



مدرسة أكاديمية جيمس الامريكية ابو ظبي الخاصة  
**GEMS American Academy**  
ABU DHABI



**2020/2021**  
**MIDDLE SCHOOL HANDBOOK**



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**2020-2021  
MIDDLE SCHOOL  
HANDBOOK**

## Middle School Handbook

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### WELCOME TO THE 2020-2021 SCHOOL YEAR



Dear GAA Parents,

At GAA our mission is clear - “We develop global citizens who have the confidence and conviction to pursue their dreams and impact the world.”

As a faculty we have witnessed students who have positively applied their learning to make an impact. There are numerous examples of the planning and execution of fully developed student projects in the visual, performing, and language arts, in environmental issues, in science, entrepreneurship, and service that have positively influenced the lives of others. In the process students have reacted to setbacks, displayed perseverance and leadership, and collaborated with others to realize their objectives. In a time of rapid change, in which each day brings us more globally connected and integrated, students have been responsive to the urgency for widespread changes in the principles of teaching and learning.

But these principles of student-centered, authentic, more purposeful learning really are not new. In 1909, in a work entitled *Moral Principles of Education*, educational philosopher John Dewey, argued that, “The child is born with a natural desire to give out, to do, to serve,” and that, “The educational end and ultimate test of the value of what is learned is its use and application in carrying on and improving the life of all.”

As a school community, we have stated in our foundational documents that we agree with this century old philosophy. Therefore, it is our responsibility to develop a spirit in students that encourages project development to improve humanity. As a faculty it is our job to facilitate and design learning environments where students have the opportunity to create meaningful experiences and have more ownership over the outcomes they are trying to achieve. In doing so we will identify and develop in students the necessary skills that will enable them to assimilate and adapt to change throughout their lives.

Providing personalized and innovative learning opportunities, while addressing real world problems and scenarios in caring and principled environment. That is GAA, and I look forward to the opportunity to partner with parents to support our students and their learning.

I wish you all the best for a successful 2020-21 school year.

Sincerely,

**Mr. Robert Rinaldo**  
**Head of School / CEO**

## Middle School Handbook

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Welcome GAA Families!

Welcome to the 2020-21 school year at GEMS American Academy of Abu Dhabi. We are in our tenth year as a school, and we believe that each year we have grown and improved. This year will be no different!

This handbook is designed to help you know and understand our expectations, which we believe is an important first step in the learning process. When you know what we expect from you as a student, then you can take the necessary steps to prepare yourself for success.

We are always open to questions about our policies and procedures, and we invite you to come speak with me or Mr. MacDonald, our Middle School Vice Principal. We work to provide a framework and environment that is conducive to learning and best for our community while following the recommendations and guidelines of ADEK (Abu Dhabi Department of Education and Knowledge).

We are guided by our mission and vision, and we are of the belief that every student can learn. Student learning is our priority, and in order to make that happen, we have created a safe, predictable environment, we have made our expectations clear, and we have provided students with the opportunity to have choice while taking responsibility for that choice. This will lead to social and emotional growth and development.

We are here for students, and we work hard for their success. We are eager to partner with students and parents to guide their success. We believe that together we can accomplish great things. Let's make this school year a successful one!

Kind Regards,

**Kain Klinkhammer**  
**Secondary Principal**

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# GEMS CORE EDUCATIONAL VALUES

**Global Citizenship** - Making an active contribution to your local and global community.

- We respect and celebrate our diversity and recognize that there are many things that unite us all.
- We make a difference in our local communities so that we have a sustainable planet to share.
- We build bridges of knowledge, push boundaries and unite young people.
- We aim to produce not just great students, but great people who live with honesty, confidence and integrity.



**Growing by Learning** - Strive to develop your potential.

- Along with our students, we never stop learning.
- Each and every one of us has a capacity for leadership.

**Pursuing Excellence**- Work to continually exceed expectations.

- Just as we set educational standards for our schools, we take care that everything we do is delivered to a high standard.
- We go the extra mile for our students and our colleagues.



**Leading Through Innovation** - Find the courage to challenge convention.

- We dare to dream of the possibilities.
- No idea is too small or too large if it makes things better for our learners and our people.





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### IB LEARNER PROFILE

At GEMS American Academy (GAA) we are committed to providing an international learning environment grounded in what is best practice from the American education landscape. We strive in working together with the GAA community to develop the attributes of the International Baccalaureate (IB) learner profile.

The aim of all IB programs is to develop internationally minded people who, recognizing their common humanity and shared guardianship of the planet, help to create a better and more peaceful world.

**Inquirers:** We nurture our curiosity, developing skills for inquiry and research. We know how to learn independently and with others. We learn with enthusiasm and sustain our love of learning throughout life.

**Knowledgeable:** We develop and use conceptual understanding, exploring knowledge across a range of disciplines. We engage with issues and ideas that have local and global significance.

**Thinkers:** We use critical and creative thinking skills to analyze and take responsible action on complex problems. We exercise initiative in making reasoned, ethical decisions.

**Communicators:** We express ourselves confidently and creatively in more than one language and in many ways. We collaborate effectively, listening carefully to the perspectives of other individuals and groups.

**Principled:** We act with integrity and honesty, with a strong sense of fairness and justice, and with respect for the dignity and rights of people everywhere. We take responsibility for our own actions and the consequences.

**Open-minded:** We critically appreciate our own cultures and personal histories, as well as the values and traditions of others. We seek and evaluate a range of points of view, and we are willing to grow from the experience.

**Caring:** We show empathy, compassion and respect. We have a commitment to service, and we act to make a positive difference in the lives of others and in the world around us.

**Risk-takers:** We approach uncertainty with forethought and determination; we work independently and cooperatively to explore new ideas and innovative strategies. They are resourceful and resilient in the face of challenges and change.

**Balanced:** We understand the importance of balancing different aspects of our lives – intellectual, physical, and emotional – to achieve well-being for ourselves and others. We recognize our interdependence with other people and with the world in which we live.

**Reflective:** We thoughtfully consider the world and our own ideas and experience. We work to understand our strengths and weaknesses in order to support our learning and personal development.

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# OVERVIEW OF GAA ABU DHABI

### MISSION STATEMENT

GEMS American Academy is a diverse and caring international learning community offering a rigorous, relevant and holistic education.

We develop global citizens who have the confidence and conviction to pursue their dreams and impact the world.

*We Inspire. We Challenge. We Innovate. We Care.*

### GAA ABU DHABI: STATEMENT OF PHILOSOPHY

GAA promotes high standards of scholarship, citizenship and responsibility within a supportive international community. We undertake a student-centered approach to teaching and learning. We rely heavily for our success on teamwork and collaboration among students, teachers and parents. Our goal is for our students to develop, and commit to, the understandings, skills and dispositions of citizenship, leadership, creativity and sustainability.

#### **We offer:**

- an American-based curriculum within an international context.

#### **The success of our program is based on:**

- teamwork, collaboration and the broad participation of our community.
- the pool of diverse ideas, experiences and values which our community offers.
- a thorough awareness of strong pedagogical practices throughout the world.
- continuous learning and professional development.

#### **We provide:**

- each student with the opportunity and support to reach their full potential.
- a kind environment, built on mutual respect and dignified treatment, that encourages self-confidence and the embracing of others whose ideas and experiences differ.

#### **We believe that:**

- each student is a unique individual with equal potential to make a positive contribution to our school community.
- it is important to instill an enthusiasm for life-long learning in each student along with the skills and dispositions necessary to prepare them for the challenges and changes which will be faced in their future.
- our students must develop the skills and understandings that will enable them to become responsible, contributing citizens of the global community.
- learning and the GAA experience are improved when parents are actively engaged in the learning of their children.

#### **We support our philosophy through:**

- high standards of achievement and performance;
- a developmental, student-centered approach to teaching;
- a comprehensive and varied curriculum aimed at the acquisition of transferable skills and enduring understandings;
- the development of independent learning skills and self-reflection in the learning process;
- constructive feedback for learning;



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- nurturing a strong sense of self-esteem, personal integrity and a respectful, caring attitude toward others;
- developing an understanding of, appreciation for and willingness to accept people whose ideas and experiences differ from our own;
- facing problems within a framework of fairness and shared values;
- nurturing a sense of responsibility for our environment.

