Out of School Activities Policy

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

1. Introduction

This document relates to the policy for all organised Out of School Activities (OSA's) undertaken by students, under the supervision of the staff of the School. It does not include visits where a class are taken off site for no more than the normal duration of a lesson. In such instances the teacher responsible must inform management of the details of the short excursion. OSAs include School Sports Fixtures, Day Trips, Overnight Outdoor Education within UAE, and Overseas Trips.

The policy covers the period from initial organisation to departing from and returning to the school.

The school encourages and supports staff who wish to take students on field trips and educational visits. It is recognised that in many cases these trips form an essential part of students' studies and personal development. However, it is necessary to ensure that students are not withdrawn from timetabled classes unnecessarily; therefore, each activity must demonstrate a clear benefit for the students involved. Unless part of the curriculum delivery, attendance for these field trips should be optional for all students.

Parents must be kept informed throughout the process and must always give their permission for their child to take part. It is mandatory that where parental permission is required it must be clearly documented.

2. Aims and Objectives

Benefits for students:

- Development of their ability to integrate socially.
- Development of: leadership skills, self-reliance, a sense of responsibility, initiative, and resourcefulness.
- Allowing learning to be applied outside of the classroom
- Increase in self-confidence, dignity and feelings of self-worth.
- Development of team spirit ideals.
- Acquiring insight, skills and knowledge to pursue outdoor activities in adult life.
- Gaining of confidence to meet challenges that are beyond their normal experiences.
- Educational, spiritual and physical development.

3. Staff Involvement

Leadership Team: The Educational Visits Team (see annex E) will be responsible for the following:

a. Monitoring the planning of the OSA and advising SLT on its suitability.
b. Monitoring the outcome of the OSA.
c. Point of contact for the OSA Leader.
d. Make recommendations for future OSA's.

The Leader – All trip leaders must also hold a leadership position at the school. The trip leader is the person who has overall responsibility for the care and supervision of the group undertaking the visit including any activities students undertake. In order to be a trip leader on any visit, you must have completed the

Educational Visits Training with a member of the Educational Visits Team within the current academic year. To avoid confusion during a trip when a member of leadership team is present, but not the nominated leader, the most senior member of staff has ultimate decision-making authority in case of emergency. The responsibilities of the trip leader include:

a. Planning the OSA from start to finish.
b. Obtaining approval for the OSA.
c. Health and Safety of students and staff taking part.
d. Supervision of students and staff.
e. Insurance – ensuring that adequate and relevant cover is in place before the OSA begins.
f. Risk Assessments.
g. Ministry of Education / KHDA approval (when required).
h. Transport organisation.
i. Obtaining details of any special medical requirements for students.
j. Parent communication

The Deputy Leader - must be involved from the beginning in the preparation and organisation of the OSA and should assist the leader with their responsibilities.They should also be ready to take over the OSA should it be necessary.

Supervisors – must be teachers or administrators working in GFS.

4. Approval

Where possible, all trips must be requested by leaders before the end of the previous academic year. Only in exceptional circumstances will a trip be authorised that was not put forward during this request process (Plays or events that could not be foreseen). When requesting approval for a visit or visitor, the trip leader must follow the review process and complete all appendices.

If permission is provisionally granted the trip leader must then discuss the activity in detail with the educational visits team.

As a general rule, we do not run educational visits on Fridays. In exceptional circumstances, approval can be given by the educational visits team.

A member of the senior leadership team will advise trip leaders whether the OSA should proceed on the grounds of safety according to the policies and procedures provided by the School. **NO VISIT MAY PROCEED WITHOUT ALL DOCUMENTS SIGNED OFF BY THE NAMED LEADERS ON EACH APPENDIX.**

Permission for Overseas Trips should be sought from the Ministry of Education / KHDA and the procurement process must be completed and signed off by the School Support Centre.

5. Supervision

Staffing Ratios: Staffing ratios should be adjusted bearing the following points in mind: age, sex, special needs of students; nature of activities, e.g. high or low risk; experience and expertise of staff; duration of trip; and type of accommodation if residential. Minimum requirements are:

a. **Day Trips** – FS: 1 teacher to 8 students. Y1 upwards: 1 teacher to 15 students for local, daytime, low-risk activities.

b. **Overnight Trips within UAE** – Y1 upwards: 1 teacher to 15 students with a minimum of 2 teachers (in case of illness or accident). If activities are of a physical or adventurous nature, 1 teacher to every 10 students. If the group is mixed, the teachers should be both male and female.
c. **Overseas Trips** – 1 teacher for 10 students with a minimum of 2 teachers. If the group is mixed the teachers should be both male and female.

