Alternative and Vocational Provision Policy

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

1. Introduction

GEMS Founders School (GFS) recognises that there is a need to ensure that our curriculum is inclusive and accessible, providing the opportunities to succeed. Moreover, we recognise the need to offer the type of provision that allows students to achieve their potential.

"Every child deserves an excellent education and the chance to fulfil their potential whatever their background and needs. Children in alternative provision deserve these opportunities too." **(Creating opportunity for all, DfE, 2018) In the words of Education Secretary Gavin Williamson**

"For too long we have been training people for the jobs of yesterday instead of the jobs of today and tomorrow. Employers are struggling to find the computer programmers, engineers, electricians and technicians they need, and students of all ages are missing out on the high skill, high wage jobs that higher technical education can lead to." (Department for England, 2020)

2. Purpose of policy

- The purpose of the alternative provision is to provide an educational provision for students who are unable to access full-time mainstream education for a number of reasons, or who are unsuited to the mainstream provision on offer.
- The purpose of the vocational provision is an educational provision for students who learn in a more kinaesthetic and practical manner or those who have a desire to enter a chosen vocational career pathway, building skills and competencies for a successful future.

3. Aims and objectives

To ensure that all students at GFS have access to the curriculum regardless of their academic ability and barriers to learning.

The objectives of the policy are:

- To outline the **reasons** why students might be offered **Alternative** or **Vocational** provision.
- To ensure that alternative provision is offered to **suitable** students in a **consistent** way.
- To provide **guidance** on the **referral** process.
- To **ensure suitable procedures** are in place relating to **attendance and the safeguarding** of students.
- To outline the **monitoring** of students' progress, behaviour and welfare.
- To **guide** staff and support staff with the identification, support and monitoring of students accessing an alternative and or vocational provision.
- To **highlight** the end goals/purpose of alternative and vocational provision at GFS

4. Reasons:

There are a variety of reasons why a student is referred to an alternative and or vocational provision. Some of these may be:

- A serious behavioural event that would normally result in an extended exclusion or permanent exclusion.
- Continued poor behaviour that fails to meet our standards and that has not improved with the supportive pastoral process put in place.
- Students needs are not being met through the mainstream curriculum on offer. The emphasis on smaller classes and engagement may be more suitable to some students.
- A student may not be attending regularly and is at risk of leaving school with little or no qualifications. An alternative and or vocational provision may provide a greater opportunity to progress to a suitable post-16 pathway.
- An unidentified or emerging need may result in a student needing additional support in a supportive learning environment. This may result in a student being placed on the SEND register or refereed for the "Small Steps or Flourish program."
- Students who have a diagnosed health issue (mental health and physical) may need to be supported to access a mainstream curriculum.
- Students that have greater spatial awareness and display distinct strengths and skills sets in practical/technical learning.
- Child performing below average.

5. How do we identify flourish students?

At GEMS Founders School, Flourish Students are students that are receiving a SEND intervention to support to improve a SEND difficulty that is or would significantly restrict their access to the curriculum. Such interventions include:

- Being in the Nurture class for Maths and English.
- Reading Group.
- Literacy and language intervention group.
- Speech and Language intervention.
- Numeracy support.
- Social and communication skills.
- 1:1 personalised intervention based on need.
- Timetabled Flourish classes where there is an identified need that these sessions are addressing and is trying to improve with measurable outcomes.

6. How do we identify Small Steps students?

At GEMS Founders School, Small Steps Students are students that are receiving a SEND intervention specifically geared towards students on the spectrum.

- A serious behavioural event that would normally result in an extended exclusion or permanent exclusion.
- Continued poor behaviour that fails to meet our standards and that has not improved with the supportive pastoral process put in place.
- Students needs are not being met through the mainstream curriculum on offer. The emphasis on smaller classes and engagement may be more suitable to some students.
- Medical diagnosis to confirm SEND issues.

7. How do we identify a vocational student?

- Students displays a lack of interest in exam-based provisions.
- CAT4 score and internal assessment tools indicate a greater spatial awareness.
- Favoured kinaesthetic learning style.

