

## Elementary School Counseling

### Ms. Melanie Moses

Welcome back to school!



It is always exciting to begin a new school year. It is time for new beginnings, fresh faces, renewing old friendships and the promise of knowledge – filled adventure.

My name is Melanie Moses and this is my third year at GAA. I have transferred from DAA in Dubai where I lived for the past six years, before that I lived in Seoul, Korea for nine years. I am originally from South Africa but have been teaching internationally for the past eighteen years.

In my role as Elementary School Counselor I will be facilitating counseling groups focused on a variety of topics. I will be supporting Grade 1-2 students individually and through classroom lessons. I focus on the wellbeing of your child. My goal is to help your child succeed in and enjoy their time at GAA.

I believe in a collaborative relationship between you, your child, your child's teacher and the counselor. I look forward to see you at our Parents Back To School evening.

You may e-mail me at [m.moses\\_gaa@gemsedu.com](mailto:m.moses_gaa@gemsedu.com) you may also choose to call the receptionist and make an appointment to see me.

### Phil Abraham



My name is Phil Abraham and this is my second year at GAA. I came to Abu Dhabi from Chicago where I spent 7 years in Education, first as a Physical Education teacher and then as a School Social Worker and Academic Advisor.

As part of the Student Services team at GAA, my primary role as counselor is to promote the academic, personal, and social-emotional growth of students. As the Elementary School Counselor for Grades 3-5, I will be supporting students, staff, and families to create a positive, supportive, and safe learning community. I will be conducting classroom lessons to promote positive attitudes and behaviors among all students, meeting with students individually and in small groups, meeting with parents, and collaborating with teachers and staff. Additionally, we are excited to utilize our Bully Prevention Unit which was acquired through the Anti-Bullying Campaign led by our parent community!

I am here to help your child achieve their personal social and academic goals as well as provide support for staff and parents. I am thoroughly excited for a new school year at GEMS American

Academy and look forward to the seeing the continued positive growth and development of our students.

If you wish to get in touch, you may e-mail me at p.abraham\_gaa@gemsedu.com. You may also choose to call the receptionist and make an appointment to see me.

### Latoya Harvey

Greetings to all. My name is Latoya Harvey and I am delighted to join the counseling department. My educational background and focus is in education in counseling, elementary education, special education, and teaching English as a second language. This year is my first year at Gems and I will primarily be working in the KG department. The majority of my duties will include teaching and promoting social skills and adaptive behavior in a whole class setting, in addition, I will be providing group and individual counseling on an as needed basis. I look forward to working closely with administrators, parents, teachers, teacher's assistants and also volunteers in ensuring the academic success of all KG students in the PYP program at Gems American Academy Abu Dhabi.

### **Tips for Parents**

The beginning of a new school year can be a stressful time for children, with new teachers and classmates, bigger classrooms, new routines and more schoolwork. This time can be particularly unnerving and overwhelming for children who are facing major transitions such as starting elementary school and moving to a foreign country. As a parent, here are some proactive steps you can take to support your child:

- Take time to listen to your child and discuss aspects of the new school that he or she is worried about.
- Remember to let your child know it's normal to feel nervous about the start of school.
- Spend time each day talking about what happened in school.
- Give your child positive feedback about his or her new experiences.
- Praise and encourage your child to become involved with school activities and try new things.

Anxiety and stresses about starting school is normal for a child and usually passes within the first few days or weeks. If your child continues to seem anxious or stressed, feel free to contact the class teacher or school counselor.