### INTRODUCTION TO THE MIDDLE SCHOOL

Middle School is a unique time in a child's development and requires a unique approach to learning. The Middle School Framework at GAA is grounded on set of widely recognized American curricular standards and based on the following beliefs:

1. *Middle School students should be exposed to a wide variety of intercultural experiences.*

This allows students to discover their passions and make informed decisions in the future regarding course selections, career paths and the pursuit of their dreams, all with the context of an international and intercultural.

2. *Social-emotional learning is just as important as academic learning.*

As Middle School students are navigating the physical and emotional changes their bodies are going through, they need extra support in developing their confidence and convictions, establishing positive social interactions, and dealing with conflict.

3. *Middle School students have unique needs and require differing amounts of support.*

Everybody can learn! Students will enter GAA at different points on the learning continuum, based on their diverse experiences, learning styles and needs. Our job is to meet students where they are and provide the emotional and academic support necessary to move them forward, in a caring learning environment.

4. *Middle School students learn better when they are actively engaged and can make connections to other disciplines, real world situations and global issues.*

Students will naturally engage more in a topic in which they are interested. They will forge deeper understandings if they can connect new learning with past experiences, make connections between disciplines, and relate their learning to real world experiences.

Our Middle School provides a responsive and nurturing environment. This program addresses the unique needs of adolescents, aiming to make learning worthwhile and rewarding. Students learn to take initiative, to think and act with intelligence, to express ideas and feelings in a socially acceptable manner and to accept responsibility for their actions and the consequences of them. We promote honesty and integrity together with developing citizenship and leadership skills.

The Middle School program is based on US Common Core Standards and International aims – with a focus on deep understandings and transferable skills. The core academic program intends to build skills and understandings around literacy, numeracy, creativity and sustainability. This core is supplemented by instruction in Art, Music, World Languages and Physical Education.

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### ACADEMIC EXPECTATIONS

At GAA we provide world class academic programming and set high expectations for our students' success. Students are expected to give their full effort towards achieving their potential in all of their areas of study. Our teachers, student support team and administration will make every effort to communicate with parents when a student is not reaching their potential or shows a dramatic drop in their academic achievement.

Students who are not working to their potential – not submitting work on time, underperforming on assessments, etc. - may be required to commit to times for academic support. Teachers often set specific days and times at lunch or before and after school to provide support.

### AWARDS AT GAA

At the end of each academic year, GAA will honor those students who have performed at the highest levels of academics, approaches to learning and citizenship. The following awards will be presented to Middle School students.

- **Subjects Awards:** Each subject area will present an award to one student in each grade level. This award is given to the student who best demonstrates a combination of mastery of the standards, excellent approaches to learning and the IB Learner Profile traits.
- **Caught Being a GEM Award:** This award is given to the student in each grade level who has received the most "Caught Being a GEM" Cards throughout the year.
- **Wildcat Victory Award:** The Wildcat Victory Award is given to one male and one female student in each grade level who has demonstrated the greatest growth in attitude, approaches to learning and performance.
- **Culture of Kindness Award:** The Culture of Kindness Award is given to one male and one female student in each grade level who has contributed the most to our school climate and our culture of kindness.
- **Top Student Award:** The Top Student Award is given to one male and one female student in each grade level who best demonstrates all aspects of an exemplary student. This includes overall academics, contributions to the community, extracurricular participation, citizenship, school spirit, and all of the IB Learner Profile Traits.

### SCHEDULE

GAA Middle School follows a four-block schedule, with Advisory taking place every day for 30 minutes after lunch. This advisory block will also include lessons learning about Moral Education.

Break times are built into the schedule to allow students opportunities to move from class to class, and use the washrooms.



# Middle School Handbook

GAA Middle School Timetable 2020-2021 - Week 1				
Sunday (White Day)	Monday (White Day)	Tuesday (Blue Day)	Wednesday (Blue Day)	Thursday (White Day)
Block A(W) (7:45 - 9:10)	Block A(W) (7:45 - 9:10)	Block E(B) (7:45 - 9:10)	Block E(B) (7:45 - 9:10)	Block A(W) (7:45 - 9:10)
Break (9:10 - 9:20)	Break (9:10 - 9:20)	Break (9:10 - 9:20)	Break (9:10 - 9:20)	Break (9:10 - 9:20)
Block B(W) (9:20 - 10:45)	Block B(W) (9:20 - 10:45)	Block F(B) (9:20 - 10:45)	Block F(B) (9:20 - 10:45)	Block B(W) (9:20 - 10:45)
Break (10:45 - 10:55)	Break (10:45 - 10:55)	Break (10:45 - 10:55)	Break (10:45 - 10:55)	Break (10:45 - 10:55)
Block C(W) (10:55 - 12:25)	Block C(W) (10:55 - 12:25)	Block G(B) (10:55 - 12:25)	Block G(B) (10:55 - 12:25)	Block C(W) (10:55 - 12:25)
Lunch (12:25 - 1:00)	Lunch (12:25 - 1:00)	Lunch (12:25 - 1:00)	Lunch (12:25 - 1:00)	Lunch (12:25 - 1:00)
Advisory (1:00 to 1:30)	Advisory (1:00 to 1:30)	Advisory (1:00 to 1:30)	Advisory (1:00 to 1:30)	Advisory (1:00 to 1:30)
Passing Time (1:30 - 1:35)	Passing Time (1:30 - 1:35)	Passing Time (1:30 - 1:35)	Passing Time (1:30 - 1:35)	Passing Time (1:30 - 1:35)
Block D(W) (1:35 - 3:00)	Block D(W) (1:35 - 3:00)	Block H(B) (1:35 - 3:00)	Block H(B) (1:35 - 3:00)	Block D(W) (1:35 - 3:00)

GAA Middle School Timetable 2020-2021 - Week 2				
Sunday (White Day)	Monday (Blue Day)	Tuesday (Blue Day)	Wednesday (White Day)	Thursday (White Day)
Block A(W) (7:45 - 9:10)	Block E(B) (7:45 - 9:10)	Block E(B) (7:45 - 9:10)	Block A(W) (7:45 - 9:10)	Block A(W) (7:45 - 9:10)
Break (9:10 - 9:20)	Break (9:10 - 9:20)	Break (9:10 - 9:20)	Break (9:10 - 9:20)	Break (9:10 - 9:20)
Block B(W) (9:20 - 10:45)	Block F(B) (9:20 - 10:45)	Block F(B) (9:20 - 10:45)	Block B(W) (9:20 - 10:45)	Block B(W) (9:20 - 10:45)
Break (10:45 - 10:55)	Break (10:45 - 10:55)	Break (10:45 - 10:55)	Break (10:45 - 10:55)	Break (10:45 - 10:55)
Block C(W) (10:55 - 12:25)	Block G(B) (10:55 - 12:25)	Block G(B) (10:55 - 12:25)	Block C(W) (10:55 - 12:25)	Block C(W) (10:55 - 12:25)
Lunch (12:25 - 1:00)	Lunch (12:25 - 1:00)	Lunch (12:25 - 1:00)	Lunch (12:25 - 1:00)	Lunch (12:25 - 1:00)
Advisory (1:00 to 1:30)	Advisory (1:00 to 1:30)	Advisory (1:00 to 1:30)	Advisory (1:00 to 1:30)	Advisory (1:00 to 1:30)
Passing Time (1:30 - 1:35)	Passing Time (1:30 - 1:35)	Passing Time (1:30 - 1:35)	Passing Time (1:30 - 1:35)	Passing Time (1:30 - 1:35)
Block D(W) (1:35 - 3:00)	Block H(B) (1:35 - 3:00)	Block H(B) (1:35 - 3:00)	Block D(W) (1:35 - 3:00)	Block D(W) (1:35 - 3:00)

## ADVISORY

In Middle School, Advisory serves as a daily “home base” for students and allows for some time to check in with each student, to address any questions or concerns a student may have and to provide a place for students to obtain school information and announcements. Additionally, it is a time to work on holistic development and teach study and organizational skills, cyber safety, building positive relationships, conflict resolution, building community and college readiness. Advisory teachers serve as student advocates and should be an initial point of contact for students and parents with concerns.

