مدرسة الاتحاد الخاصة – جميرا
Al Ittihad Private School – Jumeira
"A generation of heritage guardians and global thinkers"

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IPS-J
Distance Education
Technology Policy

Implemented: March 2020

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Distance Education Technology Overview

As educators, we are being asked to shift our mindsets and practices. In the age of COVID-19, remote teaching and learning is the new normal. Whether we are a language specialist or a content educator, there are many strategies to keep in mind when teaching online, these strategies for working with all students, especially the SEN students.

We are all charged with having to get through grade level standards in a compressed time frame during this unforeseen time of emergency teaching and learning. However, we at IPSJ recognize that this is not exactly the same as "school". To be clear, this is trying to reach kids at home during a public health crisis.This is a stopgap measure schools are providing amidst vast inequities that families experience, all the more exacerbated during this pandemic.

At IPSJ, our educators are using the "3 C's Approach" for supporting students remotely, especially SEN, at this time: Comfort, Communicate, and Connect. Comforting is key before any learning can occur and we keep in mind that every household is not created equally. Just as important at comforting is communicating effectively so that we aren't only using a monolingual mindset when reaching out to our families. Finally, while academics is important, the students we are teaching—and their families—come first.

Preparing for Online Learning

As a transition to teach online it was important to think about whether we should focus on synchronous learning, asynchronous learning, or a hybrid of the two. There are many pros and cons to both types of learning. While synchronous learning is more interactive and communicative, it does not always allow for the flexibility students need in order to complete tasks at home while balancing work and family. Therefore, at IPSJ we considered both and our educators are applying the hybrid learning method which is a combination of synchronous and asynchronous learning. We are incorporating both elements into our online class. This is similar to what we do in our physical classrooms regarding whole group, small group, and independent work.

In order to apply the previous method of learning, we conducted training sessions with our educators focused on digital learning, improving technology skills, and educational platforms. Our educators daily are using Edmodo as educational platform to engage with students.

IPS-J educators are using Atlas; the curriculum planner program, as educators we strive to make our curriculum effective, meaningful and cohesive. The Rubicon ATLAS Curriculum Program demonstrates the cohesive framework of our curriculum while providing comprehensive access to each component of our curriculum and units that they teach.

Devices and Platforms

At IPS-J we are moving forward to be an Apple distinguished school, we do provide apple products to our educators and administrators. The devices have been checked and updated with the latest version of the platforms we are using; this is to ensure the stabilities and getting the latest features of each platform. Starting from elementary up to high school our educators are equipped with iPads, Laptops, Smart Keyboards, and Apple Pencils. IT department is following up daily and regularly to provide the best support to all the educators, students, and parents.

Since families expect instruction and lessons to be carried out even from a distance. The task of a teacher becomes even more difficult as preparing a lesson to do later in class is very different from preparing it, recording it (or instructing live) and then sharing it online. That's why at IPSJ we use two types of platforms to ensure delivering the best quality of online teaching, we are using at the moment a very powerful and flexible platform that students and teachers are enjoying it.

Edmodo proved so useful for its flexibility. Once a tool in our kit during classroom time or after school, Edmodo takes on a more prominent role, offering **the ability to upload various materials, lessons, quizzes, and homework and then share them with students**. *Notes* can be used to create announcements, lessons and discussions. Important announcements can then be pinned to ensure that they are easily found. In a Note, you can create a lesson by adding all the necessary information and attaching useful links.

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You can also create short, simple videos with further explanations which are then attached to the Note for the lesson. Using the comment section, students can ask questions or request further explanations.

Edmodo also allows our educators to **create** Quizzes **and** Assignments **to assess learning progress**. A Quiz provides the level of understanding for a topic and therefore allows us to determine overall student understanding so that we can continue moving forward or decide to stop and go over the topic again. Quizzes and Assignments can be shared among colleagues so they can help each other with relevant, high-quality learning content.

