

## Learning and Teaching 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 we believe that every child is unique individual with a unique way of viewing the world. We therefore aim to create an individualised approach to learning, considering our learners' needs and interests. The teachers are highly skilled facilitators who encourage child-centred learning opportunities to ensure all learners achieve the highest academic standards, meeting and exceeding UAE and international standards.

### 2. Purpose of policy

There are four main purposes to this policy:

- To establish an entitlement to high quality teaching and learning for all learners;
- To establish expectations for teachers in teaching and learning in all subjects;
- To promote continuity and coherence across the school;
- To develop a greater awareness of the school's approach to teaching and learning

### 3. Aims and objectives

Our aims are as follows:

- To ensure high quality teaching that enables the acquisition of skills, knowledge and understanding which will underpin all future learning
- To establish fully inclusive classrooms with support and challenge for all learners for instance those with special educational needs, disabilities and English Language Learners, Emirati, etc.
- To provide a broad and balanced curriculum which provides opportunity for all learners to make progress through enjoyment and challenge
- To promote a wide range of enrichment experiences which enable children to make connections between all forms of learning
- To promote positive attitudes through our school's core values of 'mindfulness' (mindful of self and mindful of others), 'languages and culture' (developing key communication skills and an openness to others as world citizens) and 'character' (focusing on personal character development)
- To integrate Emirati culture and Islamic values into learning experiences

### 4. Learning and Teaching Style

At GEMS Founders learners are encouraged to lead their own learning with teachers facilitating the process. Through this approach, learners will be provided with a range of learning opportunities that centre around our High Performance Learning (HPL) framework.

Working with our students to develop a range of competencies in ways of thinking known as Advanced Cognitive Performance Characteristics (ACPs), and behaviours known as Values, Attitudes and Attributes (VAAs) to ensure every child has the opportunity to become a high achiever.

**a. Effective Learning**

Our expectations for GFS learners is that they all aim high, whilst adopting the key skills in ways of thinking (ACPs) and behaviours (VAAs) to achieve their very best.

- Learners show an exceptional attitude to learning – they are positive, hard-working, enthusiastic and committed. They take responsibility for their own learning in sustained ways
- They listen carefully to others and are willing to confidently contribute their ideas
- Learners respond well to teachers, communicate effectively and collaborate well with others
- Learners respond readily to the challenge of the tasks set, show a willingness to concentrate on them, and make good progress
- Learners apply their learning to the world around them, making meaningful connections between areas of learning
- Learners are sufficiently confident and alert to raise questions and to persevere with their work when answers are not readily available and resilient in moving forwards with their learning
- Learners develop systematic ways of supporting their own learning through meta-thinking and planning strategically
- Learners demonstrate innovation, enterprise, enquiry, research, critical thinking and can use learning technologies to support them in their learning
- They are provided with the skills to reflect and evaluate their own work and that of others so that they can develop an understanding of their strengths and areas for development and can take targeted action to improve
- Good learners regularly demonstrate: a growth mindset, positivity and enthusiasm, a curiosity for learning, open-mindedness, a questioning mind, determination, adaptability, initiative and an ability to take a risk and learn from their mistakes

**b. Effective teaching**

Our expectations at GFS are as follows:

- Teachers have high expectations of all learners and strive to understand them, their starting points, interests and motivations so that they can support their needs; the teacher is the facilitator to learning
- Teachers have a sound subject knowledge and understanding of how learners learn and childhood development
- Teachers need to be agile, adaptive, open-minded and innovative in their teaching approaches and continually learning from the best practice and research
- Teachers need to plan imaginative and engaging lessons and provide an inspiring learning environment. Time and resources should be used creatively to enable all groups of learners learn very successfully
- Every lesson has a clear learning objective and learning outcome, which are explained to the class and are regularly referred to throughout the lesson. A feature of lessons should also include elements of explanation, modelling, scaffolding, practice, review and reflection