## LUNCH

Students have the option of bringing lunch from home or purchasing a school meal. **The ordering of food from outside establishments is not permitted.** We encourage students to eat healthy foods. Menus for each month are posted on the school newsletter. Water is provided for all students, and students are required to bring their own refillable water bottles. We encourage students to bring healthy snacks from home to eat during our mid-morning class change. We suggest any food sent to school should be low in refined sugar and not contain any nuts or nut products. **Carbonated beverages and energy drinks are not to be brought to school.**

***\*Please be aware that GAA and ADEK policies may require changes in regards to lunch routines because of health and safety regulations in response to COVID 19.***

## RECESS

Students have scheduled recess times at lunch and depending on scheduled use by PE classes, the soccer pitch and/or tennis courts may be available for play during recess times. All students are expected to play safely and fairly and to be respectful of each other and of any equipment being used.

## HOME TRANSPORTATION

If a student wishes to change the method of home transportation to the school bus then the Transportation Office must be informed. Parents are required to contact the Transportation Office by email before noon. Changes will only be approved if there is enough room on the bus.



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### GEMS HOT WEATHER POLICY

This policy intends to reduce the risk of illness, injury or fatality to staff, students, volunteers and contractors under direct school supervision from heat related disorders.

Depending on the Heat Index reading, the following actions are to be taken:

#### 1. Heat Index between 35°C and 40°C

- a. Outdoor Physical Activity: Students who do not have a hat and water bottle will forfeit participating in physical activity and will be provided with alternative work. Teachers use discretion in modifying activities so that students participate in moderate-lower intensity activities. Regular water breaks will be offered.
- b. Breaks & Lunchtime: Students are advised to stay under shade during breaks and lunchtimes. Discretion advised.

#### 2. Heat Index between 40°C and 45°C

- a. Outdoor Physical Activity: Lower intensity activities are to be included only and for a maximum of ten minutes. 5-minute water breaks should be taken between activities.
- b. Breaks & Lunchtime: Students should remain indoors during break and lunchtimes due to activities being uncontrolled.

#### 3. Heat Index above 45°C

- a. If the temperature and humidity moves into 'serious danger' and 'death danger' according to the heat index, any physical activity, lunch & break times should be moved into an indoor space with air conditioning.

Heat and discomfort index

Additional guidance should be sought with reference to figure 1. Activities should be modified to reflect student and teacher discomfort.

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## HEAT AND DISCOMFORT INDEX

HUMIDEX INDEX OF APPARENT TEMPERATURE ( degree C )

	25%	30%	35%	40%	45%	50%	55%	60%	65%	70%	75%	80%	85%	90%	95%	100%
42°	48	50	52	55	57	59	62	64	66	68	71	73	75	77	80	82
41°	46	48	51	53	55	57	59	61	64	66	68	70	72	74	76	79
40°	45	47	49	51	53	55	57	59	61	63	65	67	69	71	73	75
39°	43	45	47	49	51	53	55	57	59	61	63	65	66	68	70	72
38°	42	44	45	47	49	51	53	55	56	58	60	62	64	66	67	69
37°	40	42	44	45	47	49	51	52	54	56	58	59	61	63	65	66
36°	39	40	42	44	45	47	49	50	52	54	55	57	59	60	62	63
35°	37	39	40	42	44	45	47	48	50	51	53	54	56	58	59	61
34°	36	37	39	40	42	43	45	46	48	49	51	52	54	55	57	58
33°	34	36	37	39	40	41	43	44	46	47	48	50	51	53	54	55
32°	33	34	36	37	38	40	41	42	44	45	46	48	49	50	52	53
31°	32	33	34	35	37	38	39	40	42	43	44	45	47	48	49	50
30°	30	32	33	34	35	36	37	39	40	41	42	43	45	46	47	48
29°	29	30	31	32	33	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	45	46
28°	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43
27°	27	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41
26°	26	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	34	35	36	37	38	39
25°	25	25	26	27	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	34	35	36	37
24°	24	24	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	33	33	34	35
23°	23	23	23	24	25	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	31	32	32	33
22°	22	22	22	22	23	24	25	25	26	27	27	28	29	30	30	31

- Up to 29 C°    No discomfort
- From 30 to 34 C°    Slight discomfort sensation
- From 35 to 39 C°    Strong discomfort. Caution: limit the heaviest physical activities
- From 40 to 45 C°    Strong indisposition sensation. Danger: avoid efforts
- From 46 to 53 C°    Serious danger: stop all physical activities
- Over 54 C°    Death danger: imminent heatstroke

### TEXTBOOKS, MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS AND OTHER RESOURCES

These are provided to all students on a loan basis. Students are held responsible for books checked out by them and must pay for lost or damaged books. Students will also be charged for deliberate damage (including writing and graffiti) to books. Secondary School students supply their own notebooks, paper, pencils, pens and other school supplies. Lost textbooks should be reported to the Secondary School Secretary as soon as possible. The student will be charged the cost of the book plus shipping, processing and handling costs. Once a receipt for payment from the Accountant is handed to the Secondary School Secretary, the book will be replaced.

### LOCKERS

Each student has a locker assigned upon arrival at GAA. Each student must bring their own lock which must be used at all times. Students must ensure the safety of their personal belongings as GAA will take no responsibility for any valuables, money, mobile phones, games, etc. that are lost or damaged at school.

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### LEARNING ACTIVITIES

**\*Please be aware that GAA and ADEK policies may require changes in regards to school related activities because of health and safety regulations in response to COVID 19.**

In a school such as GAA, the faculty and staff attempt to provide students with many opportunities to develop their particular interests and abilities. This association with students who share the same interests allows for camaraderie that fosters an increased sense of purpose and a feeling of belonging outside of the classroom. Athletics, school government, class organizations and special interest clubs provide hands-on opportunities for students to learn and develop their leadership skills. Student pride and school spirit promote good citizenship that carries over to future community involvement and citizen participation. Students are encouraged to participate in a variety of after school activities and advisors attempt to minimize scheduling conflicts.

### CO-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

At GEMS American Academy we offer both non-competitive and competitive sporting opportunities for our students. In addition, we also offer a wide range of academic and creative pursuits to enrich students' schooling experience. These activities are designed to provide an opportunity for students to socialize with each other in a fun atmosphere. Some after school activities may incur an added fee due to various factors and this will be communicated before the activity begins. Students who participate in the non-competitive programs should be picked up promptly at 4:00 p.m. at the end of the activity.

Students not participating in an after-school program are required to go home by their normal mode of transport at 3:05 p.m. Parents who are waiting for activities to finish are encouraged to take siblings outside to the playground. Students participating in after school activities are able to sign up for a late bus service. Please help us keep halls and the Reception area quiet as they are working environments, even during after school hours.

### COMPETITIVE ACTIVITIES

Competitive activities are for students in Grade 2 and above and specific information about when these opportunities are available is communicated by the Athletic and Activities Director. Grades 2 through 6 competitive activities are inclusive in nature and as much as possible will allow all students to become involved. Competitive programs in Grade 7 through 12 are more competitive in nature and involve tryouts, league games and end of season tournaments. Students are expected to commit for the entire season.

Further information about the activities program at GAA is available in the Athletics and Activities Handbook. Please contact the respective receptionist for a copy to be forward to yourself.

The school offers a wide range of activities outside school hours. These range from soccer to newspaper; basketball to origami and many others. Some activities are very popular while others are more selective. The programs offered vary seasonally, as well as from year to year, depending on supply and demand. A few of the more specialized clubs require a fee but most are provided within the school framework at no extra charge.

The success of each activity depends very much on the enthusiasm and commitment of the student and their parents. Students are encouraged to attend at least one activity per term.



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### ACADEMIC ELIGIBILITY POLICIES FOR CO-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Students participating in co-curricular programs are considered to be in positions of leadership; therefore, it is an honor to represent GAA, not a right.

In order to participate in co-curricular activities at GAA, students must be passing all courses in their schedule. Eligibility will be reviewed on a bi-weekly basis:

- Second semester Report Cards will determine eligibility for 1<sup>st</sup> season the following year

If during a grade check an eligible student has become academically ineligible a meeting with the Athletics Director will take place. If at the subsequent grade check the student's grades have not improved, then the student will be suspended from the team until eligibility is restored.

