

Dear Parents,

I apologise for disturbing your weekend, however, I feel it is important to share this update. Our GESS community member for news 1 has received a **negative test result**. This has been a very worrying and difficult time for our community member and we will continue to support he/she.

News 2, was placed on a precautionary stay at home quarantine order measure for 14 days. Our community member remains well and has no symptoms. We also continue to support and contact our community member.

The Head of Preschool will contact classes related to news 1 and 2 directly about plans for next week, today. The Preschool was professionally deep cleaned by a medical grade cleaning company as an extra precautionary measure.

We currently do not have any community members, that we are aware of, who are awaiting test results.

I have learnt even more over the past four days about our great community spirit here at GESS. The messages of support and well-wishes were greatly received.

I would also like to ask you as a community to thank our frontline staff who are working from morning until night to keep our community as safe as possible. A simple thank you can make all the difference to our GESS colleagues who are working above and beyond their job descriptions or roles. I said in one of my first emails that, this was an extraordinary effort to an extraordinary situation. Our GESS colleagues are continuing, each and every day, with their extraordinary efforts. This level of dedication is heroic and I continue to be extraordinarily proud of all of our community.

I cannot tell you when our lives can go back to being completely normal. As you saw yesterday, further travel restrictions were added by the Singapore government. We see other countries shut their borders too. We see the number of infections increase in some countries and go down or stop in others.

At GESS, we had a difficult week and as much as I wish I could say this won't happen again, it is possible. We have made it through 45 difficult days and this has only been possible due to our largely cooperative and great community support. Our school's approach continues to be to try our very best to keep the interior of our campus safe through proactive measures. These are not fool-proof and they may be inconvenient for a small number of our community. We take medical and government advice and adapt this for our unique school situation. We continue to meet daily to discuss developments and areas for improvement.

From this week's experience there are a few points I would like to address with the community.

- 1) Please, I personally ask you to keep your communication with the school to normal communication and emergency information only. We cannot continue to offer a normal school life for our children, if our teachers and frontline staff are spending a large amount of their time answering emails. **Please think twice before sending an email.** We all have our own opinions and if you think it is beneficial for our community to share this, please [submit your thoughts via this form](#). We as a community need to reduce the amount of extra emails our frontline staff and teachers are receiving. All essential information is available in the [Parent Portal update site](#) and this must be your first place to find answers. From my side, I will try to keep school communication to essential information only.
- 2) We have an experienced Emergency management team handling the COVID-19 / Coronavirus outbreak. This includes medical experts too. Please email covid19@gess.sg if you or any of your family is a suspected case or feels seriously unwell with COVID-19 / Coronavirus symptoms. You should of course get medical advice immediately too.

Next week we will launch an emergency phone number for the community to contact GESS, **in case of an emergency only**. If in doubt, please contact our experts but also know I will take strict actions against members of our community who take up our emergency team's time with non-emergency matters.

- 3) All families have the right to decide what is best for their family. I am confident in my colleagues' efforts. There may be further suspected cases in the future and if this happens, I ask you to try and think rationally. We will not share personal details about the case. We have our own detailed internal contact tracing process and we will inform all classes or community members individually. We also have a comprehensive matrix action plan to help guide us through these challenging situations.

I realise that the news of a suspected case immediately makes us think about the safety of our children and as parent, I share these similar thoughts. What I do ask of our community is not to jump to conclusions, follow only official news sources and remain as calm as possible in a worrying situation. Remember if there is a suspected or confirmed case, that person has done nothing wrong. I am sure we are all practising good hygiene, staying at home, if we feel unwell and washing our hands.

- 4) Remember that this is not a normal situation, even though it feels like a normal situation now after several weeks of extra measures, temperature checks and stay home notices. It is important that as community, we firstly realise the impact this situation has had on our well-being. Get support when you need it, find a way to channel your worries into positive activities. Secondly, please don't become complacent. Continue to practise good hygiene, wash all your family's hands and stay at home, if you feel unwell. It is likely just a normal cough, runny nose or fever but by being proactive and precautionary, we minimise the risk to our community and to your family. This includes avoiding travel to high risk areas.

New visitor restrictions implemented by the Singapore government

From Sunday 15 March 2020, 23:59 Singapore time, the government of Singapore will restrict visitors who have visited: Germany, Spain, France and all of Italy. This is in addition to, Mainland China, South Korea, Northern Italy and Iran.

Please remember this starts on Sunday 15 March 2020 at 23:59 until further notice. Here are some examples of whether a Leave of Absence is required.

- 1) Father returns to Singapore from a business trip to Germany on Sunday 15 March at 13:00 = no Leave of Absence (LOA) for students and no Stay Home Notice (SHN) for father.
- 2) Grandmother lives in France and plans to travel to Singapore to visit her grandchildren on 3 April 2020 = She would not be allowed into Singapore unless she is a long-term pass holder (DP, EP, PR, Student's pass, LTVP).
- 3) Mother returns from holiday in Spain on 4 April 2020. She is a Dependant's pass (DP) holder = Allowed to return to Singapore with a 14 day Stay Home Notice (SHN) and students take Leave of Absence (LOA) from GESS for 14 days from the day after her arrival in Singapore. **The mother must get Singapore government approval before flying back to Singapore.**
- 4) Family travels to Germany in April school holiday. All are long term pass holders = After arriving in Singapore all are placed on Stay Home Notice (SHN) for 14 days. **The family must get Singapore government approval before flying back to Singapore.**
- 5) Family friend lives in Germany staying with GESS family. Arrived in Singapore on 10 March = No Stay Home Notice or Leave of Absence for students.

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The new restrictions start from **Sunday 15 March 2020 at 23:59**. Any travel before this time to Germany, Spain, France or southern Italy is not counted. Given the large number of cases in Europe, please continue to monitor all family members and guests' health and stay at home if anyone feels unwell.

There are additional complications for long-term pass holders if you travel to Germany, Spain, France, Italy, Mainland China, South Korea or Iran during the travel restriction period. Re-entry to Singapore needs to be approved by the Ministry of Manpower (MOM) or Immigration Checkpoint Authority (ICA).

What makes this school a community school is; thinking about our community members first, making decisions in the best interest of our community and also being able to rely on the community's support during a time of need.

Please continue to give your best efforts to our school's community. I really do appreciate all that you have done so far. I know it has not been easy.

Christof Martin

GESS Principal



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