe, and student-focused. "We continue to keep students' social and emotional well-being at the centre of our educational decisions," says Strate.

The PreK and K1 students join an international community of nearly 80 nationalities with a mission to become passionate learners, prepared to adapt and contribute in a rapidly changing world.

For more information or to apply for the 2021-2022 academic year, visit [Asdubai.org/admissions](https://www.asdubai.org/admissions).



“My favourite thing at school is to draw and play with my friends.”

Charlie T.  
PreK student

innovative curriculum in a new space in the midst of a worldwide pandemic. "We have had to be strategic and prioritise our work to manage all the firsts of our new programme and space while keeping student health and safety our top priority," says Deb Strate, Director of the Early Learning Centre. Following the guidelines from the KHDA and Dubai Health Authority, ASD enacted strict health and safety measures to meet this challenge including



**NIBRAS INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL (PART OF INTERNATIONAL SCHOOLS PARTNERSHIP)**

- **Curriculum** American Education Reaches Out (AERO) Common Core Plus
- **Total number of students + no. of students per class** 1,110 students; maximum of 20 students per class and 10 students per cluster KG.
- **Innovations in education** Inquiry-based teaching emphasises the student's role in the learning process – they are actively encouraged to explore, ask and research.
- **Extracurricular activities** Provided by a third-party as per DHA regulation.
- **Awards and recognition** NEASC accreditation, National Honor Society membership, KHDA highest rating 'Developed' for Distance Learning program.
- **Modes of inclusion** Three modes – General Support Services, Targeted Intervention and Intensive Intervention Support.

Nibras International School (NIS) caters to KG through to Grade 12, offering a rigorous American education through the American Education Reaches Out (AERO) Common Core Plus programme. Quality and experienced teachers with American and international experience practice inquiry-based teaching that emphasises the student's role in the learning process – they are actively encouraged to explore, ask and research. NIS is one of the few schools in Dubai accredited by NEASC, a globally recognised standard of excellence and integrity; and is also a member of the National Honour Society (NHS). The Distance Learning Provision at NIS has been given a Developed Rating – the highest possible rating by the KHDA.



**REGENT INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL (PART OF FORTES HOLDINGS)**

- **Curriculum** British National Curriculum, GCSEs, IGCSEs, A Levels and BTEC
- **Rewards structure for gifted/talented students** We reward and recognise all our students, so they not only shine academically but also flourish in life. Specifically, for the gifted and talented students we have resource rooms to access 'stretch' activities and programmes, access to specialist teachers, and signature programmes where students use and apply STEAM beyond the classroom.
- **Innovations in education** Regent's primary and secondary departments provide a cutting-edge curriculum where children "learn by doing". They develop the 5C's – critical thinking, creativity, communication, collaboration and commitment – essential to becoming leaders, thinkers and inventors in today's tech-driven world. The school's signature

programmes, include, Positive Education Ethos, STEAM and project-based learning, creative and performing arts concentration, virtual and augmented reality, extracurriculars and enrichment and Fortes AI learning platform.

- **Extracurricular activities** Regent offers over 60 extracurricular activities to suit every child's interests, which include: Duke of Edinburgh Award activities, participation in TEDx, sports, performing arts, drama, dance, ballet, music, World Scholars Club, Model UN, student newspaper, rock band, and so much more.
- **Awards and recognition** With a rich history of over 27 years, Regent is recognised as one of the leading and most innovative schools in the region as well as a global leader in Positive Education. It is rated "Outstanding" by the British School Overseas Inspection Authority and "Very Good" by KHDA.
- **Modes of inclusion** Regent personalises our programme so that each student is perfectly positioned to achieve their very best possible outcomes and most appropriate route to study for the future.



**SUNMARKE SCHOOL (PART OF FORTES HOLDINGS)**

- **Curriculum** IB Diploma, IB Career-related Programme, GCSE, A Levels and BTEC.
- **Innovations in education** Multiple Academic Pathways, AI Learning, AR/VR, Mini MBA, Project-Based Learning, Careers Rising Workshops.
- **Extracurricular activities** TEDx, robotics, coding, the arts, music, sports and more.
- **Student awards and recognition** The World's Best Debater Title, The Nikon Choice Award Winner, Outstanding Pearson Learner Award.
- **Modes of inclusion** Interventions for literacy, interventions for mathematics, speaking and listening, social skills, motor skills.



**THE AQUILA SCHOOL (PART OF INTERNATIONAL SCHOOLS PARTNERSHIP)**

- **Curriculum** National curriculum for England, EYFS, BTEC, IB.
- **Total number of students + no. of students per class** 640, with 24 per class.
- **Innovations in education** The school hosts multiple-themed weeks of whole school learning, like the Mantle of

the Expert and Drama Workshop Week. The secondary pupils have access to many leadership events and ISP International Learning Opportunities. The Hydroponics farm allows pupils to engage in lessons and experiences that teach them about their role towards the environment and sustainability.

- **Extracurricular activities** The school has a selection of activities that are run by teachers. Our pupils choose these based on their interests and they are provided free of charge. We also have an external provider, Smash Sports, who also provides a range of paid activities that our pupils can enroll in.
- **Awards and recognition** Aquila always celebrates the progress of its children with golden time, golden tickets, Aquila awards for amazing learning. They also compete internally in the readers cup, and subject competitions.
- **Modes of inclusion** The school works closely with Hemam (specialist inclusion centre for children with high needs), and we have our own inclusion department. We also implement IEP, and provide EAL support.