Questions regarding participation may also occur if a student is involved in academic dishonesty, violates the disciplinary code, is excessively absent from school or accumulates excessive tardies. The school is aware that each student has a specific set of needs – some excel academically, some excel athletically or artistically, some excel at both.

The purpose of the School's eligibility policy is not to deny students the opportunity to participate in an area where they excel due to poor academic performance. Rather, the goal is to review each student's case and to make a decision based on input provided by the professional and personal counsel of the student's teacher and parents. The Principal will then make the decision for eligibility. The following factors will be taken into consideration.

- the student has been working to the best of his/her ability;
- all homework has been completed on a timely basis;
- the student demonstrates a desire to improve;
- it is in the best interest of the student;
- illness or uncontrollable absence has negatively affected the student's grade.

### STUDENT COUNCIL

The Middle School Student Council is dedicated to providing leadership opportunities for students, providing services to the school and community and making the lives of students more enjoyable. The organization serves as a link between students and teachers, organizes social activities and assists the greater school community in various events and activities throughout the year. Students from grades 6-8 are eligible to serve on the Middle School Student Council. It is considered a privilege to be selected, and students involved with the student Council are leaders who demonstrate the qualities of exceptional and successful students. Student Council members will meet once a month with the Secondary Principal to provide a student perspective on school climate and culture.

### FIELD TRIPS

Students may be asked to participate in educational field trips during the year. Teachers will always request parental permission for their children to take part in such events well in advance. Students need to complete the School Activities Form before any trips. **\*Please be aware that GAA and ADEK policies may require changes in regards to school related activities (field trips) because of health and safety regulations in response to COVID 19.**

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## Middle School Handbook

# SCHOOL UNIFORMS REGULATION

### DRESS CODE: SECONDARY

The aim of our uniform is for students to present a neat, work-like appearance at all times and to take pride in being members of GEMS American Academy. In accordance with ADEK policy, the school's uniform is compulsory and should reflect the school's commitment to honor UAE traditions, culture and religion.

The GAA uniform supplier is Threads. Due to the current Covid-19 situation, the uniforms for GAA will only be distributed from Threads' Retail outlet in Capital Mall. There will be no uniform sale from the GAA school uniform store. Uniforms can be purchase online at [www.threadsme.com](http://www.threadsme.com)

All uniform items, including bags, lunchboxes, water bottles and other personal belongings should be clearly labeled at all times. This will aid in the swift return of misplaced belongings.

### Compulsory Uniform for All Students

2020-2021 School Year

DAILY SCHOOL UNIFORM					
Grade	Gender	Tops	Bottoms	Tie	Shoes
Grades 6 to 12	Boys	Boys BLUE OXFORD SHIRT SHORT SLEEVE w/ LOGO	NAVY STRIPE TROUSER for Boys (No shorts)	STRIPED TIE	<b>ALL BLACK SHOES – INCLUDING DARK SOLES (see image below)</b> SOCKS- SOLID BLACK, BLUE OR WHITE
	Girls	Girls BLUE OXFORD SHIRT SHORT SLEEVE w/ LOGO	NAVY STRIPE TAILORED TROUSER OR SKIRT for Girls (No shorts)	STRIPED TIE, STRIPED BOY TIE OR SCARF for Girls	

  

	<h2>CORRECT</h2>		<h2>INCORRECT</h2>
			

# Middle School Handbook

## Accessories

ACCESSORIES	
REQUIRED	OPTIONAL
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• P.E. BAG with GAA logo</li> <li>• BASEBALL CAP with GAA logo to be worn outside only</li> <li>• Navy Swim Cap (for students with long hair)</li> <li>• <b>If students wear a sweater over uniform shirt: V – NECK SWEATER WITH LOGO or CARDIGAN SWEATER WITH LOGO</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• GAA SWIMMING COSTUME / TRUNK</li> <li>• GAA BACKPACK</li> <li>• If girls wear LEGGINGS/STOCKINGS/PANTYHOSE/TIGHTS FOR SKIRTS instead of socks, color must be SOLID NAVY BLUE or BLACK.</li> <li>• If a belt is worn, it must be solid black</li> </ul>

## P.E. Uniform Grades 6 To 12

PHYSICAL EDUCATION UNIFORM				
Grade	When to wear	Tops	Bottoms	Shoes
Grades 6 to 12	Students will wear regular school uniforms to school every day. At the beginning of PE class, they will change into this PE uniform. At the end of class, they will change back into regular school uniforms.	SKY BLUE POLO Shirt with GAA logo	NAVY GAA SHORTS	QUALITY ATHLETIC SHOES (NOT UNIFORM)  WHITE SPORT SOCK

GAA may not require uniforms whilst participating in after or out of school activities or on designated special dress-down days. However, students should be properly dressed in a manner that is not offensive to our host country. The following rules will apply:

- No tight clothes.
- No spaghetti strap shirts.
- No exposed mid-riff.
- No hoodies
- No offensive logos or expressions on clothing.
- No hats are to be worn in the building

The Secondary Administration may require a student to return home for the purpose of changing clothing. Our policy is: *Wear clothing that is respectful to yourself and others.*

The only excused uniform violation should be by way of parental notification to the Secondary Office before the start of the school day.

## PERSONAL PRESENTATION

Students are expected to arrive at school and depart from school in full school uniform. During school hours and while in school uniform the following rules apply:



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- No excessive makeup or jewelry is allowed.
  - Students with pierced ears may wear studs or small hoop earrings.
  - Rings should be small without sharp edges or loose parts.
  - Necklaces should not be visible.
  - Except for tasteful natural color highlights, students are not allowed to dye their hair.
  - No visible body piercings or tattoos.
  - Non-regulation outerwear may not be worn in school; it should be kept in lockers.
- 

## CURRICULUM

### OVERVIEW

In GAA, courses in grades 6-8 are in three different categories:

1. GAA Core Academic Courses
2. ADEK Required Courses
3. GAA Elective Courses

Each student's program is made up of a combination of these different categories of courses.

Abu Dhabi Department of Education and Knowledge (ADEK) requirements vary depending upon a child's nationality and religion. Our school uses information provided by parents during the school registration process. Requirements for Arabic Language, Islamic Studies and UAE Social Studies courses vary according to each student's registered nationality and religion.

In order to comply with ADEK regulations, every student has specific course requirements according to one of the following four categories:

- Group 1 – Arab Muslim
- Group 2 – Arab Non-Muslim
- Group 3 – Non-Arab Muslim
- Group 4 – Non-Arab Non-Muslim

### HOMEWORK

Students will receive regular but manageable amounts of homework which will be given in class. Each student is encouraged to check the homework section of each teacher's class website (example- Phoenix Classroom) for their daily assignments.

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## ASSESSMENT

### ASSESSMENT PHILOSOPHY

GAA assessment beliefs and practices focus on mastery of the standards and proficiency of the learning objectives. Assessment results are reported as proficiency levels for each standard

## Middle School Handbook

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targeted. These proficiency levels of Emerging, Developing, Proficient, and Mastery, provide feedback on the learning progressions.

Our assessment practices include:

- Regular assessments
- Assessments aligned to and directly measuring standards
- Work completion, organization, etc. are reported separately as AtLs (Approaches to Learning)
- Assessment success reported on an online gradebook using proficiency levels for each standard targeted; not an overall score
- Use of rubrics to define mastery criteria

### REASSESSMENT POLICY

- Reassessment opportunities will take place outside of class time.
- Students will complete the GAA Reassessment Application which includes:
  - The date and time of the reassessment
  - An action plan that outlines the learning that will take place between the first assessment and the reassessment
  - A reflection component articulating their learning progression of the standard
- Missing or late assessments/assignments will be reported in the online gradebook and reflected in the ATLs.
- Gradebooks will communicate reassessments. Achievements on reassessments will replace original proficiency level.
- Assessment events/deadlines are an opportunity to show learning progress and achievement as well as to receive timely feedback to support the learning journey. As such, without appropriate approval, there will be non-academic consequences in accordance with the behavior policy.
- Assessment events, such as an exhibition, concert or end-of-course exam, may not be eligible for reassessment. This would be communicated prior to the event.
- The GAA Reassessment Policy is provided to each student at the beginning of the year or upon entry into GAA.

### REPORT CARDS

The purpose of the report card is to clearly communicate with students, parents, and teachers, the students' level of **proficiency and mastery** towards GAA's adopted standards.