Zoom with classes moved to a remote learning format for the remainder of the academic year, educators and students are eager to maintain the academic rigor and intellectual vibrancy of the classroom. Live video with interactive participation is one of the best ways for educators and students alike to replicate the classroom experience. So what makes Zoom such a great classroom tool? Here are just some of the benefits:

- Platform independent: participants can join the session from any device—no VPN needed,
- Scalable: one-on-one meetings, up to a class of 500 students or a staff meeting up to 300,
- Easy and intuitive: one-click connection for easy video and audio,
- Real-time interaction: chats, polls, breakout rooms, content sharing, whiteboarding, annotations,
- Closed captioning and keyboard shortcuts: ensure accessibility for all learners,
- Integration: it can be integrated with many education platforms.

ICT department regularly in contact with the help desk of each program and platform we use to make sure that our educators and students are not facing any obstacles or issues in the process of the online learning.

Safeguarding and Online Safety

As many schools are eagerly moved toward virtual and remote learning during this uncharted time in our lives, we at IPSJ are working together as information and communication technology closely with the executive team and educators to ensure all of our students are being safe and secured while they are learning in the cyberspace. IPSJ understandably worried about keeping students safe while teaching in an unusual setting. Our students and parents are the main targeted factor to ensure their safety online; that's why we have built a digital library to upload a guided video to help them to feel safe and handle the tasks of the distance learning easily.

We are providing online support through Edmodo and emails to send announcements and policies. Also, we have assigned staff to be in touch directly with parents and students to help them daily in terms of digital learning problems, safety problems, emotional and wellbeing.

Digital Citizenship

IPSJ encouraging students what it means to be a responsible digital citizen as part of a broader strategy of promoting a positive education community climate. Our students have been acknowledged of the importance of the following: privacy and security, relationships and communication, cyberbullying and digital drama, digital footprints and reputation, self-image and identity, information literacy, and creative credit and copyright.

Cyber Bullying Policy

Definition of Cyberbullying:

Cyberbullying involves the use of information and communication technologies to support deliberate, repeated, and hostile behavior by an individual or group that is intended to harm others.

Rationale:

The School recognizes that excellence in education requires that technology is seamlessly integrated throughout the educational program. Increasing access to technology is essential for that future. We also recognize that technology plays an important and positive

role in everyone's lives, both educationally and socially. It is committed to helping all members of the school community to understand both the benefits and the risks, and to equip children with the knowledge and skills to be able to use technology safely and responsibly.

Research into cyber bullying indicates that it is a feature of many young people's lives. Cyber bullying, like all other forms of bullying, should be taken very seriously. It is never acceptable.

The policies, procedures and information within this document apply to everyone enrolled in our school, inside and during distance learning.

Aims:

The aims of this policy are to ensure that:

- we safeguard the students in the real and virtual world,
- students, staff and parents are educated to understand what cyberbullying is and what its consequences can be,
- knowledge, policies and procedures are in place to prevent incidents of cyberbullying in school, within the school community or during the remote learning time,
- we have effective measures to deal effectively with cases of cyberbullying,
- we monitor the effectiveness of prevention measures,
- We monitor the wellbeing and behavior measures.

Cyberbullying can involve Social Networking Sites, emails and mobile phones used for SMS messages and as cameras. In addition;

- It can be used to carry out all the different types of bullying; an extension of face-to-face bullying,

- It can also go further in that it can invade home/personal space and can involve a greater number of people,

- It can take place across age groups and school staff and other adults can be targeted,

- It can draw bystanders into being accessories,

- It includes threats and intimidation; harassment or 'cyberstalking'; vilification; exclusion or peer rejection; Impersonation; and manipulation,

- It includes cyber stalking, e.g. repeatedly sending unwanted texts, defamation

- It includes the circulation of private information or images

- It can be an illegal act as in the UAE it is unlawful to disseminate defamatory information in any media including internet sites

Policy Procedure:

IPSJ educates students both in the proper use of technology and about the serious consequences of cyber- bullying and will, through curriculum links, ICT lessons and assemblies, continue to inform and educate its students in these fast-changing areas.