**VICTORY HEIGHTS PRIMARY SCHOOL (VHPS)**

- **Curriculum** British Curriculum
- **Total number of students + no. of students per class** 799 and max of 25 per class
- **Rewards structure for gifted/talented students** No 'rewards' structure per se (the school doesn't believe in rewarding for attainment – rewards are based upon effort) – however, we do have a comprehensive More Able, Gifted and Talented provision, run by a dedicated member of the schools inclusion department, which includes children receiving additional lessons to ensure they are stretched and challenged.
- **Innovations in education** VHPS has one of the region's most established 1:1 Chromebook provisions, running from Year 2 to Year 6. As a Google Reference School, VHPS has been recognised for its efforts in this area.
- **Extracurricular activities** Pre-Covid, all children were entitled to two ECAs per week, alongside a third Arabic ECA. There were also a number of sports squads, including swimming. The fantastic PE department oversaw a wonderful second place in the most recent edition of the BSME Small School Games – with VHPS winning the overall swim gala.
- **Awards and recognition** The Principal Sasha Crabb, has won the Principal of the Year award twice since the school was founded in 2013. The Assistant Head Teacher was recognised in The Knowledge Review as one of the 10 most influential education leaders in the UAE in 2019. In 2015, VHPS was privileged to be named the "Best in older childhood education" in the Mother, Baby and Child – Top Mums Choice Award. VHPS was also a Finalist – 'Outstanding Strategic Initiative' at the British International School Awards 2017/18.
- **Modes of inclusion** At VHPS there is a whole school approach to inclusion, which means all staff and children are responsible and accountable within the school. At the forefront of this, quality first teaching and curriculum modification from outstanding teachers takes place in all classrooms to meet the diverse needs of all children. VHPS has a dedicated inclusion team comprising teachers and learning support assistants whereby additional support sessions are implemented to facilitate and develop the academic, social and emotional needs and the well-being of all. This is done in a variety of ways such as in-class support, small group sessions and/or one-to-one sessions.

## GERMAN INTERNATIONAL SCHOOLS

# Education made in Germany in the UAE

**F**rom Kindergarten to the graduate level, the three German International Schools of the United Arab Emirates, situated respectively in Abu Dhabi, Sharjah and Dubai offer education “made in Germany”. They are part of a network of currently 140 German Schools abroad in 72 countries all certified through the German Conference of Ministers of Education (KMK). They adhere to a worldwide quality standard and are recognised for this with the seal of approval “Excellent German School Abroad” signed by the German Federal President. All schools in the network are governed by the Federal Republic of Germany, which sponsors qualified teachers from Germany and financially support the schools.

German Schools Abroad do not only impart academic and language skills, but shape their students to become global citizens. Through the cooperation with Germany and being governed by the Federal Republic of Germany, the three German Schools Abroad in the UAE are at the core of intercultural exchange and place a high emphasis on maintaining German and Arabic cultural assets in a strong school community. They follow a German curriculum, which is specifically supplemented and expanded by Arabic and social studies from the local curriculum.

German Schools Abroad offer a variety of graduate qualifications, such as the German International Abitur (DIA), the International Baccalaureate (IB) or the Bilingual International Baccalaureate (BIB). All respective diplomas offer the highly qualified German students the chance to not only study in Germany but also worldwide.



Deutsche Internationale Schule Abu Dhabi  
المدرسة الألمانية الدولية  
German International School Abu Dhabi

**T**he German International School in Abu Dhabi (GISAD), founded in 2008, is owned by the German Embassy in Abu Dhabi and generously supported by the Crown Prince Court. Since 2008, GISAD has established itself as a renowned international school that is regularly awarded “very good” from ADEK (Abu Dhabi Department of Education and Knowledge).

Roughly 400 students attend GISAD and are taught by highly trained teachers, mainly from Germany, although other nationalities include British, Austrian, Syrian, Egyptian, Palestinian and Jordanian. GISAD has a German curriculum, based on the German Thuringian Education Plan. Our curriculum incorporates bilingual elements and offers our students of 17 different nationalities a multicultural learning environment. The relatively small size of the school allows for a familiar atmosphere, students feel at “home” at GISAD.

The focus on multilingual education begins at the kindergarten level and offers language instruction in



German and English. Further, the GISAD offers the Linguistic Integration Program (LIP) for academically high achieving students with little or no prior knowledge in German but seeking a late entry into the German education system.

Our graduates benefit from the general educational approach the German curriculum offers to combine a global awareness of culture with deepened knowledge in math and sciences: They study different fields of science, medicine, and business administration, to name a few, at prestigious universities. We are proud that the first Emirati student from a German School Abroad graduated in 2019 at GISAD.

For further information please visit: [www.gisad.ae](http://www.gisad.ae)  
Facebook: [@germaninternationalschoolabudhabi](https://www.facebook.com/germaninternationalschoolabudhabi)  
Instagram: [@gisabudhabi](https://www.instagram.com/gisabudhabi)  
LinkedIn: [@germaninternationalschoolabudhabi](https://www.linkedin.com/company/germaninternationalschoolabudhabi)



**T**he German International School (DIS Sharjah), is known for its unique ambience of a green oasis right in the heart of Sharjah. Founded in 1976, it is a school with vast experience and a long history, following its commitment to progress and to

providing its students with the best education. Having nearly 200 students in kindergarten, primary, secondary and the (G)IB, the DIS Sharjah has succeeded in creating a familial atmosphere that enhances learning and provides the children with a place to feel at home.

The atmosphere of openness and mutual support promotes teamwork as well as personal growth and independence in the students. The campus offers great facilities for scientific work, music, arts and sports while the spacious outdoor area, boasting wide lawns and shading trees is ideal for playing and relaxing.