8. Wider school interventions

Interventions that do not necessarily qualify students as "Small Steps, Flourish or Vocational" student are:

- English speaking for ELL students.
- Having a mentor.
- Attending the nurture maths class.
- Social skills.
- Using the Flourish at break and lunch.
- Using a laptop.
- Having coloured exercise books or overlays.
- Using IDL.
- Having exam access arrangements.
- Having a pupil passport.
- Having a class exit pass.
- Having medical issues and having to come to department for respite, physio etc. and transition.
- Having a fidget toy.
- Access to therapy and sensory rooms.

9. Responsibilities

Leadership Team – Inclusion/Curriculum/ Vocational

- Monitor and review the alternative and vocational provision on a regular basis.

Senior Leadership

- Responsibility for the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the alternative and vocational provision.
- Report to stakeholders on the effectiveness of the provision.

10. Alternative and Vocational Leadership

- Where appropriate the Head of Inclusion and Head of Vocational Learning will liaise with Heads of Department and the examinations and data team to ensure that students are accessing an appropriate curriculum. All students should have the opportunity to sit formal external examinations.
- The Assistant Headteacher for Inclusion and the Head of Vocational Learning will work collaboratively to plan and support the resourcing of appropriate curricula.
- Where appropriate, the Deputy Heads of Inclusion will liaise closely with the attendance and safeguarding teams; ensuring the safeguarding of each student on a daily basis.
- Undertake monitoring and quality assurance processes for all aspects of alternative and vocational provision, including the Internal and External verification processes.
- With appropriate Heads of Year, be responsible for the regular review of students' progress, in conjunction with parents/guardians and other supporting agencies or professionals.
- With Heads of Year, to maintain accurate records evaluations of students' progress with regards to attendance, behaviour, academic progress and students' emotional well-being, including BTEC Tracking documentation.

- To implement appropriate alterations to the provision of a student where progress is not seen.
- To devise Individual Education Plans (IEP's) for each student of determination.
- To accurately inform professionals where multiple agencies are involved with a student and their family.
- To plan, evaluate and quality assure provision.

11. Safeguarding Lead

- Will maintain a register of those students' accessing a day or more (or the equivalence of) of an alternative provision.
- To record the dates of reviews undertaken.
- To file and quality assure the IEP's for each student.
- Plan and inform staff of multi-agency meetings; delegating appropriate staff to represent the school and student.
- Maintain accurate child protection records of students on an alternative provision.
- To offer, facilitate and quality assure external provision providers for all students for alternative provision.

12. Referral process

- If a student is identified as having an English Language deficit or concern surrounding inclusion then an 'Inclusion Referral Form' should be completed.
- If a student is struggling to access a particular subject or curriculum area and/or displays strengths and interest in a particular discipline than a referral can be made to the Head of Vocational learning to explore substitute pathways (See appendices 01 and 02).

13. Assess Plan Do Review (APDR)

- **Assess:** this should give a pen portrait of where the student is at, what difficulties they have and how this is presenting itself in school.
- **Plan:** This is a broad overview of what we ultimately want to achieve.
- **Do:** These are concise steps that will be taken to address the difficulties with names of people that will be responsible for carrying out each step.
- **Review:** Ideally, parents and students should be involved in the review with their views included. There should not be more than one review where a student and parent have not fed into it. The review should discuss the success of each step in the 'Do' sections and reflect on why they were/were not successful. It should then be decided if the target in the plan has been fully/partially/not met.
- The next cycle, if needed, will consider the successes and failures of the previous cycle and can keep what is successful, extend the cycle keeping the same steps (with reasons why), or completely change all the interventions.

14. Attendance and Safeguarding

- Those students accessing an alternative provision shall be placed in the vulnerable student attendance list. This will ensure first day absence calls to be made and raise awareness of those students' absence.
- Parental contact to enquire absences which are unexplained, to confirm that the absent child is home when parents/carers or guardians are not responding to phone calls/text messages/emails.
- Vocational students' attendance will be monitored as per whole school and protected by safeguarding protocols of the school. Wellbeing concerns will be referred to the school counsellor, welfare team or safeguarding leads where appropriate.

