Learning Culture and Managing Behaviour Policy

1. Introduction

At GEMS Founders School, Dubai (GFS), we are a mindful school. We want our students to be honest,

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

respectful, and hard-working individuals who take responsibility for their own behaviour, learning, and achievements. We aim to create a culture which ensures behaviour supports learning. This policy describes the GFS approach to positive behaviour and managing unacceptable behaviours.
This policy is grounded in:

- Our school values: Grow, Flourish, and Succeed
- The Founders Way
- The GEMS Values: Care, Always Learning, Excellence & One Team
- Be a GEM Playbook
- KHDA and MOE guidelines and policies
- UAE Regulatory laws

2. Purpose of policy

The Learning Culture and Managing Behaviour Policy ensures that all members of our school community feel safe, understood, and have a sense of belonging. It sets out how GFS promotes positive relationships, supports learning, and ensures behaviour consistently supports a purposeful learning environment. The policy also outlines how unacceptable behaviours are addressed swiftly, fairly, and appropriately to maintain safety and wellbeing for all.

3. Leadership of Behaviour: Roles and Responsibilities

Promoting positive behaviour and a purposeful learning environment is a shared responsibility.

- **GEMS Education:** Sets overarching behaviour principles through Be A GEM.
- **School Leadership:** Ensures consistent and visible implementation.
- **Pastoral, Inclusion & Safeguarding Leads:** Provide targeted support and remove barriers to learning and wellbeing.
- **Teachers & All Staff:** Model positive behaviour, teach routines, recognise positive conduct, and respond consistently to concerns.
- **Students:** Uphold GEMS and Founders Way values and contribute positively to school culture.
- **Parents / Carers:** Reinforce expectations and work in partnership with the school.

4. Restorative Practice & Relationships

Mutual Respect - At GFS, we believe that everybody deserves respect. When communicating to one another, we are respectful in our volume, tone and speech.
We understand that behaviour for learning is best supported through strong relationships. We aim to follow the Establish-Maintain-Restore (EMR) method when developing and maintaining student-staff relationships.

- **Establish** – Intentional practices to cultivate a positive relationship with each student (i.e., build trust, connection & understanding)
- **Maintain** – Proactive efforts to prevent relationship quality from diminishing over time (i.e., ongoing positive interactions)
- **Restore** – Intentionally repairing harm to the relationship after a negative interaction (i.e.,

reconnecting with student).

Conflict Resolution - Restorative practice is a way of working with conflict that puts the focus on repairing the harm that has been done. It is an approach to conflict resolution that includes all parties involved. It requires active listening, restorative questions, and behaviour as communication. A plan of action is created to solve the cause of the conflict and move forward using the 'restorative practice conversation scaffold.'

We understand that universal behaviour systems are unlikely to meet the needs of all students. When necessary, the approach should be adapted to the individual's needs. This could include but is not limited to: inclusion support, pastoral support, welfare or counselling support or a positive report card.

5. Behaviour Expectations:

At GFS we expect students to meet these expectations:

- **Be Present**: Attend school every day, on time, with correct uniform and equipment.
- **Be Ready to Learn**: Follow every routine. Arrive to lessons on time.
- **Be the Best You Can Be**: Live by our GEMS & Founders Way values in lessons and around the school.
- **Be Kind**: Ensure everyone is able to learn in a calm and happy school.
- **Be Focused**: Complete homework on time and take pride in their work.
- **Be Brave**: Stand up and speak up if you need support. Tell us about bullying and we will help.
- **Be an Ambassador**: Join the school's clubs, leadership programs and play a part in GFS school community

6. Accentuating the positive

At GFS, we believe that rewarding positive behaviour is more effective than punitive strategies. As such we must reward our students for positive behaviours. Our rewards system, rooted in the values of Care, Always Learning, Excellence, and One Team, recognises students who go beyond expectations in all areas of school life.

Praise is our primary tool for building a positive culture. Staff are encouraged to give specific, sincere, and consistent praise (both verbal and non-verbal) whenever they observe positive behaviour. Achievement points are awarded to promote and reinforce these behaviours. Positive interactions must outweigh the negative by a ratio of at least 5:1, and praise may also be extended to families to strengthen the school-home partnership. For students with more negative points, increasing positive contact with home can help shift mindsets and behaviours.