Thanks to small classes, the DIS Sharjah teachers can give the students the individual attention they require to develop their skills and potentials. We aim to enable their multilingual, responsible and analytical thinking along with digital, social and critical thinking skills to prepare them for the work place of tomorrow.

For further information please visit: [www.dssharjah.org](http://www.dssharjah.org)  
Facebook: [Deutsche Internationale Schule Sharjah](https://www.facebook.com/DeutscheInternationaleSchuleSharjah)  
Instagram: [dssharjah](https://www.instagram.com/dssharjah)



**T**he German International School Dubai, DISD, was founded in 2008 and is owned by the Consulate General in Dubai. Around 750 students from more than 30 nations study here in a respectful and open-minded atmosphere. DISD is located in Dubai Academic City and can be counted among the most modern German Schools Abroad. DISD fosters the unique German engineering spirit and aspires STEM excellence (science, technology, engineering, mathematics) from Kindergarten to the Abitur. The school offers an outstanding and inspiring learning environment with modern science labs, two libraries and state-of-the-art sport facilities to cater to the students' needs in every category.

All Primary and Secondary School classes work with iPads, implemented with an innovative evidence based approach. DISD students thrive in a multilingual environment and develop into true global citizens with the German language as a core competence. Many of the students reach a native speaker level in several languages, next to German, as well in English and Arabic. The city Dubai, region and the world serve as classrooms in stimulating national and international excursions and exchange programs.

For further information please visit: [germanschool.ae](http://germanschool.ae)  
Facebook: [@germanschooldxb](https://www.facebook.com/germanschooldxb)  
Instagram: [@germanschooldxb](https://www.instagram.com/germanschooldxb)  
YouTube: [DISD German School Dubai](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC...)



# TACKLING A FEAR OF THE KNOWN



- With parents apprehensive about sending their children to a regular academic environment amid the pandemic, UAE schools seek to reassure that the children are secure and in safe hands

BY SANKAR SRI PILLAI

Head of Content, Supplements and Contract Publishing

Parents continue to show concern and remain apprehensive as school gates opened to welcome students back to conventional classrooms this month after the pandemic lockdown and the resultant distance learning initiatives undertaken by UAE educational institutions. Physical distancing, maintenance of hygiene in public spaces and gatherings and the loss of learning are all issues plaguing the parents' minds. However, UAE schools have been a step ahead in the process, with systems and checks in place to assuage parents and their wards that things are all right.

### In this together

Jackie Greenwood, Head of Counselling and Well-being, Fairgreen International School, says, "The tag line, in this together, has never been more appropriate. None of us have found the last year easy, but together we have found comfort and support,

new ideas and ways of coping. As we have transitioned back to the Fairgreen campus, we have prioritised transparent and frequent communication along with accessibility, care and kindness.

"Our focus has first and foremost been on the physical, social and emotional well-being of our children. One of our strengths has always been the personal connection and the extent to which each child is known by many adults in school. This has allowed us to operate a dual system of proactive well-being activities as well as being open and responsive to concerns. This support extends to our parent community and our teachers. A combination of video messages, online coffee mornings, support seminars and prosocial activities has meant that our community has felt reassured and ready to move forward with optimism. Our students are our biggest assets and cheerleaders; they show us every day their resilience in adapting positively to the changes that Covid has presented.

No doubt this reassures our parent community that their children are still embracing school life and are coping better than any of us could have hoped."

For Dr Paul Richards, Superintendent, American School of Dubai (ASD), it's all about the knowledge parents and students gained from the pandemic and the extent of their ability to incorporate those learnings in their daily lives that will matter. "We truly believe that schools are among the safest places to be during and after the pandemic, though we never take our parents' trust in ASD for

granted. Some behaviours learned during the pandemic, such as staying home if one is really sick, or wearing a mask so as not to spread contagion, will endure in the post-Covid world. Though this experience has been taxing on everybody, I believe we will exit the pandemic with greater respect and compassion for each other, and a belief that contributing to the common good will advance our society."

Some schools are even ready to take this one step further and give in to parental concerns by allowing children to continue distance



**Jackie Greenwood**  
Fairgreen  
International School



**Dr Neil Hopkin**  
Sunmarke  
School



**Dr Omaima Ataya**  
American School  
of Dubai



**Dr Jay Teston**  
Nibras International  
School



■ Nibras School flies high on the trust it garners from parents thanks to transparent communication channels

learning until parents consider it fit to send them to a physical school environment

### In school or away?

Dr Neil Hopkin, Executive Principal, Sunmarke School, part of Fortes Holdings, says, "Sunmarke School has created a secure and safe environment that is both safe for students and staff, as well as stimulating and as close to normal as protocols allow. This is strictly monitored by a dedicated Covid action team, with constant adjustments and enhancements made school-wide to reflect the rapidly changing nature of this virus and the legislative requirements.

"Furthermore, the school continues to offer students and their parents (where protocols allow) the option to continue learning in the physical school and also to learn entirely online. In this manner parents with differing concerns can find the manner of learning that fits their particular circumstances. We have found our families to be very appreciative of this flexibility and focus on their individual needs. Very regular information updates, reminders and guidelines have helped to inform the community about their own best practice for continued good health, as well as ensuring that we follow protocols to protect one another within the school community."

