

Reading Policy

Vision: Grow - Flourish - Succeed

Mission: Together we inspire creative, mindful learners who value diversity, support one another and strive for success.

1. Introduction

At GEMS Founders School, Dubai (GFS) we believe that it is vital to foster a love of reading and to explicitly develop students' reading skills. Extensive reading and exposure to a wide range of texts make a huge contribution to students' educational achievement. Therefore, a combination of sharing books and stories, independent reading and taught reading are at the core of our reading programme.

Purpose of policy

To promote reading within the classroom, the school environment and encourage students to develop a love of reading that will continue to grow outside of school and on their journey as lifelong learners.

Aims and objectives

H.E. Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid al-Maktoum, the UAE's vice-president and Dubai's ruler, stated: "Our goal is to make reading a daily habit that is deeply ingrained. It is the duty of relevant institutions to make this law a reality".

In response to this, this policy supports and provides opportunities for students at GFS to read every day, in English and Arabic lessons and in subjects across the curriculum.

This aspiration is based upon our desire for GFS students to enter the world of work as articulate and literate individuals with a strong love of reading. We recognise the responsibility to send primary students to the secondary school being able to read proficiently and with the ability to participate in society.

In the UAE National Agenda, results in internationally benchmarked tests, including the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS), the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) and the Trends in International Maths and Science Study (TIMSS), highlight the importance of reading literacy on student performance in international assessments, including science and mathematics. GFS therefore provides opportunities to ensure our students have high levels of reading literacy and can successfully read across the curriculum.

To support the UAE National Agenda in its vision to produce a reading generation and establish the UAE as the capital of cultural and knowledge content.

To meet the UAE National Agenda target (and GFS targets) to ensure that the students in the UAE rank among the best in the world in reading, as per the results in internationally benchmarked assessments including PIRLS, PISA and TIMSS and to ensure our students have strong knowledge of the Arabic language.

GFS will ensure that all children have equal access to the curriculum, regardless of gender, race, religion or ability. Children with specific reading, speech and language or hearing difficulties will be identified and supported through support programmes in school and external help will be sought where necessary.



To promote high standards of literacy, GFS will aim to ensure that all students:

- read fluently and with good understanding
- develop the habit of reading widely and often, for both pleasure and information
- acquire a wide vocabulary, an understanding of grammar and knowledge of linguistic conventions for reading, writing and spoken language
- write clearly, accurately and coherently, adapting their language and style in and for a range of contexts, purposes and audiences modelled in their reading.
- use discussion in order to learn; they should be able to elaborate and explain clearly their understanding and ideas, supported with evidence from the text
- are competent in the skills of speaking and listening, asking and responding to questions and participating in discussions, demonstrating understanding of what they have read.
- Use texts independently for research to support their learning in a range of subjects.

2. Learning and teaching

GFS will use a variety of teaching and learning styles in lessons and reading sessions to develop reading skills. This will be delivered through whole-class teaching, while at other times children will be required to work independently to develop their reading. GFS will provide suitable learning opportunities for children of all abilities, irrespective of their first language.

Foundation Stage (FS)

In the Foundation Stage, reading is an important feature inside and outside the classroom. As well as being read to and sharing books together in groups or as a class, our FS children have frequent opportunities to browse through books on their own, developing the skill of handling books independently. Each class have weekly visits to the dedicated Foundation Stage library, and children have continuous access to stimulating book corners in their classrooms. Teachers frequently read aloud stories, nursery rhymes and songs to students modelling the range of age-appropriate reading skills. In doing so they inspire a love of books and stories and help our children to develop their comprehension and make links to their developing knowledge of the world. Our FS classrooms have role play areas which are often based on stories or nursery rhymes the class have listened to, these help our children to: become familiar with characters and stories, develop their spoken language and vocabulary, understand the structure of stories, and explore ideas and experiences that are unfamiliar to them. Children in FS begin to learn word reading skills using a systematic, synthetic phonics approach where both phonic decoding skills and the quick recognition of 'common exception words' is taught. Teachers use the resource 'Floppy's Phonics' to guide their planning and pedagogy for phonics teaching.