All members of the School community are aware they have a duty to bring to the attention of the principals of sections any example of cyber-bullying or harassment or misuse of technology that they know about or suspect. Leaders know to respond effectively to reports of cyber-bullying or harassment and as a school there are systems in place to respond to it.

IPSJ endeavors to block access to inappropriate web sites, using firewalls, antivirus protection and filtering systems. Students are only permitted to use devices connected to the internet of the school network connection. Whilst education and guidance remain at the heart of what we do, IPSJ will take action against those who take part in cyber-bullying in line with the guidelines in the Anti-Bullying policy. In addition, IPSJ will confiscate devices where necessary to prevent students from misusing equipment. If an incident takes place in the evening or at the weekend, IPSJ reserves the right to take action against bullying perpetrated outside the school which spills over into the school.

IPSJ will keep good records of all cyberbullying incidents on the school system. Students are encouraged to report any suspicions of cyberbullying and have access to the school principals. Support is offered to victims of cyberbullying including emotional support and reassurance.

Sanctions are issued in line with our Anti-Bullying policy.

Roles and Responsibilities:

Staff

All staff have a responsibility to prevent misuse of equipment and cyberbullying. Principals may ask to look at content on a student's personal device, but it is good practice to do so with an adult present.

Mobile Phones

- Ask the student to show you the mobile phone
- Note clearly everything on the screen relating to an inappropriate text message or image, to include the date, time and names
- Make a transcript of a spoken message, again record date, times and names
- Tell the student to save the message/image
- Inform a member of the Senior Leadership team and pass them the information that you have

Computers/Laptops/iPads

- Ask the students to get up on-screen the material in question.
- Ask the students to save the material.
- If possible, Print off the offending material straight away.
- If possible and with the student's agreement a screen capture image may be able to be sent to the staff's school email account
- Inform a member of the Senior Leadership team and pass them the information that you have.

Normal anti-bullying procedures to interview students and to take statements will then be followed particularly if a child protection issue is presented.

Students:

- Should follow the school's code of conduct / behavior policy, when writing online. It is acceptable to disagree with someone else's opinions, however, do it in a respectful way. What is inappropriate in the classroom is inappropriate online.
- Must speak to an adult as soon as possible if they believe someone is a victim on cyberbullying.
- Should not answer abusive messages but save them and report them
- Should not delete anything until it has been shown to parents or a member of staff at IPSJ (even if it is upsetting, the material is important evidence which may need to be used later as proof of cyber- bullying)
- Should not give out personal IT details
- Should never reply to abusive e-mails or messages in chat rooms or other social media
- Should never reply to someone you do not know

Parents:

- It is vital that parents and the schoolwork together to ensure that all students are aware of the serious consequences of getting involved in anything that might be seen to be cyberbullying.
- Parents can help by making sure their child understands the school's policy and, above all, how seriously IPSJ takes incidents of cyber-bullying

- Parents should also explain to their children legal issues relating to cyberbullying

- If parents believe their child is the victim of cyber-bullying, they should save the offending material (if need be by saving an offensive text on their or their child's mobile phone) and make sure they have all relevant information before deleting anything

- Parents should contact the school as soon as possible. A meeting can then be arranged with the principals

Parents relationship, ICT, Digital team, and Counselors contacts

Who can help?	What do they do?	What topics they can help with?	How can they be contacted?
Juliana Abdel Samad	Parents Relationship	General Parents Concerns	juliana@ipsjumeira.com
Abdelrahman Barakat	Educational technology	Education technology and Online Platforms. Technology and security concerns.	abdelrahman@ipsjumeira.com
Samar Yassin	ICT and E-Learning	Online platforms.	samar@ipsjumeira.com

		Accounts and Logins. Emails problems.	
Hatem Redwan	**Digital Team**	**Edmodo usage problems.**	**hatem.radwan@ipsjumeira.com**
Mariam Tazi	**Social Counselor**	social, emotional, and behavioral support	**maryam.t@ipsjumeira.com**
Samaa Barakat	**Social Counselor**	social, emotional, and behavioral support	**samaa@ipsjumeira.com**