Rewards are structured to recognise students who consistently demonstrate GEMS and The Founders Way values and meet expectations, celebrating positive behaviour at multiple levels.

- **Daily**: Teachers recognise positive behaviour through praise and achievement points, ensuring all students, including students of determination, are celebrated. Class Teachers/Form Tutors aim to award at least **one** point during tutor time, specialist teachers at least **three** points per lesson, and Heads of Year at least **five** points per year group during social times.
- **Weekly**: Achievement point milestones and outstanding commitment to our values are acknowledged through positive communication home and *GEM of the Week* recognition.
- **Monthly**: Students are recognised for exemplifying the *Leadership Gemstone* of the month.
- **Half-termly**: Assemblies celebrate excellence in values, learning, attendance, improvement, leadership, and community contribution through certificates, awards, and experiences.
- **Annual:** The "GEMS of Honour" award celebrates students who demonstrate sustained excellence, with recipients eligible for the prestigious GEMS Group Awards.

7. Proactive behaviour for learning support

At GFS, we believe that the consistent use of evidence-informed strategies is key to sustaining a positive learning culture. Staff are trained to recognise that students' behaviour and needs vary according to their stage of development, and to adapt their approaches accordingly. This ensures strong relationships are established and maintained across the school.

8. Inclusion including reference to SENDo, EAL and Advanced Learners

We recognise that students of determination who exhibit adverse behaviour may need an individual approach to manage behaviour for learning. Where consideration for additional support is needed, the Inclusion Team will work alongside the teachers and parents to develop a personalised support plan for the individual student.

Where a language barrier is contributing to adverse behaviour in students with English as an additional language, the inclusion team will support teachers to ensure they can communicate effectively with the student to help them to follow the learning culture policy.

9. Supporting Mental Health & Wellbeing – Welfare and Counselling Teams

We believe that the learning culture of a school thrives when all members of the school community have access to wellbeing support.

'A child's mental health is just as important as their physical health and deserves the same quality of support.' – Kate Middleton, Princess of Wales, Royal Patron of the children's mental health charity Place2Be (February 2015)

- The welfare and counselling teams at GFS implement a welfare strategy which promotes positive mental health and ensures that all stakeholders have equitable access to wellbeing support.
- The counselling team works alongside the safeguarding and welfare leads to ensure that individual cases are triaged effectively. Where needed, they offer 1:1 counselling sessions for students across the school.
- The welfare team provides mental health first aid support for students as and when needed. They offer 1:1 wellbeing session with students who have been triaged by the counselling team.
- Our trained adult mental health first aiders offer support for adults within the school community.
- Our trained student mental health first-aiders (emotional buddies) offer support for other students within the school community.
- External mental health support is accessible for all community members via partnership with mental health professionals.

10. Eliminating the negative: Strategies for managing unacceptable behaviour

Unacceptable behaviours are categorised as disruptive behaviours and red line behaviours

Disruptive behaviours
Examples: • Chewing gum in school • Disturbing others/out of seat without permission • Failure to speak to peers/staff/visitors with respect • Head on desk/slumped in chair • Refusing to follow instructions from staff • Talking over the teacher/ answering back • Walking off from a member of staff • Using headphones/ Bluetooth headsets without permission • Failure to behave sensibly around the school (such as pushing or horseplay that can be a precursor to fighting) • Littering in the classroom or around the school

Strategies to deal with disruptive behaviours:

- Teachers ensure disruptive behaviours are avoided and nipped in the bud through fidelity to Teach Like A GEMS Playbook: GEMS Culture.
- Students who display a disruptive behaviour will be given a whisper correction; a brief, discreet conversation to refocus behaviour and reinforce accountability for learning.
- If the student continues to display a disruptive behaviour despite the whisper correction, they receive a second correction, and this will lead to a phone call home.
- If they fail to correct their behaviour for a third time within a single lesson, teachers should log this and This may result in sanctions, for example, reflection time.
- Consistent repeated low-level behaviours should be brought to the attention of parents, and may result in further consequences such as behaviour report.