That said, Dr Omaira Ataya, School Physician, ASD, is happy to have children coming into school, stating that The American Academy of Pediatrics reaffirms its recommendation to have children physically in school for their physical, emotional, and academic well-being. "The KHDA has similarly advocated strongly to get our students back to school in person," says Dr Ataya, adding, "what these past few months have shown us is that we can accomplish this if we adhere strictly to our health and safety protocols. A

growing body of evidence demonstrates that opening schools has not significantly increased viral transmission in our community. In fact I believe our schools are one of the safest places to be.

"Parents, students, and teachers have grown accustomed now to these health and safety measures, which have been keeping us safe and open. We all practise diligent hand hygiene, physical distancing, and mask wearing. We avoid gathering in large groups. Most importantly, we stay home when we feel sick and get tested for Covid-19 if we develop any symptoms. Now it's time for the next big step and get vaccinated against Covid. We are grateful to be in Dubai where we have two safe and effective vaccines available. Getting vaccinated soon will eventually lead to herd immunity and put an end to this pandemic. Like Lin-Manuel Miranda wrote in the award-winning musical *Hamilton*, "I am not throwing away my shot!"

However, the tangibles aside, constant communication can be a shot in the arm too.

### Remain transparent

Dr Jay Teston, Principal, Nibras International School, part of International Schools Partnership, says, "We are thankful to our parents for continuing to trust us to educate their children. Our community's safety, health, and well-being continue to be a priority at Nibras International School, and our entire community has worked together to maintain this.

"I believe frequent and transparent communication in times of uncertainties, builds trust and assurance within the community. We continually shared our Covid policies, the results of all agency inspections - KHDA, DHA, Dubai Municipality, and have provided weekly reports to the NIS community, thus allowing us to grow stronger together." ■

## DUNECREST AMERICAN SCHOOL

# For clean technology and social consciousness

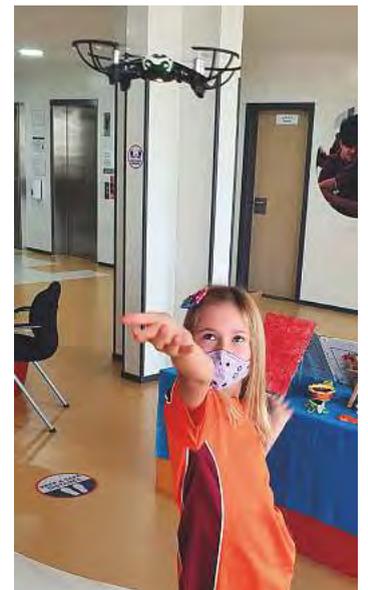
In 2020 we learned that life is fragile but harmony is the key to happiness. At Dunecrest American School we fuse technology with social consciousness in order to help our students understand complex real world problems and to acquire critical skills and empathy needed to resolve them.

Our STEAM-led, project-based learning lends itself to fantastic future-forward modules, electives and extra-curricular activities from Pre-KG all the way up to secondary school.

Consider our grade 2 students who are exploring how human choices impact the survival of plants and animals. Specifically, students are examining what role technology can play in reversing bees' colony collapse disorder and how this will help with food production and animal survival. Using design thinking, students will explore the possibility of using drones to pollinate plants. This exciting unit leverages the PARROT Mambo Drone, Apple's SWIFT Playground coding language and our students' future-focused problem solving techniques.

Staying true to its core mission of helping students to realise their power to change the world around them, Dunecrest has partnered with Million Solar Stars Founder and our Middle School Science Teacher, Adam Hall to launch the Million Solar Stars Science course (MSS). MSS connects students with tools to design and engineer hands-on solar power models and to engage multiple stakeholders to increase the number of schools powered by solar energy.

Term 1 has been incredibly busy for our budding clean tech engineers and community leaders! Students explored the feasibility of using solar power on our very own campus as well as using Minecraft and TinkerCAD to model different panel instal-



lation designs. Proposals were presented to school and industry leaders. Students also attended a weeklong workshop with a photovoltaic specialist from Namene Solar. On March 6, students and partner AMANA Solar will host a Walk Around the Sun to raise awareness about solar energy through a variety of exhibits and activities.

From events to electives, we mustn't forget our extra-curriculars. Activities are in full bloom this year at Dunecrest. We have three active gardening and environmental clubs. Working with School Director, Bill Delbrugge, students are caring for almost 100 different flora and fauna. Further they have created an abundance of leafy green vegetables in our 11 hydroponic plant towers and are germinating 150 beans in our dedicated science wing as part of a productive garden initiative.

2020 was a year of reflection. It was a time for prioritisation and gratitude. The year 2021 is a time to harness this awareness and to be an agent of growth and harmony. We are proud of our pioneering offerings, which will continue to grow and evolve along with our students.

# Ensure career readiness

● New-age subjects are being introduced into the curriculum in Western countries, keeping the demands of Gen Alpha in mind and to prep them for jobs of the future. Is the UAE on track?

## GN FOCUS REPORT

The Gulf News EduFair, a virtual event organised by the newspaper in November last year with participation from the UAE's top universities and associated industry partners also hosted a webinar to ideate and discuss strategies on making the UAE student body future ready. With insights being shared on future careers, and looking at ways and means to best respond to evolving societal needs, panel representatives from the UAE's premier universities were unanimous on the fact that the need was to bridge skill gaps and secure roles for students, our future career professionals, within emerging industries.

### Schools set the bar

While universities chisel and mould entrepreneurs and bring students up to speed with the skill sets of tomorrow, it's the UAE schools that set the groundwork and pave the way for students to meet their aspirations, before they select the college of their choice and a resulting career of their dreams. The critical role played by schools is not lost on Jason King, Principal, Regent International School, part of Fortes Holdings, as he emphasises on adaptability to changing scenarios as a key facet for career readiness.