Grades reflect targeted successes and areas for additional attention. It is intended to shape student reflection in order to **drive improvement**.

At the end of each semester a full report card will be sent home electronically. Progress Reports will be sent home after the first and third quarters. We encourage parents to contact teachers if they have questions or concerns about student progress.

Students with failing grades in multiple core subjects after the first semester will be candidates for retention based on their second semester achievement.

### ADEK COMPULSORY COURSES

Students who fail to meet the standards in the ADEK Compulsory courses (Arabic, Islamic Studies, UAESS and Moral Education) will be required to reassess and/or repeat the course/year.



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### STANDARDIZED TESTS

Three times each year, in the Fall, Winter and Spring, students in Grades 6 to 8 take the MAP (Measure of Academic Progress) test. This is an adaptive standardized comprehensive test that measures a student's abilities and achievements in Language Arts, Mathematics and Science. This test is given to students in a growing number of international schools around the world. Scores are reported to the parents and will eventually become part of the student's school records.

Students in Grades 6 and 8 will also write the CAT-4 diagnostic test during the year. The CAT-4 also measures abilities and achievements, however, it also measures students' learning competencies and styles which allows teachers to modify and adapt their instruction to meet the needs of each student.

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### ATTENDANCE

The school day for all grades commences at 7:45 a.m. Dismissal time is 3:00 p.m. The hours for after school activities vary. Most activities start at 3:00 p.m. and finish at 4:00 p.m. Some activities conducted off-campus may finish later than this. The school cannot supervise students before 7:30 a.m. or after 3:00 p.m. We request that students are under parental supervision while on school premises before and after these times.

### ATTENDANCE PROCEDURE

It is expected students will attend class every school day. All teachers will report attendance each period as well as keep an accurate record for each class. If a student arrives late to school, they are required to go directly to the Secondary Office immediately after arriving on campus in order to obtain a Student Late Pass. School clerical staff will record every time a student is late to school.

### ADEK REQUIREMENTS

For the purposes of this policy, absence refers to the days when students fail to attend School. A student who does not miss a single class throughout the year is said to have a 0% absence record or a 100% attendance record. Absence rates above 10% should be regarded as a cause for concern.

- **Absences from school:**

All absences from class, with the exception of field trips or school sponsored activities/sports, are considered as absences for the minimum attendance policy. In an effort to help our students maintain good attendance, the Secondary office staff will contact parents at four (4) and seven (7) absences, and Secondary Administration will contact parents after ten (10) absences to discuss the importance of attending school regularly. Every effort must be made by the student and the parents/guardian to ensure that students are in all their classes every day. Extraordinary situations will be reviewed and considered by the administration. After twenty (20) total absences a student may be considered a candidate for retention.

Excused absences include only school sponsored field trips. If a student is sick, he/she must contact their teacher to see what was assigned. It is the student's responsibility to complete all work he/she has missed.



## Middle School Handbook

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- **Unexplained Absences (Truancy)**

If a student skips a class, his/her parents will be informed, and the student will meet with the Dean of Students or Vice-Principal as necessary, who will take appropriate action.

### LATE ARRIVAL - TARDY/EARLY PICK-UP

Students are expected to be in class on time. Students who arrive tardy to school, should report to the Secondary office for a late pass. During the day, teachers will record tardies in PowerSchool.

Each month students are given an allowance of three (3) tardies. After these three are exhausted, students will be given an after-school detention for the 4<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> tardy in a month. After a second detention in any given month, escalating consequences may be issued for every second tardy thereafter.

Consequences for tardiness will escalate with repeated infractions. Having more than ten (10) tardies in a month is considered insubordination. It shows disrespect for the school's code of conduct and will be treated as insubordination, not a lateness issue.

Tardiness for the first period in the morning may be excused the day of the infraction by a phone call or email from the parent.

Parents must notify the Secondary Secretary by phone or email if their child is going to be absent or needs to leave school early.

**Attendance and student participation in learning activities is important; therefore, parents are urged to schedule medical, dental and other appointments after school hours or during vacations. Good attendance is essential if the student is to be successful and faculty can best help students learn when students meet this expectation.**

### SCHOOL DISMISSAL

Students are expected to leave campus within 45 minutes of dismissal time unless they have a school sponsored activity. Once students leave campus they may not return unless they have a later activity or are accompanied by a parent/guardian.

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## **CODE OF CONDUCT - SCHOOL BEHAVIOR**

Our aim is to create a community of learning in which every student has a right to receive an education in a safe and secure environment. GAA is committed to developing social responsibility and reinforcing ethical and moral values among students so that they demonstrate respect for each other and value individual differences.

Our goal is to teach appropriate positive behavior among all students in order to create a positive culture of kindness that promotes pro-social norms. Acknowledging students who exhibit positive behaviors reinforces this culture of kindness and leads to improved academic and behavioral outcomes for all students.

GAA has identified the following school expectations to teach and promote our high standards of responsible behavior:

## Middle School Handbook

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- ▶ Be Safe
- ▶ Be Respectful
- ▶ Be a Learner
- ▶ Be Kind

### Be Safe

Students are taught that physical and emotional safety are prioritized. Students can only learn and play once their safety is secure.

### Be Respectful

Being respectful involves treating others the way you want to be treated, having a positive regard for peers and adults and valuing differences in culture.

### Be a Learner

The principle “Be a Learner” essentially relates to valuing the learning process and learning community.

### Be Kind

Fostering a Culture of Kindness is a top priority at GAA. Students are taught values of kindness and are expected to treat others with kindness at all times.

We believe that a positive academic and social climate is necessary for student learning. We also believe that responsibility for establishing this climate is shared by each student, faculty member and parent. We value having students follow reasonable rules and it is important for students to understand their purpose. Part of the learning process involves making decisions and sometimes making mistakes. However, we expect that students will learn from their mistakes and demonstrate growth.

At GAA a proactive and collaborative approach is used to solve discipline issues. Students, parents, teachers and administrators are committed to working together to maintain high standards of behavior. Students are expected to abide by school rules and procedures whenever they are at school, including after-school and evening activities, and on weekends.

## STUDENT RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The following table is a statement of responsibilities and rights. It is through mutual acceptance of responsibilities that rights exist. A right exists only to the extent that there is a responsibility on the part of others to respect that right.



## Middle School Handbook

STUDENT RIGHTS	STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES
EVERY STUDENT HAS A RIGHT to relevant and high- quality education.	EVERY STUDENT HAS A RESPONSIBILITY to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ take materials to class</li> <li>✓ complete and turn in assignments on time</li> <li>✓ give every task their best effort</li> </ul>
EVERY STUDENT HAS A RIGHT to be physically and emotionally safe and secure in the school community.	EVERY STUDENT HAS A RESPONSIBILITY to respect the security of others and deal with conflict in an appropriate manner.
EVERY STUDENT HAS A RIGHT to expect reasonable, respectful and socially responsible behavior from others.	EVERY STUDENT HAS A RESPONSIBILITY to treat themselves and others with respect by speaking and acting in a socially responsible manner.
EVERY STUDENT HAS A RIGHT to a positive learning environment.	EVERY STUDENT HAS A RESPONSIBILITY to follow class rules by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ being seated by the time class starts.</li> <li>✓ listening attentively.</li> <li>✓ following directions.</li> <li>✓ giving others an opportunity to learn.</li> <li>✓ remaining in class until dismissed by the teacher.</li> <li>✓ moving through the buildings in an orderly manner.</li> </ul>
EVERY STUDENT HAS A RIGHT to be part of a school of which they can be proud.	EVERY STUDENT HAS A RESPONSIBILITY to take pride in their school by helping maintain the campus, the buildings and all materials and equipment.
EVERY STUDENT HAS A RIGHT to his/her good name.	EVERY STUDENT HAS A RESPONSIBILITY to respect the reputation of others.

### STUDENT BEHAVIORAL EXPECTATIONS

GAA is a school that honors and promotes respect for others, inclusiveness, individual differences, and appropriate behavior. We believe that ethics and values are essential in a principled community, and expect behavior that upholds the dignity and self-worth of all community members.