Key Stage 1 (KS1)

Children in KS1 have reading at the heart of their English lessons to develop happy, healthy and curious learners who read confidently and independently. There is dedicated time for all children to read independently, read aloud and be read to during the school day. Children in Year 1 and 2 take part in daily Phonics lessons to further develop word reading skills and strategies to engage with texts. They use the Oxford resource 'Floppy's Phonics' to guide planning and pedagogy and use the accompanying cumulative, decodable books so students practice and develop the ability to segment and blend phoneme/grapheme sounds independently and to read common exception words on sight. To foster a productive reading culture at GFS, we use the Jane Considine 'Hooked on Books' approach. This incorporates whole class comprehension, the explicit teaching of reading comprehension strategies and modelled reading. Each class have weekly visits to the dedicated Primary library where they can borrow books to read at home and in school. Children have continuous access to book corners in their classrooms where they have access to a wide variety of high-quality texts to read in their classrooms.



Key Stage 2 (KS2)

Children in Years 3 to 6, take part in regular taught reading sessions using the 'Hooked on Books' approach, this builds upon the learning in KS1 with modelled comprehension, the application of reading strategies and opportunities for children to read aloud, talk about books and share their views and opinions. High quality texts are used to contextualise learning, reading great literature opens children up to ideas, experiences, places and times they might never otherwise experience in real life. In reading lessons teachers also read aloud, modelling fluent reading. Children in KS2 have a wide exposure to a variety of high-quality texts throughout the curriculum. Children have continuous access to book corners in their classrooms where they have access to a wide variety of high-quality texts, this helps to make reading a part of their everyday life. Each class have weekly visits to the Primary library where they can borrow books to read at home and in school. Children have opportunities to read independently and be read to by an adult to continue to build an enjoyment of stories and books.

Key Stage 3 (KS3)

Children in Years 7 to 9 have dedicated reading opportunities in Form Time. Opportunities for reading across the curriculum are encouraged and evidenced in lesson and curriculum planning documentation. On screen reading is encouraged to support students with external testing. Learners are given the opportunity to use engaging online platforms, such as Literacy Planet, to assess their spelling, punctuation, grammar and reading comprehension frequently. GFS follows PISA's definition of reading literacy as "understanding, using, and reflecting on written texts, in order to achieve one's goals, to develop one's knowledge and potential, and to participate in society". KS3 students analyse and evaluate an array of different texts, both fiction and non-fiction, focusing on a range of themes. Reading comprehension is embedded in the curriculum through regular retrieval practice opportunities. Incorporating the High Performance Learning Framework into every lesson promotes and develops students' acquisition of higher order reading skills, including **analysing** the texts critically to develop relevant hypothesis and **linking** ideas to make connections to the bigger picture by considering alternative interpretations.

Key Stage 4 (KS4)

Opportunities for reading across the curriculum are encouraged and evidenced in lesson and curriculum planning documentation. On screen reading is encouraged to support students with external testing. GFS follows PISA's definition of reading literacy as "understanding, using, and reflecting on written texts, in order to achieve one's goals, to develop one's knowledge and potential, and to participate in society". KS4 students analyse and evaluate an array of different texts, both fiction and non-fiction, focusing on a range of themes. Reading comprehension is embedded in the curriculum through regular retrieval practice opportunities. Learners are expected to read widely and to use secondary sources to support their arguments when answering exam-style questions. Incorporating the High Performance Learning Framework into every lesson promotes and develops students' acquisition of higher order reading skills, including **analysing** the texts critically to develop relevant hypothesis and **linking** ideas to make connections to the bigger picture by considering alternative interpretations.