- Teachers must use a range of Assessment for Learning (AfL) in their practice so they can accurately understand what their learners know and don't know so that can redirect the learning when needed and can check on the progress made
- Questions need to be carefully planned in order to challenge learners' thinking and promote critical responses and develop problem solving, innovation and independent learning skills
- Teaching activities are varied and include support and challenge to ensure that all individuals make progress and aim high.
- Teachers provide opportunities for children to explore, develop and practice new skills/ concepts
- All teachers cater for a range of differing learning styles and cultural diversity thus ensuring pupil participation and understanding
- Staff to provide appropriate resources, which support learning outcomes and provide appropriate levels of support and challenge for all learners to achieve highly.
- To have high expectations of presentation, quality and quantity of work
- Assessment data from a variety of sources is used effectively to inform the next steps in teaching, curriculum design and adaptation to support all the learning needs of all groups of learners
- Teachers direct Teaching Assistants (TAs) and Higher Level Teaching Assistants (HLTAs) to be fully involved and active in lessons so that they can support all learners. For those children with additional needs, Learning Support Assistants (LSAs) who are part of our inclusion team, help provide curriculum adaptation to ensure entitlement
- Teachers spend time reflecting on their practice to understand the impact they are having on their learners' learning and how they can maximise this progress further; teachers should strive to be role models for the learners in their care
- Teachers take an active stance in their own Professional Development so they are constantly seeking ways to improve their practice
- Teachers can seek advice from our community of school leaders and across the GEMS, COBIS and BSME networks

## **5. Whole School Curriculum Planning**

Our curriculum is broad and balanced, aiming to develop a depth of learning of content, skills and the application of this to the real world. We use a range of resources to support our curriculum design:

- The Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum
- The Primary National Curriculum for England 2014
- The Secondary National Curriculum for England 2014
- The Ministry of Education Curriculum for Arabic, Islamic, Social Studies and Moral Education
- Oxford AQA and Cambridge Assessment International Education Subject Syllabi

Our curriculum is enriched in a number of ways and some of these may be virtually according to current government guidelines. This includes but is not limited to: Extra Curricular Activities (ECAs), After School Activities (ASAs), sports days, art, music and creative performances (e.g. GFS Got Talent), events, educational visits. Importantly, in recognition of Emirati culture, our school celebrates a range of local events, including UAE National Day, Flag Day and Emirati Children's Day.

## **6. Early Years Foundation Stage**

For our youngest children, their care, happiness and development is our highest priority at GEMS Founders.

In the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) there are seven key areas of learning:

- Personal, Social and Emotional Development
- Communication and Language
- Physical Development
- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding of the World
- Expressive Art and Design

Learning through play is a key element of the EYFS framework and teaching and learning at GFS reflects this. Learners experience a balance of adult-led planned purposeful play (indoors and outdoors) with dedicated time provided for children to initiate their own learning. In this time, children can consolidate, practise and extend the knowledge and skills experienced and taught in adult-led activities. The development of children's learning skills known as "The Characteristics of Effective Learning" (Playing and Learning, Active Learning, Creating and Thinking Critically) are supported throughout the daily routine and teaching and learning approaches are adopted. In FS we identify all children's talents and uniqueness so that their needs can be met.

## **7. Inclusion including reference to SENDo, EAL, G&T**

At GFS we believe that all learners can achieve and make progress including those with additional needs. Through careful lesson planning, modification of assessments and expectations, we make sure that the learning is accessible or challenging enough for all. Where there is an additional need, class teachers work collaboratively with the Inclusion Team, the individual pupil and parents to ensure that they are supported through an effective Individual Education Plan (IEP). The learner's individual targets will then be the key focus for them in small group teaching including Flourish, with an Inclusion specialist. Guidance will also be followed to achieve targets within the whole class setting. (Please refer to the Inclusion Policy for more detail)

## **8. Equal Opportunities**

The school recognises the value of, and seeks to achieve, a diverse school community which includes people from differing backgrounds, with different skills and abilities. The school will take positive steps to create school culture through its governing body, managers and other employees, 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.