"At Regent, our students learn 'how to learn,' adapt, and reinvent themselves. Our teachers encourage risk-taking and bold ideas. They encourage critical thinking and creative solutions. Our young boys and girls develop a mindset that ensures success in life long after they leave school," says King.

Sangita Chima, Principal, Amity School Dubai, is well aware of the challenges of meeting the demands of Generation Alpha and feels the institution she heads is

on the right track in prepping young minds in terms of career readiness, with able support from the UAE authorities.

"A combination of the UAE Education System and India's vision for NEP 2020 (New Education Policy 2020) will prepare Generation Alpha for engaging, technology-embedded learning opportunities of the future," says Chima. "Amity School Dubai has an innovative IT curriculum based on several key concepts such as computational intelligence, artificial intelligence, algorithms, heuristics, computational biology and more. We are in the process of procuring new technological resources, redesigning our learning spaces, securing new AI support and creating an innovative curriculum, all of which will be rolled out by April 2021."



**Jason King**  
Regent International  
School



**Sangita Chima**  
Amity School  
Dubai

### The way forward

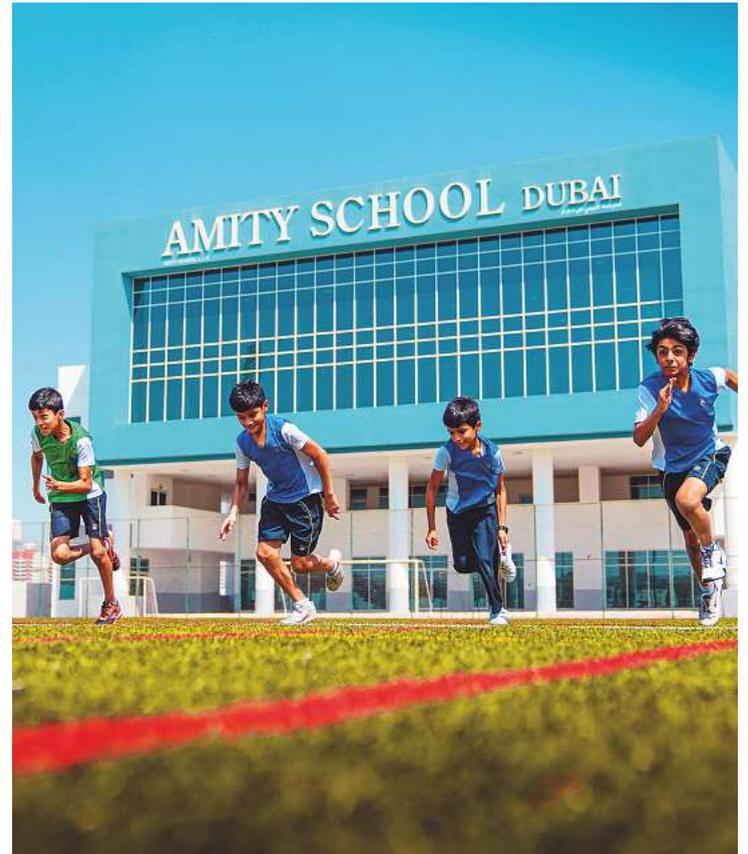
The tools aside, counselling and constant communication are key as well in highlighting global trends and informing students and their parents on the way industries are headed and spotlighting where opportunities lie, says King.

"Throughout their time at Regent there are numerous opportunities where our students and their families engage with the school to discuss the progress being made, their current academic performance, and their career and academic aspirations. Building on from these meetings, particularly from Year 6 onwards all the way through the secondary school to Year 13, we have a team of highly experienced staff, including career counsellors, who will guide students, in conjunction with their families, into the most appropriate pathway to fulfill their future dreams and goals. This support includes workshops and personalised meetings for both students and parents throughout the year." ■

## AMITY SCHOOL DUBAI

ADVERTORIAL

# The change-maker school



The Amity School Dubai community welcomed 2021 with open arms and masked faces. While teachers, parents and students faced the challenging impact of covid-19, their school community grew stronger and closer as the values of trust and confidence evolved harmoniously together. Through the unpredictability, Amity School Dubai was quick to implement digital tools and create content across all learning requirements and experiences. In March 2020, an exciting Bridge Programme was converted to digital distance learning mode, without any loss of time. The school also got some help from their partners in the region, as teachers from Amity International School Abu Dhabi conducted training programmes to help teachers get a grip of the various teaching opportunities available through MS Teams and SeeSaw. In a matter of days, students were trained at the tech spaces in school, while training modules and webinars for parents continued during the first week.

Through this rapid transformation, the school learnt to take every step to support parents and students. With agility, the curriculum was redesigned to include the discovery of new digital tools. Stepping into real time innovation with amazing new experiences and preserving the core value of seamless individual attention, between the teacher and the child was a challenge the school overcame through 'insights' on the screen.

Teachers at the school are ready for the new adventures of 2021. Their strategy is clear, and they know they can make a difference in the lives of students and families, as they continue to advocate for resilience and hope. Amity School Dubai's ability to handle crisis as a challenge is truly remarkable, for the pandemic is not a paralyzing event but a push to evolve and innovate. They have learnt to embrace technology, leverage their ability to multitask, problem solve and evolve quite seamlessly as a change-maker school.



مدرسة ليوا الدولية - المشرف  
LIWA INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL - AL MUSHRIF



# ENROLL NOW

## Admissions open from KG to Grade 9

Offering a vibrant and holistic international American curriculum education, where the modern day needs of young people are understood, and where our students are engaged in learning, intellectual risk taking and a healthy, rounded lifestyle.