Red Line behaviours Further details below

Examples:

- Repeated breaches of the school rules
- Refusing to hand over a mobile phone when visible in school
- Repeatedly ignoring a staff member's instructions or school policy leading to harm of themselves or others
- Truancy from lessons
- Walking out of a classroom without permission
- Failure to attend a detention
- Rude language, gestures or swearing at someone
- Cheating in exams/assessments
- Graffiti or obscene/offensive language or depictions*
- Damaging equipment/property*
- Dangerous or unsafe behaviours
- Bullying (physical child-on-child abuse)
- Bullying (verbal child-on-child abuse)
- Racist language or behaviour (Further details below)
- Cyber bullying (Further details below)
- Any behaviour which violates UAE laws, including having cigarettes/e-cigarettes/vapes or contraband on school premises
- Theft or bringing in stolen items & selling of items
- Aggressive or threatening behaviour towards a member of staff
- Aggressive or threatening behaviour towards peers
- Fighting, physically aggressive or threatening violence
- Extortion
- Bringing a weapon, dangerous and/or prohibited item into school
- Bringing the school into disrepute (social media/within the community)
- Defamation of staff online (Further details below)
- External truancy
- Inappropriate touch & Sexual assault / harmful sexual behaviour
- Substance use

*In instances of damage to school property, parents will be asked to cover the costs of repair

Strategies to deal with Red Line behaviours:

- Red line behaviours are not tolerated at any time. These must be logged by teachers and could lead to an immediate referral to reflection.
- Consequences may also include suspension or exclusion where necessary.
- In the occasion of a suspension, on the student's return, a reintegration meeting may be included with their teacher, a welfare lead, a relevant pastoral leader and a parent/guardian to develop a reintegration plan to restore positive behaviour.

Red Line behaviours chronology of actions:

- As soon as the incident is witnessed by or reported to a member of staff, that person must inform a relevant leader
- The person leading the investigation may seek support from a senior colleague and can ask colleagues to assist with the investigation
- The investigation will gather as much information about the incident (e.g. what happened, what was said, who witnessed it, times, dates, locations)
- Parents of all children involved are informed before the end of the day that a **Red Line behaviour** has taken place and an investigation is underway
- When the investigation is concluded, parents are invited in for a meeting to discuss the findings
- Any sanctions or disciplinary action is communicated to parents
- Restorative conversations take place
- All Red Line behaviours are logged, with disciplinary actions included

Incidents of cyberbullying and inappropriate use of ICT, including social media

Cyberbullying is defined as bullying that takes place online, such as through social networking sites, messaging apps or gaming sites. Cyberbullying is not tolerated and will be treated as a Red Line behaviours. Examples of inappropriate use of ICT include:

- Recording a person on a device without consent, including members of staff
- Creating and posting media content which clearly identifies a child in GFS uniform
- Creating social media content which is defamatory
- Sharing social media content which is defamatory
- Creating and/or sharing media content on school grounds
- Accessing illegal online content
- Accessing sexual online content
- Sharing media content which can be harmful or hurtful to others (e.g. airdropping a video or picture)

This is not an exhaustive list, and any inappropriate use of ICT may be treated as a Red Line behaviour. Staff must report any instances of cyberbullying or inappropriate use of ICT to a senior leader.

Incidents of racial language and behaviour

Racial harassment will not be tolerated and must always be reported. At GFS we promote and celebrate diversity. Staff members who witness an incident must inform an SLT member immediately. The school records all racial incidents. Developing appropriate attitudes and behaviour is supported through the schools' Moral Social Cultural Studies and PSHE curriculum.

Defamation of Staff Online

Any form of negative, disrespectful or defamatory comment or content about teachers or other members of staff on social media or online platforms is strictly prohibited. Such actions undermine the values of respect and integrity that the school upholds and can cause serious harm to individuals and the wider school community. Incidents of this nature will be treated as a serious breach of the school's behaviour expectations and will result in disciplinary action.