The primary responsibility for a student’s behavior rests with the individual student. Students not adhering to GAA rules / policies will be subject to disciplinary action. Any Middle School students who draw attention to themselves for behavior that does not cast a positive light on themselves, their peers, or GAA will also be subject to disciplinary action.

#### Positive Behavioral Interventions and Support (PBIS)

The GAA Middle School follows the PBIS framework for discipline and behavioral support. In this framework, desired behaviors are directly taught to the students and practiced until they become routine. Positive behaviors are recognized and acknowledged regularly while negative behaviors are addressed through consistent and predictable consequences applied to all students equally.

At the beginning of each school year, Middle School students, teachers, and administrators will review a comprehensive discipline plan based on the expectations *Be Safe, Be Respectful, Be a Learner, Be Kind*. This plan will indicate what specific behaviors are acceptable in all areas of the school.



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### Honesty / Ethics

We strive to have all of our students live up to the high standards at GAA and it is imperative that students always tell the truth when speaking to any adult at school about a behavior issue. Consequences for not being immediately honest with an adult regarding a behavior issue will result in consequences being escalated and restorative practice will be implemented.

### Compliance with Rules

Students shall comply with all rules and regulations adopted by GEMS American Academy which will be enforced by school administration and staff. The following rules identify, but do not limit, the types of activities covered by the school rules and regulations.

- On the school grounds or in the vicinity of the school during and immediately before or immediately after school hours.
- On the school grounds or in the vicinity of the school at any other time when the school is being used by school groups.
- Off the school grounds at a school activity, function, event or any school-sponsored trip.
- Off the school grounds in any case involving local law, provincial, or national authorities.

## SCHOOL RULES

### General Behavior

It is the responsibility of each student to evaluate the appropriateness of, and to be accountable for, all of his/her actions. Any indecent, discourteous or disruptive act is inappropriate and unacceptable. This includes any action inside or outside the classroom which interferes with the educational process or the well-being of others. Student misconduct is categorized into four levels, with each level resulting in a disciplinary approach for modifying and correcting student behavior appropriate for the misconduct. The following list of unacceptable actions and definitions is provided as a guide but is not intended to be a complete list.

Please see Behavior Levels and corresponding consequences on the next page.



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## Behavior Levels And Consequences

**Level 1** - Level one behaviors are typically dealt with by classroom/homeroom teachers. Level one focuses on primary behaviors and immediate solutions.

*These examples of behaviors merely serve as an illustrative guide and are not limited to the list below:*

Examples of Level 1 Behaviors	Examples of Level 1 Consequences
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Disrupting hallway, class and/or school functions</li> <li>● Poor Sportsmanship</li> <li>● First time Dress Code violation</li> <li>● Disrespect</li> <li>● Inappropriate use of language</li> <li>● Homework infractions</li> <li>● Littering</li> <li>● Chewing gum</li> <li>● Pushing or tripping</li> <li>● Inappropriate display of affection</li> <li>● Low level teasing</li> <li>● Reoccurring unexcused tardies</li> <li>● Off task behaviors including:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Chat/text messaging and using social networking sites (ex. Snap chat during class time)</li> <li>○ Viewing websites that are not part of the assigned class work.</li> <li>○ Gaming during class</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Inappropriate use of electronic devices (laptop, tablet, etc.)</li> <li>● Misuse of school facilities – including pool, gym, elevator, etc.</li> <li>● Selling goods on campus</li> <li>● Neglecting requested parent signatures</li> <li>● Interfering with others learning</li> <li>● Misbehavior as determined by teachers and/or school administration</li> <li>● Not adhering to social distancing expectations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Student will receive a warning</li> <li>● The student will be reminded of the behavior agreement and encouraged to modify his/ her behavior accordingly.</li> <li>● Continued disruptive behavior in class, playground or extracurricular activities will result in parent conferences, detention, and other forms of restorative actions.</li> <li>● Key restorative questions will be asked.</li> </ul>



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**Level 2** - These behaviors are moderately serious behavior concerns or repeated Level 1 misbehaviors. Logical consequences for Level 2 breach of conduct will be decided by the Head of Grade and/or Dean of Students in consultation with the classroom teacher. A record of the incident will be recorded. Parents will be notified by the Head of Grade or Dean of Students as required.

*These examples of behaviors merely serve as an illustrative guide and are not limited to the list below*

Examples of Level 2 Behaviors	Examples of Level 2 Consequences
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Repeating Level 1 Behaviors</li> <li>● Academic dishonesty</li> <li>● Continued Dress Code violations</li> <li>● Aggressive or constant teasing</li> <li>● Repeated pushing/tripping</li> <li>● Discrimination/Mocking others</li> <li>● Disruptive actions on the school bus</li> <li>● Disrespect of property</li> <li>● Offensive emails</li> <li>● Dishonesty</li> <li>● Indirect bullying</li> <li>● Downloading programs and games that interfere with student learning or Acceptable Use Policy (This includes sharing games via USB sticks)</li> <li>● Sending unwanted and/or offensive (e)mail or messages (e.g. via chat)</li> <li>● Plagiarism</li> <li>● Viewing offensive material</li> <li>● Violation of technology Acceptable Use Policy (Eg. Unauthorized online gaming, web browsing, etc)</li> <li>● Possession of items that are deemed unacceptable in school</li> <li>● Inappropriate use of phone (using during school hours)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Restriction of privileges and activities</li> <li>● Making up for missed work at lunch times, after school or at home</li> <li>● Mediation sessions</li> <li>● Individual counselling</li> <li>● Parent contact/conference and involvement</li> <li>● Individual behavior chart/plan</li> <li>● Home-school reporting system (via email, behavior chart or Student Planner)</li> <li>● Detention</li> <li>● Confiscation of unacceptable items</li> </ul>

\*Mobile phones, smart watches and earbuds distract from the learning environment and are not to be used during class time. Students are required to silence all phones and Smart Watches and place them in the collection bin at the beginning of each lesson. This is without exception. GAA assumes no responsibility for replacing these items if brought to school. Phones/smart watches on display, in use and/or that ring or buzz during class, may be confiscated and turned into the Secondary Office. Phones/smart watches turned in to the office will be subject to the following:

- 1st Offense: Kept for one week.
- 2nd Offense: Kept for two weeks.
- 3rd Offense: Kept for the rest of the Semester.

Phones/Smartwatches will be returned to students at the end of each day during the confiscation period. Students must hand the phone/watch back into the office before 7:45 the following school day for the duration of the confiscation period.



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**Level 3** - Level 3 behaviors are serious breaches of the GAA behavior expectations and/or repeated behaviors of Level 2. A record of the incident may be recorded on the student's file. The Dean of Students, Vice Principal or Principal in consultation with the classroom or duty teacher would initiate a follow up with the student involved and decide on appropriate consequences. Parents will be notified by a member of the Secondary Leadership Team (Dean, Vice Principal or Principal).

*These examples of behaviors merely serve as an illustrative guide and are not limited to the list below:*

Examples of Level 3 Behaviors	Examples of Level 3 Consequences
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Repeated Level 2 behaviors</li> <li>● Deliberately defacing property</li> <li>● Compromising safety for self and/or others</li> <li>● Blatant or repetitive defiance of a staff member</li> <li>● Theft of property*</li> <li>● Vandalism*</li> <li>● Fighting</li> <li>● Identity Theft/Impersonation of staff and/or student online or through Social Media</li> <li>● Violation of technology Acceptable Use Policy E.g. Sharing or taking unauthorized photos or recording video of others.</li> <li>● Hacking</li> <li>● Encouraging/Provoking Unlawful Behavior</li> <li>● Bullying- Physical/Verbal</li> <li>● Skipping Class/Unexplained Absence</li> <li>● Purposeful cyber bullying with malicious intent</li> <li>● Racist comments or actions towards a community member</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Individual counselling, with on-going instruction in personal and social development.</li> <li>● Mediation sessions</li> <li>● 3-way conference between administrator, student and parent</li> <li>● Individual behavior plan/chart in consultation with Counselor, Home-school reporting system (via email, behavior plan or student planner)</li> <li>● Behavior Contract</li> <li>● School-based community service</li> <li>● Replacement/ repair of damaged property</li> <li>● Restriction of privileges and activities</li> <li>● Internal or external suspension</li> <li>● All actions taken with regards to the Behavioral Protocols and expectations are decided by the Middle School Leadership Team.</li> </ul>

\*Students will be held responsible for behavior (regardless of their intent) which results in the loss of school property or the personal property of another student. Students will face disciplinary consequences and will provide financial restitution for property that is stolen.