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Liwa Education

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ADVERTORIAL

## REGENT INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL

# Offering outstanding secondary education to boost career options

**W**e are at the cusp of the 4th Industrial Revolution and education must keep pace so the next generation can thrive and achieve their potential. The secondary curriculum at Regent International School is designed for the 21st century learner and promotes the mastery of subjects and development of skills so students become lifelong learners and change-makers.

Regent's secondary curriculum is distinguished with its unique project-based Learning (PBL) pedagogy where students "learn by doing," working on real-world projects developing products and solutions to solve real-world problems. Students combine knowledge and skills from different subjects and develop the 5C skills of creativity, critical thinking, collaboration, communication and commitment, so critical to success in today's world.

Regent is further distinguished with its unique Signature Programmes in STEAM and Robotics, Coding, Entrepreneurship and Sustainability, which are woven into the curriculum and its PBL approach to education.

Jason King, Principal of Regent says, "Every



child at Regent makes outstanding progress because of a very supportive and intellectually challenging environment. Through multiple conversations and career counselling throughout the year, our teachers carefully guide and support students in their secondary subject choices in Year 10 and 11 and beyond. Regent also holds a Virtual Options Week in January every year for students who, with their parents, meet

our secondary teachers to discuss their subject and career pathways before the final choices are made. Regent has wide subject options to ensure students can work towards their chosen universities and desired careers."

Regent International School follows the National Curriculum of England and offers an outstanding education culminating in the GCSEs and BTECs in Year 10 and 11, and A levels in Year 12 and 13. Regent is rated "Outstanding" by the British School Overseas Inspection authority and "Very Good" by KHDA.

King adds by saying, "Regent has a rich history of over 27 years. We are recognised as one of the leading and most innovative schools in the region, as well as a global leader in Positive Education, where academic and personal achievement are combined with well-being and character development enabling children to flourish and achieve their aspirations and dreams. All our teachers are trained in our Positive Education philosophy and are committed to nurturing students both academically and pastorally so they can thrive."

ADVERTORIAL

## SUNMARKE SCHOOL

# Nurturing growth and potential

**A**t Sunmarke, we nurture and unlock the potential in every child through a three-pronged focus on career, university preparation and industry exposure and work experience.

Career education and guidance is an essential part of the support we offer to all of our students at Fortes Education. Effective support can help to prepare young people for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life. It can help them to make decisions and manage transitions as learners and workers. As options for young people become more varied and complex, it is vital that we support them to develop the knowledge and skills they need to make informed choices for their future. While at Fortes, students create CVs and LinkedIn profiles, are taught about interview techniques and are provided with up to date information about expected salaries and required job skills.

We encourage students to be ambitious and explore their own career aspirations. Through one-on one



meetings, career assemblies and weekly career lessons, we ensure students' readiness to take their next steps.

We believe it is important to provide students with a range of options for life after graduation. Personalized university guidance helps students and their families achieve their aspiration. We ensure students

have access to a range of University Admissions officials through fairs or one to one visits. Connecting to universities is an important step for parents and students alike as they are able to understand the process involved in applying for admissions and scholarships. Our students have secured admissions from the Ivy league, Russell Group and other

top universities over the years.

We foster partnerships with parents through our SunRISE workshops, where we are able to inform them about application procedures, ways to access scholarships and funding for university, application to summer programmes and understanding trends at the workplace of the future.

We believe that facilitating meaningful encounters with employers for all students is paramount. Our work experience programme – which was the only one in Dubai to go entirely virtual in June 2020 due to the pandemic – is open to all students in the Secondary and allows students to take on real-life projects with some of the top companies in the world.

CEOs, leaders and entrepreneurs share the stage with our student hosts to impart their life experiences. With some of the most influential names in the region being a part of our 'Think & Thrive' series, our students are always learning and getting inspired from the very best in their fields.

## NIBRAS INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL

# Premier education institute becomes a member of the National Honour Society

**D**ubai-based Nibras International School (NIS), part of International Schools Partnership (ISP), a global group of schools, has received the prestigious National Honour Society affiliate status for the 2020-2021 school year. The school has received this status based on their commitment to student and community affairs.

With Chapters of the National Honour Society found throughout the US and the world, the membership recognises learning establishments and students globally for their accomplishments and challenges them to develop further, through active involvement in their respective school activities and community service.

Dr Jay B. Teston, Principal, Nibras International School, says, "We are delighted to be affiliated to the National Honour Society. This membership will help us to establish a solid framework for promoting the ideals of scholarship, service, leadership, and character in our school. This globally-recognised programme not only marks a historic milestone for Nibras International School, but also recognises our achievement in student and community engagement activities, which form part of our core values. It's a great honour to join



other globally recognised schools and only a very few in the UAE, as a National Honour Society member."

According to Dr Teston, earning and maintaining a National Honour Society membership comes with exclusive tools and resources for students that will support them in their endeavours and help them be active citizens with long-term goals.

"Through our various student-centered activities, such as the Model United Nations, student enrichment programs, career guid-

ance and the ISP Buddy Exchange Program, we have been able to cultivate our students' potential to ensure that they learn, lead and influence. The National Honour Society affiliation now gives the Nibras International School community an opportunity to further develop a sense of themselves, the world around, and how they can more for the rest of the community," Dr Teston concludes.