15. Monitoring academic progress and behaviour

- The Assistant Headteacher for Inclusion has a responsibility to report, on a termly basis, the progress of students accessing alternative provision.
- Where appropriate, students will have assessments linked to GCSE specifications which are then reported using school systems.
- Behaviour concerns will be communicated through the school system and followed up where appropriate.
- Vocational students' progress will be logged on school system.
- Data for students accessing the ASDAN programme will be logged on the school system by the ASDAN coordinator.
- Feedback on students' work must adhere to the school's 'Marking and Feedback Policy.'
- Students will undergo the full admissions process; completing all relevant admissions paperwork. Parents/carers and guardians must be in attendance in the admissions meeting.
- Administration staff, attendance, examinations and data teams will all be informed of the starting date and status of the named student.
- The named student will be added to a relevant tutor group and added to the vulnerable student attendance register for those deemed appropriate
- The MOE regularly reviews and updates equivalency requirements for vocational pathways. We will communicate any changes promptly and parents are also required to remain informed to best support their child's academic journey.

16. Provision

GFS has clearly defined provisions for varying needs. These include:

- SMALL STEPS - FS1- KS2 long term outsourced in house alternative provision.
- FLOURISH - Individual support lessons in a safe and supportive learning environment.
- SEND curriculum/ ASDAN curriculum - Nurture groups for those entering GFS at lower than expected levels and a range of ASADAN courses for students of determination.
- On-line blended - KHDA approved online learning provision that enables those students who are not able to access a full-time curriculum.
- BTEC Vocational courses - Range of vocational subject's specialisms offered at Level 1- 3.

17. Small Steps

- **SMALL STEPS** is a full-time provision for students who cannot access a mainstream provision.
- Students will have access to a bespoke program of study and it is likely that students will not sit formal external examinations.
- The curriculum will follow a course of study to include, English, Maths, and l life skills related studies.
- Students will have, where possible, access to subject specialist teachers.
- The ambition for Small Steps is that every student has access to 25 hours of in school-based learning each week.
- The long-term goal of the provision is to integrate students into mainstream classes

18. Flourish provision

- **FLOURISH** offers support beyond the mainstream curriculum. The aim of which is to support students in accessing a mainstream curriculum whilst supporting an identified need.
- A timetable of available support will be maintained and updated by the Assistant Headteacher for Inclusion.

- Support will be clearly defined for that period.

This may include:

- Reading interventions.
- English, Maths and Science support.
- Enrichment activities.
- ELL support.
- Mentoring.
- Tailored interventions based on need.
- Students have access to work related studies and work experience.
- Students will be supported by staff to apply for employment, education or training opportunities at post-16.
- Students will hopefully be able to reintegrate to mainstream lessons to broaden their educational experience as they develop their ability to age related expectations
- The Assistant Headteacher for Inclusion will be responsible for the quality assurance of the provision.
- The Assistant Headteacher for Inclusion will be responsible for the evaluation of the interventions and will plan and resource the curricula.

19. Online Learning

- Phoenix Classroom is the online provision chosen by the school. This online provision is ratified by the KDHA and will link to the work done in class. Please see remote learning policy for more details.
- Students that access online provision will have work set and timetabled as part of their programme of study and student's timetable will reflect online learning provision.
- The timetable of online lessons will mirror those of the mainstream curriculum.
- The online learning will follow the structure of the school day.
- The monitoring of attendance and access to online provision will be completed daily and for those sessions identified by staff.
- Students will be placed on the vulnerable student list and thus will be subject to daily absence calls and video calls through teams where appropriate.

20. BTEC Vocational Learning

- Students will opt in subject areas but will be advised not to enrol for more than 2 BTEC qualifications at any given time in order to balance workload and ensure a scope of learning.
- Students will be provided work experience opportunities and support with further and higher educational options.
- Enterprise, innovation and industry experiences will be created for all students on vocational pathways.
- The Vocational department will collaborate with the Assistant Headteacher for Inclusion and careers counsellors to ensure clear learning pathways are in place.