Key Stage 5 (KS5)

A Level English Literature and Language are offered to Year 12 students as part of the option choices. Opportunities for reading across the curriculum are encouraged and evidenced in lesson and curriculum planning documentation. On screen reading is encouraged to support students with external testing. GFS follows PISA's definition of reading literacy as "understanding, using, and reflecting on written texts, in order to achieve one's goals, to develop one's knowledge and potential, and to participate in society". KS5 students analyse and evaluate an array of different texts. In English Literature, learners focus on challenging fictional texts across a range of different time-periods. Whereas in English Language, students read an array of non-fiction texts for different purposes (e.g. language in media). Reading comprehension is



embedded in the curriculum through regular retrieval practice opportunities. Learners are expected to read widely and to evaluate secondary sources to support their analysis. Incorporating the High Performance Learning Framework into every lesson promotes and develops students' acquisition of higher order reading skills, including **analysing** the texts critically to develop relevant hypothesis and **linking** ideas to make connections to the bigger picture by considering alternative interpretations.

Home Reading and Parental Engagement

GFS work in partnership with parents to develop a love of books and reading in students. Daily reading at home and at school ensures children make good progress in developing reading skills, whatever their age. The online e-library platform "Oxford Owl" is used from FS2 to Year 6, through which children access a range of levelled texts to read at home independently. Students in the Foundation Stage also take home levelled decodable books that align with the phonics they have been learning in class. Encouraging children to read widely, in and out of school, across both fiction and non-fiction, helps to develop their knowledge of themselves and the world in which they live, to establish an appreciation and love of reading, and to gain knowledge across the curriculum. Reading widely and often increases students' vocabulary because they encounter words they would rarely hear or use in everyday speech. The school has four well-resourced libraries and all students have dedicated time to visit the school libraries to borrow books for reading for pleasure. Parents have opportunities to attend parent workshops where teachers share information about the importance of reading with children at home, these sessions further explain the teaching strategies and resources used in school and teachers share practical examples of how parents can support their children with reading at home. At GFS we celebrate children's reading successes in school, and we invite parents to be part of this.

3. Special Events

Throughout the academic year there are special events which further promote a love of reading at GFS. Assemblies and special events, such as the celebration of World Book Day, National Poetry Day and key writers' birthdays, provide opportunities for students to engage in books. Where possible, visits from authors are arranged and each year the school participates in The Emirates Literature Festival and invites students to participate in reading and poetry competitions.

4. Equal Opportunities

GFS recognises the value of a diverse school community which includes people from differing backgrounds, with different skills and abilities. GFS will take positive steps, through its governing body, managers and other employees, to create a school culture in which people can feel confident of being treated with fairness, dignity and tolerance, irrespective of their individual differences. This commitment extends to the whole school community and others connected with it. The school is committed to the elimination of unlawful discrimination and to the promotion of good relations between all.

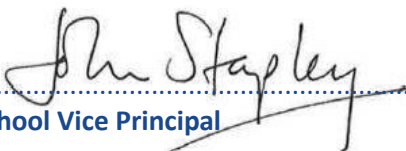
5. Assessment and recording

- Students' reading ability is assessed using a variety of available tools appropriate to the age and ability of the student.
- From this information, accessible and challenging books are provided/recommended to each student as well as appropriate support, if needed.
- For students aged 6-15, the GL New Group Reading Test (NGRT) will be taken three times during an academic year to measure reading attainment and progress. It will provide a reading age and standard age score (SAS) that will be shared with parents during the school's regular reporting cycles.
- Assessment information is used by teachers to personalise learning and optimise student performance.

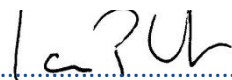


7. Monitoring and review

This policy has been discussed and agreed by the GEMS Founders School, Dubai teaching staff and leadership teams for implementation.

Signed 
Whole School Vice Principal

Date13 October 2023.....

Signed 
Associate Principal

Date13 October 2023.....

Signed 
Executive Principal/CEO/Senior Vice President of Education

Date16 October 2023.....

Next policy review date:

02 February 2024

28 June 2024