\*School property is to be respected, used and enjoyed by all members of our community. Students will be held responsible for behavior (regardless of their intent) which results in the damage of school property or the personal property of another student. Please treat property with

## Middle School Handbook

**Level 4** - Level 4 behaviors are the most serious breaches of the GAA behavior expectations and/or repeated behaviors Level 3. A record of the incident will be recorded on the student's file. The Dean of Students, Vice Principal or Principal in consultation with the classroom or duty teacher would initiate a follow up with the student involved and decide on appropriate consequences. Parents will be notified by a member of the Secondary Leadership Team (Dean, Vice Principal or Principal).

*These examples of behaviors merely serve as an illustrative guide and are not limited to the list below:*

Examples of Level 4 Behaviors	Examples of Level 4 Consequences
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Repeated Level 3 behaviors</li> <li>● Smoking (including tobacco products and electronic cigarettes) *</li> <li>● Possession Drugs/ Alcohol on campus*</li> <li>● Physical intimidation or verbal abuse towards a staff member</li> <li>● Possession of weapons</li> <li>● Altering or tampering with school records</li> <li>● Sexual harassment/assault*</li> <li>● Gross or flagrant violation of school guidelines that endangers the reputation of the school or other students</li> <li>● Gross violation of technology Acceptable Use Policy.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Individual counselling, with on-going instruction in personal and social development.</li> <li>● Mediation sessions</li> <li>● 3-way conference between administrator, student and parent</li> <li>● Individual behavior plan/chart</li> <li>● in consultation with Counselor Home-school reporting system (via email, behavior plan or Student Planner)</li> <li>● Behavior Contract</li> <li>● School-based community service</li> <li>● Replacement/ repair of damaged property</li> <li>● Restriction of privileges and activities</li> <li>● Internal or external suspension</li> <li>● Referral to Principal for possible dismissal or nonrenewal</li> <li>● All actions taken with regards to the Behavioral Management Procedures are decided by the Middle School Leadership Team.</li> </ul>

\*Students will neither be allowed to smoke nor be in possession of tobacco or e-cigarette (vaping) products under any circumstances on the GAA campus, including all of the parking lots. This also applies to all school related functions whether on or off campus. Anyone caught smoking, smelling of smoke or where the preponderance of evidence indicates the student was smoking or with a smoker but did not report the violation will automatically be given a suspension.

\*Unlawful possession, use, or sale of any controlled substance or alcoholic beverage (including being under the influence of) is a serious matter, and a violation of the laws of our host country, the United Arab Emirates. Any infraction, including possession of drug paraphernalia while under the supervision of the school subjects a student to expulsion.

\*Sexual harassment is defined as “unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal, visual, or physical conduct of a sexual nature, made by someone from or in the educational setting.” This can also include, but is not limited to, sharing inappropriate pictures via email and on the Internet and inappropriate sexual advances conveyed in online forums such as social network, chats and email. School policy makes it clear that a student may be suspended from school or recommended for expulsion if the Head of School determines that the student has committed sexual harassment.



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### DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS

When a student's behavior violates school rules, he/she will be subject to a range of disciplinary consequences at the discretion of teachers and school administration. Repeated violation of school rules and procedures may make a student subject to expulsion.

#### Initial interventions may include:

- Verbal warning for misbehavior and reminder of proper conduct
- Written documentation of the violation in the student report
- Separation from the peer group
- Referral to school counsellor for guidance
- Parent contact
- Written warning requiring parent signature
- Intervention meeting, to discuss plans to address student's chronic behavior issues
- Referral to Student Support Team and/or other learning specialists for behavioral and learning support

More serious, repeated or chronic violations of school expectations may result in the following school-based consequences.

### School Based Consequences

Failure to abide by the rules and regulations in this handbook may result in restitution, detentions, behavior plans, in-school suspension, out of school suspension, behavior probation or expulsion.

- **Restitution** is intended to help students correct their wrong-doings by fixing the problem or by providing service to the school that restores the damage done to individuals, the facility, or the school culture.
- **Detentions** can be issued in two ways:
  - **Lunch hour detentions** are served – usually the day of the infraction – at lunch break in a supervised room.
  - **After school detentions** are held from 3 - 4pm twice a week. Parents will be notified by email at least one day in advance so that transportation may be arranged.
- **Behavior Plans** are created for students who show a pattern of repeating behavior(s). Students may be required to have their behavior signed off by classroom teachers and reported to administration on a daily basis. Failure to meet the expectations of the day may result in subsequent discipline.
- **Suspensions** are the temporary removal of a student from school for various reasons which include but are not limited to disrespect for an adult, lack of cooperation, or disrupting the teaching and learning process. Students who are suspended lose their social privileges and extra-curricular eligibility for the duration of the suspension. Suspended students are not allowed to participate in school activities.
  - **In-School Suspensions** are served in the office or a suitable location designated by administration during the school days. Students will work independently on their assigned work and will have alternate break times.
  - **Out of School Suspensions** are served at home. The student is responsible during the period of suspension for obtaining and completing the assignments given during the period of absence from classes. Students suspended out of school are not allowed on the premises at any time during their suspension.



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- **Behavioral Probation** is determined by the administration for chronic or serious violations of school conduct. Behavioral probation includes a designated period of time, usually with disciplinary sanctions, given to the student to prove him/herself as a responsible member of the student body. Students on behavioral probation are restricted from participation in school activities unless Principal approval has been given.
- **Expulsion** is the permanent removal of the student from the student body and may occur for serious and/or repeated offences. Only the Head of School, following the policy stated in the school board policy handbook and after recommendation of the Principal, has the authority to make the decision to expel a student. Students who are expelled for disciplinary reasons are not allowed to return to campus to attend any activities, nor may they re-enroll at a later date.

***Any behavior or activity out of school that is illegal or brings disrepute to GAA may result in suspension or expulsion from school.***

### BULLYING PREVENTION

According to [www.stopbullying.gov](http://www.stopbullying.gov), an official website of the United States Government, bullying is defined as unwanted, aggressive behavior that involves a real or perceived power imbalance. The behavior is repeated, or has the potential to be repeated, over time.

In order to be considered bullying, the behavior is often aggressive and includes a series of malicious behavior with the intent to hurt or harm others.

Bullying is associated with behaviors causing an imbalance of power whereby kids who bully use their power—such as physical strength, access to embarrassing information, or popularity—to control or harm others. Power imbalances can change over time and in different situations, even if they involve the same or different people. Some bullies target individuals while others target a variety of people.

In order to be considered bullying, unwanted or unwelcome behavior typically occurs more than once. A single, unkind act does not usually constitute bullying, however incidents of harm and wrongdoing will still be addressed according to the school’s behavior protocols.

GAA does not tolerate any form of bullying (verbal, physical, social or cyber). Offences will be addressed by the classroom teacher, the Middle School Dean of Students, the Middle School Counsellors, and, where appropriate, the Middle School administrators for follow up and consequences. Offences may result in student suspension and/or expulsion.

Bullying that occurs outside of school is the responsibility of parents/guardians. Parents and guardians are reminded that students must be of legal age to use social media. Please refer to the guidelines associated with specific social media for age restrictions.

Bullying can be:

<i>Physical</i>	pushing, kicking, hitting, pinching
<i>Verbal</i>	name calling, sarcasm, spreading rumors, persistent teasing
<i>Emotional</i>	excluding others, tormenting, ridiculing, humiliating
<i>Racist</i>	racial taunts or gestures
<i>Sexual</i>	unwanted physical contact or abusive comments





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### For Students

*What do you do if you are bullied or you notice others bullying?*

Bullying is wrong and you should report it. You have the right to be safe from attacks and harassment and nobody should expect you to be silent when you or others are being tormented or hurt. Tell your parents about what is happening. Also tell the principal, a teacher, your counselor, the school nurse or any other trusted adult. Explain who is involved and what is happening. You may want to take some friends with you for support, especially if they have witnessed the incidents.

### For Parents

*If your child is a victim of bullying:*

Encourage your child to talk to you about their school and social life. Watch your child for signs of distress. Listen to your child and take seriously any reports of bullying. Do not keep the bullying a secret. Contact the principal or the counselor immediately. Work with the school to develop strategies to support your child.