## **9. Parental involvement**

At GFS we recognise just how important parents are in supporting in the education of their child or children. We encourage parents to support with learning at home by checking on the online platforms (such as Seesaw, MS Teams and GEMS Connect) and by following the GEMS Three-a-Day approach with their child. There are three essential parts to our 3-a-day approach:

- Talk about learning
- Share learning
- Encourage learning

Under normal circumstance, we encourage parents to become partners in learning through volunteering in aspects of school life. Currently, we are following government guidelines around this and additional adults are not permitted in school. However, if parents volunteer on a regular basis, we ensure that they are supported in providing recent adequate police check as safeguarding in our school is paramount. If parents are able to volunteer, they should first of all contact their child's class teacher.

## **10. Assessment and recording**

Learners have baseline assessments when they first arrive at GFS and when they move onto a new year group. Regular progress checks across the academic year ensure that all learners are supported effectively in achieving highly. Intervention processes are in place to narrow their gaps in learning. Assessment data is recorded on our SIMS data system; the results of which are analysed and inform planning to ensure pupil progress. There will also be mandatory assessments in certain year groups as per KHDA guidelines. Parents will receive regular progress updates, be invited to attend parent consultation days and a comprehensive end of year report.

## **11. Resourcing**

During our Blended Learning/ Distance Learning, all classrooms will be fitted with a webcam and teachers will have Bluetooth microphones. Each classroom is fully equipped with a Clevertouch interactive board. Prior to Covid-19, teachers were aspiring to create imaginative and engaging classroom environments for their learners. Classroom libraries were accessible in key areas, as well as a school library, which the learners visited regularly. (We hope that we will be able to revert back to this in due course, following government guidelines). Learners will be provided with sufficient exercise books and writing materials and electronic devices when necessary. Any additional resources required will be communicated with parents. A CPD library also exists for staff.

## **12. Roles and responsibilities**

- a. Local Advisory Board/ GEMS** - GEMS will carry out regular internal reviews to monitor the standards of teaching and learning across the school and provide support for the GFS team.
- b. Leadership Team** - Leaders are accountable for standards of teaching and learning across the school. On the basis of the monitoring and evaluating cycle, including pupil data and pupil progress interviews, appropriate in-service training will be identified and offered. Teachers will then be encouraged to identify their own learning needs and will be guided to use a range of support and training materials, e.g. through IRIS Connect and Optimus Education. Workshops will be designed and led by our Middle and Extended Leadership Teams. Teachers will also be encouraged to engage with other GEMS teachers through network meetings and will be directed, where appropriate to external training, including courses provided by TELLAL. All leaders need to comply with the UAE Leadership Standards.
- c. Subject leaders/ Year and Phase Leaders** - To be effective, collaboration between all leaders is required. All leaders need to take responsibility in achieving the highest standards of teaching and learning in all subjects, supporting their team members and senior leaders.
- d. Teachers** - Teachers are responsible for meeting all of the non-negotiables for teaching which are noted in the employee handbook. They must comply with the GEMS Global Teacher Standards which are aligned with KHDA guidance and the UAE Teacher Competency Standards. For the Teacher

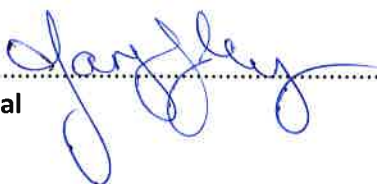
Licensing process, all teachers should keep a portfolio of evidence towards these teaching standards. We seek regular teacher feedback, particularly through the PDP process, meetings and surveys.

### 13. Monitoring and review


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

Signed  .....  
Assistant Principal – Learning & Teaching

Date 02.09.2020

Signed  .....  
Vice Principal

Date 3/9/2020

Signed  .....  
Principal/CEO

Date 3/9/2020