NIS – Dubai, is one of the few affordable American curriculum schools in Dubai that offers the



American Education Reaches Out (AERO) Common Core Plus programme, as well as Advanced Placement courses. The school is NEASC accredited, a globally recognised standard of excellence through which students get accepted to the best international universities. Amazing learning, global vision, and a true sense of community are the fundamentals at NIS, and it provides students with the tools they need to turn passion into purpose and influence. Through the rigorous curriculum NIS opens students' hearts and minds so that they embrace challenges and opportunities, share ideas and purpose, and truly influence others to make a positive difference.

For more information about Nibras International School visit <https://hubs.li/H0DZcW80>

## LIWA EDUCATION

# A visionary education group

**A**liwa Education is an established educational leader, recognised in providing an accessible, high-quality, American curriculum education in the UAE for the past three decades.

Its schools across Al Ain and Abu Dhabi offer a challenging education, combining the essence of Emirati values with a rich set of core competencies that produces confident, resilient and courageous young leaders.

Students at Liwa Education's three schools – Liwa International School Falaj Hazza, Liwa International School for Girls and Liwa International School Al Mushrif – learn to develop an international mindset, grounded in local values, understanding and appreciation. Each school understands the need



for agility and adaptability in an ever-changing landscape and its graduating students are fully prepared to meet both national and global challenges, now and in the future.

Each school with the Liwa Education group provides a broad-based approach to learning, focused on delivering a high stan-

dard of education in a wide range of subjects. The curriculum works on the guiding principal that students will make better choices in their own fields of study, if they have a good education in a number of areas right through to their high school years. With a strong focus on co-curricular activities to help students in their personal and so-

cial development, Liwa Education schools produce students who are adaptable, forward-thinking and equipped with the skills needed in a fast-changing work environment.

Dr Shereen Gobran, CEO and Director of Schools at Liwa Education said, "We prepare students for the real world through the planning and delivery of a robust education, which promotes skill development, as well as knowledge and understanding of subjects both inside and outside the curriculum. These skills are in line with the Abu Dhabi Student Competency Framework, which includes critical thinking, creativity, innovation, problem solving, communication skills, self-confidence and global and environmental awareness."

## VICTORY HEIGHTS PRIMARY SCHOOL

# Staying true to the community

Visitors to Victory Heights Primary School (VHPS) will step into a true community primary school. Often, parents who visit the school will remark how similar the school feels to their own childhood memories - the principal who ensures she knows every child's name through to the leadership team who are truly a part of the day to day operations of the school - constantly visible and engaging with children and their learning. They will see classrooms that feel alive and buzz with energy and enthusiasm - not through gimmicks but through children delighting in acquiring new knowledge and understanding. The school revels in its mantra that learning is, for the most part, 'bread and butter' with the occasional 'fish and chips' moment to inspire awe and wonder.

Yet whilst VHPS (as staff, children and parents will affectionately refer to the school) seemingly harks back to a bygone age, away from the glitz, glamour and scale of some other schools in the region - VHPS delivers on its vision to 'Nurture, Challenge and



Excel'. With consistently outstanding results in the core subjects of English, Maths and Science, where around 75 per cent of children consistently achieve the highest standards, as benchmarked against UK schools, and a showing in the recent round of TIMMS international benchmarking, which would make VHPS the envy of schools around the world. Children at VHPS leave after Year

6 in great shape for the next stage of their journey, having grown into confident, high achieving individuals, in a nurturing and caring small school environment.

VHPS also prides itself on its collegiality. Education in Dubai is not about self - it is about a shared ethos and increasing standards across the board so as to meet the lofty goals for education set out by the UAE's visionary leadership. As

a founder member of the UAE Research Schools Network, for example, VHPS promotes a research-informed approach to education, and shares the results of its own action research freely. So too, is collegiality emphasised, in the schools commitment to sharing best practice in small 'cluster' groups formed with other local schools - most recently looking at developing the provision of Arabic education.

ADVERTORIAL

## AMERICAN COMMUNITY SCHOOL OF ABU DHABI

# Elevating technology education to inspire the next generation

Imagine a classroom that has a radio station, a TV studio, robotics arena, animation station, and a small stage for performance, where students are so engaged in learning the bell for dismissal is ignored. The technology team at the American Community School of Abu Dhabi (ACS) re-imagined the tech program and trans-

formed an existing classroom to motivate students to be active creators giving them a voice and giving them a choice. The result: an inspiring space where students innovate, create and try out new things.

In the new Backstage Techttoos program, students Grades 6-8 choose their own path of adventure, from filmmaking to animation, they

are free to move at their own pace. So, if they want to take their time with a digital art project or jump right into coding, they can. Students earn small "techttoos" which are physical representations of the new technology skill they have mastered. Students are not only rewarded, they are celebrated for their creativity and innovation.

Aligned to the International Society of Technology in Education (ISTE) standards, the new program is rigorous, effective and popular with students. During the pandemic, students were so excited by the new course, additional projects were designed especially for Remote Learning.

For Grades K-5, ACS added a new Innovation Lab with new ipads, TV studio, podcasting studio, animation lab, and a new program called MyTechBadges. Dash, the robot, greets young students as they adventure into robotics. The new curriculum is sparking students' imagination, rewarding them for exploring new ways of learning through technology.

Even in this unprecedented year, ACS made significant enhancements to technology programs by providing new opportunities for greater student engagement and achievement, building the necessary skills to be competitive in a digital, post-Covid world.





## **DRIVEN BY SUSTAINABILITY, INNOVATION & ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT**

Fairgreen International School is a pioneering educational community, with a mission to embrace and promote sustainability in all its forms. Fairgreen's challenging academic environment motivates students to be agents of change and helps them progress as solution-minded, critical thinkers.