13. Sanctions and Escalation routes

The school is committed to applying sanctions that are appropriate, proportionate, and aligned with the nature, severity and context of the behaviour incident, considering the age and individual circumstances of the student.

All disciplinary responses will be implemented in a manner that preserves student dignity and supports reflection, learning, and improved future conduct.

Under no circumstances will corporal punishment be used, nor will any disciplinary practice involve humiliation, intimidation or public shaming.

Sanctions will not require students to remain on campus beyond official school hours solely for disciplinary purposes.

Staff member	Class Teacher	HOY	HOY/AHT	AHT/DHT	DHT/SDHT	Head of School	Associate/Vice Principal
Behaviours	• Disruptive behaviours • Attendance • 1st Bus Report	• Persistent disruptive behaviours • 2nd Bus Report	• Persistent disruptive behaviours over time • 3rd Bus Report	• Refusal of Report • Red Line Behaviours • 4th Bus Report	• Refusal of Report • Continued Red Line Behaviours • 5th Bus Report	• Refusal of final Report • Continued Red Line Behaviours	• Serious and consistent refusal of report • Immediate threat to life
Possible Actions	After three silent whispers: • Restorative conversation • Behaviour logged • Email to parents • Phone call to parents • Reflection time • Parent meeting if required	• Restorative conversation • Behaviour logged • Phone call to parents • In-class behaviour) report • Parent meeting	• Behaviour logged • Reflection time • Parent meeting • HOY Report • If successful: HOY Positive Report	• Behaviour logged • Parent meeting • AHT report • Suspension/ 1st Undertaking letter if required	• Behaviour logged • Parent meeting • DHT report • Suspension/ 2nd Undertaking letter if required	• Behaviour logged • Parent meeting • HS report • Suspension and 3rd Undertaking letter if required	• Behaviour logged • Parent meeting • Meeting with KHDA • Paperwork collated, sent to KHDA • Immediate Exclusion

Suspensions and Exclusions

Exclusion from school is a serious disciplinary sanction and will only be used as a last resort when a student's behaviour presents a significant risk to the safety, wellbeing or learning of others, or where there has been a persistent and serious breach of the school's Managing Behaviour Policy despite appropriate interventions and support. Before any decision is made, the school will consider the individual circumstances of the incident, the student's age, previous behaviour record, any identified additional learning needs or disabilities and the effectiveness of previous strategies. All suspensions will be fair, proportionate, evidence-based and fully documented. Parents will be informed promptly of the reasons for the exclusion, its duration and the arrangements for reintegration or, in exceptional cases, the process relating to permanent exclusion. During any period of suspension, the school will plan a supported reintegration meeting before the student's return. Permanent exclusion will only be considered where all reasonable alternatives have been exhausted or where a single incident is of such exceptional seriousness that the continued presence of the student would compromise the safety or wellbeing of others or the orderly operation of the school. The school will ensure that exclusion decisions comply with KHDA requirements, uphold students' rights to dignity and fairness and are not discriminatory, particularly in relation to Students of Determination or students with identified additional needs.

13. Using behaviour data dynamically

All achievement points and unacceptable behaviour incidents must be recorded in *Go4Schools* and monitored by leaders across the school. Relevant leaders should regularly monitor trends and patterns in behaviour in their areas of the school and act when needed to ensure our learning culture policy is adhered to. While we understand that unpredictable events can happen, we believe in using a range of data to frequently review the learning culture of the school. This includes but is not limited to the following data sets: attendance, punctuality, clinic records, achievement points, behaviour incidents, student, parent and

teacher voice and observational data. This data should inform decisions regarding additional support for students.

14. Monitoring and review

The policy has been discussed and agreed by the Senior Leadership Team and Executive Leadership Team for implementation.