Note: Once the minimum of 2 teachers has been reached other suitable adults may be used to meet the required ratios, especially those with specialist skills working for the company providing the activity.

For most overnight and overseas trips, teachers can go free of charge, normally in the ratio of 1 teacher per 10 students. If, however numbers of students do not reach 20, thereby allowing 2 staff (the minimum) to go free, then either the trip must be cancelled or the school must pay for the extra member of staff.

All overnight and overseas trips must have a GFS leader as part of the supervision team.

6. Health and Safety

The OSA Leader is responsible for following best practice regarding the health and safety of all members of the group and must be fully conversant with Emergency Procedures.

A risk assessment should to be carried out for all off-site OSAs. An example of this can be found in the ALL STAFF Channel of MS Teams.

Where an activity includes an element of risk e.g. abseiling, one member of staff should remain at the start of the activity until all students have passed through, and one should be at the end of the activity until all students have finished.
A risk assessment should be carried out for **all** off-site activities. A pre-visit to venues is required for the purpose of risk assessment. Sites that are frequently visited should be re-assessed on a regular basis, at least annually. Where possible, a copy of the site risk assessment should be included.

Low Risk Activities: are those in which any part of the activity does not itself represent risk, and where complete safety is achieved by normal vigilance and supervision.

High Risk Activities: are those associated with potential physical danger. The activity may involve the prior acquisition of specific skills and often requires specialist equipment and qualified instruction by approved persons. A GFS leader must be present for any high-risk activities.

Risk is quantifiable and is usually rated as being low, medium or high. For an activity to be acceptable for students it must, after 'control measures' have been taken, be rated as 'Low'. Control Measures can be as simple as ensuring that the activity provider has relevant licenses and trained staff to carry out the pursuit. The process of Risk Assessment involves the following:

(a) identification of the hazards.
(b) classifying the risk.
(c) identifying who is at risk.
(d) identifying existing controls and where these are considered to be inadequate ensuring that actions are taken to bring them to the necessary standard.
(e) identifying the residual risk rating after control measures are in place.

7. Insurance

The type of insurance required for an OSA depends mainly on its location and the type of transport used.

GEMS General Insurance Policy. GEMS Insurance Policy adequately covers students for medical expenses arising out of accidental injuries whilst under GEMS custody within UAE territorial limits.

Overseas Trips. The OSA Leader must ensure that insurance for overseas trips gives not only general travel coverage (cancellation charges, emergency medical, personal accident, loss of passport, delayed or lost baggage, personal money and personal liability etc.) but also takes account of any special insurance requirement for hazardous activities. It should not be automatically assumed that the company supplying the activity will provide adequate insurance. If extra insurance is required, then this should be included in the cost of the trip. Parents should not be allowed to 'opt out' of this extra insurance even if they believe their children are already covered. Parents should be made aware before the trip that once their child returns to the U.A.E. they are responsible for any further medical expenses.

OSA's not Using School Transport. Care must be taken to ensure that relevant insurance is in place when using transport other than that belonging to the school.

Parents are not covered under school insurance.

8. Duty of care

When teachers take a party away from School, they are 'in loco parentis'. The 'Duty of Care' expected is that of a reasonably careful and prudent parent applying their mind to the OSA situation. This duty is continuous during the whole period of the visit and cannot be delegated to anyone else. This applies to students under the age of 18 with parental consent being required for off-site ventures for people under that age.

Protection of Children: The planning and organisation of OSA's, and particularly those of a residential nature, must include precautions to protect students from abuses such as racial, sexual or physical harassment from either adults or other students in the group. Whilst those teachers who are already in the employment of the school will have made a declaration at the time of their appointment, it is essential that any voluntary adults who may be assisting are also asked to make a similar declaration.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs: A letter from the principal of the school must be submitted to the MOFA informing them of the school's intended trip to the country concerned (overseas only). It should be applied for at least 6 months prior to departure through the GRE. A copy of OSA proposal (appendix 1), a list of students and staff, and photocopies of parent's permission forms for each student are required to accompany the request. Copies of staff passports and visa page is also required.

KHDA: 3 days prior to the trip (overseas only), the contact name and number of the OSA leader, as provided to the parents must be submitted to the KHDA along with a list of students and supervisors. In addition, they will need the details of the contact person within Dubai that KHDA can contact if required for the duration of the trip (most likely Principal or Vice Principal).