Fairgreen offers:

- The International Baccalaureate® (IB) Continuum (IB PYP, MYP, DP & CP)
- IBCP Partnership with the Sustainability Management School of Switzerland
- Innovative Architectural Design Programme for Middle and High School Students
- Urban Farming, Eco-entrepreneurship, STEM Learning Opportunities
- Project-based Learning and Service Learning
- Diverse Extra-curricular Activities including Sports, Performing & Fine Arts
- A World Class Campus Located in The Sustainable City

located in



Accepting applications for Pre-KG to Grade 11 for the 2021-2022 academic year. For more information and to apply, please visit [www.fairgreen.ae](http://www.fairgreen.ae), call **04 875 4999** or email: [info@fairgreen.ae](mailto:info@fairgreen.ae)

BEAM

# The American School of Creative Science: Science as the art of learning

**W**hat are the characteristics of an ASCS student? Resilience, resourceful, responsible, reflective, and ready to reason!

At the American School of Creative Science, a N.E.A.S.C candidate, our aim is to offer the very best of academic instruction, merging Ministry of Education Curriculum of Arabic, Islamic, Social Studies and Moral Education, with US Common Core Standards, along with a unique and rigorous Qur'an program, ensuring students develop a love for recitation and memorisation. Our curriculum is delivered in an environment that places a strong emphasis on strong moral values, ethos, and cultural traditions, hence our motto: Excellence rooted in values.

We have a lot of fun at ASCS; being a close-knit school community, filled with a sense of joy and enthusiasm for learning, without compromising on providing students with the skills necessary to

be engaged, global citizens, who have a growth mindset. The learning environment at ASCS not only instills a sense of safety and security, but also fosters and develops independent learners, who take responsibility for their learning and know their next steps.

It is our diversified curriculum, in which we purposefully plan strong cross-curricular links, as



● Sara Hollis - Principal - ASCS NAS

well as plan for real-life scenarios, that brings learning to life: Quran enrichment program; Modelled reading & guided reading; Well-being lessons; Virtues curriculum; Virtual labs; STEM lessons; School-based activities such as ASCS Community Garden, ASCS Souk, Apollo 13 Challenges; Extra-curricular activities

As an Apple School, our teachers consciously work to embed the Apple Elements of Learning, throughout all lessons. We move beyond using technology as a substitution and is optimised as a learning tool, to enhance feedback, students' response to feedback, foster teamwork and collaboration, develop their critical thinking, and ensure personalization of learning.

We cultivate assessment capable learners who can articulate their learning goals. Via Showbie not only do students have continual access to provided learning material and their portfolio of work,

but they also have access to their own data, and detailed targeted National Agenda classes for TIMSS and PIRLS, enabling our students to be aware of how their time in school is helping them to contribute to the UAE National Agenda.

Our educators are reflective! Data is used to inform planning and measures impact with targeted intervention built into our timetable. Teachers regularly perform data analysis to determine each students' unique learning gaps. These are targeted through personalised assignments provided via the online platform, MAP Skills Navigator, that re-teaches key skills and performs assessments, bridging gaps and identifying forthcoming targeted learning requirements.

At ASCS, you are part of a learning community where educators see learning through the eyes of their students and our students see themselves as their own teachers and leaders.

## FAIRGREEN INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL

# Learning for the future

**T**oday's children will live in a future predicted to look quite different than the present. A modern education must prepare students for the very different world they will inherit. At Fairgreen International School in Dubai, their International Baccalaureate continuum curriculum is designed to inspire creativity, innovation and healthy risk taking with the unique added focus of sustainability education, which is woven into the fabric of the school, teaching students to examine the environmental, social and economic impact of their collective actions.

"By the time our students eventually graduate from college, many will be applying for positions that currently don't exist or at least look very different," shares Fairgreen Director, Graeme Scott. "Many future careers will be in fields connected to sustainability."

Heading toward their fourth year this August 2021, Fairgreen is excited to launch their IB Diploma and IB Career-related programmes (IBDP and IBCP) for students entering their last two

years of high school. Both programmes offer an exceptional education with an emphasis on care for oneself, care for others, and care for the planet - the essence of sustainability. IBDP is designed to help students attain an excellent breadth and depth of knowledge in a variety of subject areas, while the IBCP integrates academia with hands-on, real-world learning for students with an interest in or passion for sustainability. Fairgreen has partnered with the Sustainability Management School (SUMAS) of Switzerland in the implementation of its IBCP programme, hence students who choose IBCP will take some coursework online with SUMAS while completing field experiences locally with mentors in a specific area of focus within sustainability. Both tracks provide a holistic, well-rounded and experiential approach to learning.

Located in The Sustainable City of Dubai, Fairgreen has access to the city's bio-domes, eco-focused businesses and organizations, and an Innovation Centre dedicated to sustainability research and ed-



ucation opening in October 2021. Fairgreen's IBDP and IBCP will run alongside each other, affording all students academically rigorous coursework and practical experience working with professionals focussed in sustainability-related fields, including Nature Conserva-

tion, Sustainable Hospitality, Sustainable Fashion, and more!

Join our Virtual Open Day on 23 February, 11am via Zoom - register via [www.fairgreen.ae](http://www.fairgreen.ae)

Fairgreen's IBDP/IBCP is pending formal IB authorisation expected to be received by June 2021.



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- Central Location Near Al Barari & Arabian Ranches

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Mid-way through the 21<sup>st</sup> century, they could all look back and think to themselves, “This is the flight of stairs where it all began. This is where our lives took off. This is *where amazing happened.*”



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