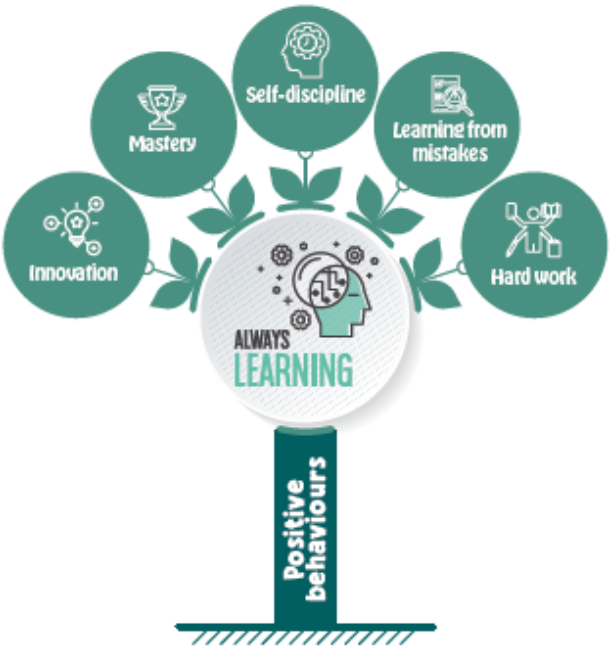
Signed ..... Date .....June 2026.....
Whole School Vice Principal

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

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

Next policy review date:
August 2027

POSITIVE BEHAVIOURS



Be a GEM

GEMS EDUCATION

POSITIVE BEHAVIOURS

GEMS Values	Positive behaviours	Achievement Points
	Showing creativity and innovation to deepen your understanding in a focus area	2 points
	Working hard and going the extra mile consistently	2 points
	Learning beyond the subject through podcasts, books, online courses or masterclasses	2 points
	Engaging in co-curriculum activities and mastering a skill through self-discipline	2 points
	Learning from mistakes and taking on board constructive feedback	2 points
	Learning from, with, and about each other very well	2 points
	Using everyone's ideas to achieve a good solution (problem solving)	2 points
	Working well with others to achieve team goals	2 points
	Sharing responsibilities and tasks to achieve the best for everyone	2 points
	Taking responsibility when things go wrong	2 points
	Having the grit to never give up	2 points
	Listening attentively and participating enthusiastically in lesson	2 points
	Trying hard to produce work of exceptional quality in lessons and during tests	2 points
	Being a self-starter and thinking outside the box	2 points
	Attending enrichment or additional catch-up sessions to help you reach your full potential	2 points
	Speaking politely with excellent manners	2 points
	Offering help to others through acts of kindness or community service	2 points
	Reporting bullying and speaking up when someone needs help	2 points
	Listening actively and respecting other opinions and differences	2 points
	Showing gratitude and appreciation for the little things that we often take for granted	2 points

Restorative Practice Conversation Scaffold

Restorative conversations provide a safe space to address incidents of conflict or harm. These conversations support the development of pro-social capabilities by creating opportunities for social and emotional learning. When using restorative conversations teachers need to scaffold students to a resolution that is accepted by all, is aligned to the school's core values and ensure that the type of restitution agreed upon is logically related to the mistakes made.

The scaffold

Tell the story

- What happened?
- What did you want? (identify the need)
- Is it ok to want? (validate the need)
- Did what you do work for you? (behaviour)
- What do we believe at school about _____ (behaviour)?
- Do you believe in that rule?
- What could you try next time that would work for you? (replacement behaviour)
- Who could help you with that? (support)

Explore the harm

- Who has been affected by this behaviour? In what ways?

Repair the harm

- Are you willing to solve the problem?
- What could you do to fix the problem?
- What else could you do?

Reach an agreement

- What do you need to do from now on?
- Are you willing to fix the problem with _____?

Follow-up/monitoring

- When would be a good time to check in with you to see that you have fixed the problem with _____and you are doing what we agreed?
- How are you feeling now?

References

Diane Gossen – Restitution

Hopkins, B., & Masters, G. (2003). Just Schools: A whole-school approach to restorative justice. Anthenaeum Press.

New Zealand Ministry of Education, (2014). Restorative Practice KETE Book 3. https://pb4l.tki.org.nz/content/download/872/3277/file/Restorative%20Practice%20Kete%20Book%20Three.pdf.

NSW GOVERNMENT