First Aid: It is mandatory that at least one teacher/adult in the party is First Aid trained and that sufficient first aid kits are carried, i.e. one per vehicle or one per sub-group.

First Aid kits should be booked through the Clinic and must be loaned for the duration of the activity. Returning the first aid kits and reporting used materials is the responsibility of the OSA leader.

Routine Medical Requirements: Details of any person participating in the activity who may require some form of routine medical treatment during the OSA must be recorded and retained by the OSA Leader. These

details must include type and dosage of medication, when medication is required to be taken, symptoms if medication is not taken or an incorrect dosage is taken, and actions to be taken in an emergency. Only children with a completed 'Medical Declaration Form' will be permitted to attend OSA's. Any child requiring emergency medication or that has a serious illness/disability will require a care plan that is written and approved the treating physician, clinic, parents and trip leader. This includes a personal emergency evacuation plan (PEEP). There should also be consideration for a school nurse to join the visit for such cases.

Sufficient medication for the visit must be in the custody of the leader or the student concerned.

Cultural and religious requirements: These must be considered and staff sensitive to their needs (e.g. diet, time provided for prayer and other religious requirements, places of visits, etc.).

Transport: The number of passengers carried on a vehicle, must not exceed its legal seating capacity. Where seat belts are fitted they must be worn. The number of persons seated must not exceed the number of seat belts provided.

It is recommended that, where possible, students should be transported in a school coach/minibus or public transport and that the use of private cars should be discouraged.

The leader must travel on the bus with the students and parents must travel separately and meet at the venue if applicable.

9. Finance

The Finance team requires at least 3 working days to raise cash and cheque payments.

GFS does not hold large amounts of cash overnight. Any cash deposited with accounts is banked at the end of each day.

If transport is required, you should factor this into the cost of the trip. Check with STS the approximate cost per student – this is usually no more than 10 AED per student for Dubai based trips. N.B. Students should not be charged for transport if they are representing the school i.e. sporting event where GFS plays opposing teams.

10. Planning an OSA

The planning of an OSA is to be undertaken by the OSA Leader and Deputy Leader if permission is granted in principle. Guidelines for arranging OSA are as follows:

Categories:

a. Day Trips (within the U.A.E.) – see Annex A
b. Overnight Trips (within the U.A.E.) – see Annex B
c. Overseas Trips – see Annex C
d. Inter-School Matches and Tournaments – see Annex D

Each Annex refers to various appendixes which may be found in this document. These appendixes, like the annexes are guides only and staff making use of them are encouraged to suggest improvements based on experience.

The OSA forms and documentation must be reviewed by the designated members of the Senior Leadership Team at least 48 hours before the trip.

11. Role and responsibilities

All staff are responsible for upholding to the Out of School Activities Policy.

The OSA Leader is responsible for completing all documentation, including after trip responsibilities. The completed documentation must then be submitted to the PA to the Principal for filing.

12. Monitoring and review

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

13. Supporting documents

Code	Annexures and Appendices	Instruction
OSA – Annex A	Day Visits/Visitors	Select based on activity type
OSA – Annex B	Local Residential Visits	
OSA – Annex C	International Residential Visits	
OSA – Annex D	School Fixtures	
OSA – Annex E	Educational Visits Team	Trip leader must gain approval from the relevant member of the educational visits team.
OSA – Appendix 1	Visit Approval & Staff Ratios	Compulsory
OSA – Appendix 2	Application Support & Review	Compulsory
OSA – Appendix 3	Risk Assessment	Compulsory (adjust to activity)
OSA – Appendix 4	Attendance Register with Emergency Contact Details	Compulsory
OSA – Appendix 5	Financial Details	Use for Annex A, B and C
OSA – Appendix 6a Appendix 6b	Transport Request Form Transport details	If required Required if a visit goes over multiple days
OSA – Appendix 7	First Aid Box	Compulsory
OSA – Appendix 8	Sample Letter to Parents	Compulsory
OSA – Appendix 9	Emergency Procedures	Compulsory
OSA – Appendix 10	GEMS Approved Provider Trip Agreement Form	Compulsory for residential visits only

Signed ..... Date .....22 August 2025.....
Whole School Vice Principal

Signed ..... Date .....22 August 2025.....
Associate Principal

Signed ..... Date .....22 August 2025.....

Executive Principal/CEO/Executive Vice President of Education

Next policy review date:
February 2026