Refer to BTEC Handbook for full outline of courses.

This policy has been discussed and agreed by the GEMS Founders School Dubai teaching staff and leadership teams for implementation. This policy takes into consideration the GEMS Inclusion Policy and the Dubai Inclusive Education Policy Framework and Resolution to Regulate Vocation Education

Signed ..... Date 22 June 2026.....
Whole School Vice Principal

Signed ..... Date 22 June 2026.....
Associate Principal

Signed ..... Date 22 June 2026.....
Executive Principal/CEO/Executive Vice President of Education

Next policy review date:
August 2027

Appendices

Inclusion Team
Team around the child, SEND, G&T, ELL and Counselling

Referral form

Referral Form Information: *(to be filled by class teacher)*	
Student Name:	
Date of Birth:	
Class:	
Referring to:	**Inclusion/ ELL/ G&T/ Counselling** *(delete as appropriate)*

Areas of concern leading to the referral.

The lists below are examples and guidance for the detailed information that the referral form requires.
You do not need to edit the below – these are examples.

	Examples
Language	
Reading skills	*Reading at ___ level. Finds it difficult to sequence and blend sounds at __ level.*
Writing Skills	*Difficulty in writing on a line. Finds it difficult to create grammatically correct sentence structures. Finds it difficult to write in correct tenses. Misses out determiners in sentences. Letter reversals. Makes consistent errors in phoneme-grapheme correspondences. Difficulty in applying capital letters or certain punctuation.*
Social skills	*Finds it difficult to communicate with peers. Struggles to make friends or keep friends. Behaviour does not match peers at age group (then please detail why).*
Numeracy	*Detail the student's current working level and ability with the 4 basic operations/ times tables/ number sequencing/ mental maths/ partitioning/ counting on or counting back/ skip counting.* *Student requires concrete resources for all tasks and highly differentiated tasks.* *Student requires 1:1 support to work through starter/ all tasks.*
Behaviour	*Student seems emotionally low and apathetic. Student demonstrates erratic behaviour and struggles to think ahead. Student acts without considering the consequences to themselves or others. Student demonstrates particularly poor behaviour on Sundays and Thursdays. Student can be hostile or verbally*
Physical needs	*Student is struggling with pencil grip and fine motor coordination for writing.* *Student 'bumps' into things and trips over often.* *Student is struggling to manoeuvre stairs or get around the school with ease.*

01.

Date and concern No.	Specific concerns/observations: TEACHERS TO EXPLAIN AREAS OF NEED BELOW
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	
6.	

Strategies/provisions used so far – This must be completed and detailed.		
Date	Strategy and concern number this links to if different concerns have been identified (see previous page) What have you tried?	Outcome of Strategy What impact did it have?

Parental Involvement: (emails, verbal communication…etc.) Class teachers must communicate concerns with parents before observations from another team can occur.

Date:		Class teacher:	

To be completed by SEND/ ELL/ Counsellor

Leader picking up referral:
Observation date:

Observation setting:
Observation notes:
Assessment Conclusions:

SFS VOCATIONAL EDUCATION REFERRAL FORM

Name of student

Form

Student SEN status

If this student has an SEN Statement or EHCP please attach to this referral along with most recent Annual review.

Learner health and social care needs

Does the student have any health difficulties which may affect learning? Yes ☐ No ☐

Does the student take any medication? Yes ☐ No ☐

Does the student have any allergies? Yes ☐ No ☐

Does the student have -

What signs may be noticeable if the student is in difficulty?

What action have be taken so far?

Details of professionals involved:

Name of Referrer

Job Title

Vocational Course applying for:

Please indicate the subject and duration of the intended course		
Computing ☐	Hospitality and Catering ☐	Engineering ☐
Travel and Tourism	Applied Business	sport

What behaviours or outcomes led to this referral?

What are the student's views of this referral?

What are the parent's/carer's views of this referral?