*If your child is responsible for bullying:*

Never ignore it.

Make it clear that such behavior is unacceptable.

Work with the school to develop strategies to change behavior.

## ACADEMIC HONESTY POLICY

GAA expects and requires that students will uphold the highest standards of ethics and academic excellence. The Academic Honesty Policy represents our effort to guarantee that students are committed to building and maintaining a learning community of the highest integrity by carrying out academic tasks with honesty in all situations.

Definition: "Academic dishonesty" includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- Plagiarism (i.e., using someone else's ideas or words without giving credit to that person, including direct quotes, paraphrasing, or summarizing)
- Copying by any means other students' homework (students who are observed in common areas looking at their own and another student's lab notebook, worksheet, or any other homework assignment would be assumed to be in violation of this rule regardless of the exact wording of their work. Equally, students submitting assignments with identical phrases in free-response sections would be assumed to have violated the policy)
- Allowing one's homework to be copied. In this regard, all homework is considered individual work unless otherwise stated by the teacher. As such, no student should physically give his/her homework to another student. If copying occurs, it will be presumed that the student who gave his/her homework to the copying student allowed the homework to be copied.
- Using written formulas, hidden reference sheets, notes, codes, or key words on one's person or objects for use on any test, quiz, presentation, or assignment without prior permission from the teacher; also, carrying such materials with the intention of using them on a test or exam



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- Looking at another student's test or quiz during its administration or using programmed material in watches, calculators, phones, MP3 players, or computer programs without permission from the teacher
- Giving answers or questions to another student during or after a test or quiz; receiving answers or questions from a student who is or has already taken a test or quiz (students engaged in any form of unauthorized communication while in the possession of a test or quiz may be presumed to be in violation of this rule)
- Using the Internet, laptop computers, text messaging, phone cameras, MP3 players, or other modern technology to plagiarize, copy, or share work with another student (including but not limited to copying and pasting in whole or in part material from the Internet, purchasing material from the Internet to be submitted as one's own work, using a translation program for a world language class, presenting lab data found on the Internet as one's original work, using e-mail to share individual homework assignments)
- Taking credit for work done by someone else (e.g., family members or tutors) including submitting rough drafts or similar created by another person
- Presenting invented data (e.g., lab results for lab activities that have not actually been conducted), information, or cited sources (in a bibliography) as authentic
- Any deceitful means used on a test, quiz, or assignment, including but not limited to stealing electronic or paper copies of tests from teachers' classrooms or computers; receiving copies of tests, quizzes, or assignments from students who took the class in previous years; possessing unauthorized teachers' materials; taking credit for work not completed (as in group assignments); submitting the same assignment for credit in multiple classes without teachers' permission
- Any other behavior that could be reasonably construed as academic dishonesty, including class-specific expectations explained in teachers' syllabi.

**Note:** On cooperative work: all written work is individual work unless otherwise stated by the classroom teacher. Although it is acceptable to talk with classmates, friends, and family members about what you are studying and thinking, do not compose written work collaboratively, and make sure that written work you submit for credit is presented entirely in your own words when quotation marks are not used.

### Consequences for Acts of Academic Dishonesty

Note: A preponderance of evidence is used to make determinations of academic dishonesty. All academic honesty violations will be reported to the Principal and/or Vice Principal and counseling office. A record of the violation will be put in the student's permanent file. In cases of significant or repeated offenses, GAA will report acts of Academic Dishonesty to college admission officers.

#### First offense at GAA:

1. Student may receive a mark of "Insufficient Evidence" for the assignment, test, quiz, project, or exam or be asked to complete an alternate assignment.
2. Student may be required to meet with the Dean of Students, Vice Principal or Principal to discuss the importance of academic integrity.
3. Student's parents will be informed of the violation.
4. Student may receive a detention.

#### Second offense at GAA:

1. Student will receive a mark of "Insufficient Evidence" for the assignment, test, quiz, project, or exam.



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2. Student will be required to meet with the Principal and/or Vice Principal to discuss the importance of academic integrity.
3. Student's parents will be informed of the violation.
4. Student may be given a suspension.

### Third offense at GAA:

1. Student will receive a mark of "Insufficient Evidence" for the assignment, test, quiz, project, or exam.
2. Student's parents will be informed of the violation.
3. Student will be required to meet with the Principal and their parents to discuss the importance of academic integrity.
4. Student will be suspended from all sports and extra-curricular activities for the duration of the season or quarter.
5. Student will receive a multiple day out-of-school suspension from school.

### Additional offenses at GAA:

#### Additional offenses may result in expulsion from the GEMS American Academy.

**Note:** If a student facing expulsion for an academic honesty violation has had no acts of academic dishonesty for at least one full calendar year, the school may choose, at the Principal's discretion, to allow the student to present information to support their ability to continue attending school and/or school related events.

## TECHNOLOGY – ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY (AUP)

Access to the school network and the internet is a privilege, not a right. Access is available only for educational and administrative purposes. GAA's technology resources are to be used in accordance with this Acceptable Use Policy and all users will be required to comply with its regulations. Non-compliance may result in loss of privilege and disciplinary action. The following guidelines are intended to help users understand appropriate use. The school may restrict, suspend or terminate any user's access to the school's computer system upon violation of the AUP.

This Policy applies to all technology at GAA, and in all learning spaces including facilities in the Theater and the Gym, not just computers and equipment in its Labs.

## BYOD (BRING YOUR OWN DEVICE)

As a school of excellence, we aim to enable teaching and learning to extend beyond the traditional confines of school-based resources and benefit from the innovative integration of learning technology that is possible with the use of personal devices.

Students in Grades 6-12 are expected to bring their own laptop to school as part of the GEMS initiative to support student learning through technology. This program, often referred to as a "bring-your-own" model, enables students to develop a range of skills that increases their ability to use the same piece of technology in different contexts. The benefit of an ICT rich learning environment is the opportunity for students to conduct authentic research, produce high quality publications and participate in collaborative online communication.

The laptop must suit the needs of our curriculum and therefore, as a guide, we have created a set of suggested minimum specifications.



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These suggested minimum specifications **only apply to secondary:**

Platform	PC or Mac
Operating System	Windows 10 or higher / OS X 10.14 (Mojave) or higher
Screen Size	11 inches or more
Processor	Intel i3 (2100T/2120T) or higher / AMD A8 (5500/6500) or higher
RAM	4GB or higher
Hard Drive	120GB or higher
Wireless	802.11g or higher
Ports	2 USB ports/Audio in/out /In-built microphone/VGA or HDMI
Battery Life	4+ hours (4+ cell or higher)
Warranty (highly recommended)	3-year warranty with damage protection

**Important Note: We do not recommend using Chromebook and Microsoft Surface, as students may face issues with Wi-Fi connection and NWEA tests.**

In everyday language, the laptop must be in good condition and less than three years old. iPads and Android based devices are very popular, but at this time do not meet the minimum requirements for a student owned device at GEMS.

Students must register their device with the IT Department to be given permanent access to the GEMS network. They will be required to log in to the network using individual login details. It is expected that each student will be able to connect up to two devices - their laptop and a tablet device. Phones will not be connected to our network.

It is an expectation that students attend school prepared with a fully-charged compliant device. If for any reason this is not possible then parental notification to the Secondary Office before the start of the school day is required. The consequences for not attending school with a fully-charged compliant device range from after school detention to out-of-school suspension.

### ETHICAL CONDUCT

It is the responsibility of all users:

- to recognize and honor the intellectual property of others.
- to comply with legal restrictions regarding plagiarism and the use and citation of information resources.
- to restrict the use of GAA's technology resources to the mission of the school; the use of computer systems for personal use unrelated to the mission of the school or for private gain is prohibited.
- to help maintain the integrity of the school network and equipment; deliberate tampering, or experimentation is not allowed.

It is a violation to modify and/or copy any protected system files, system folders, or control panel files without prior approval of the Network Administration or IT Coordinator.



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### EDUCATIONAL USE

Users are responsible for the ethical and appropriate use of their network accounts. Any use of technology not directly related to education will be considered inappropriate.

### RESPECT FOR OTHERS

**Users should respect the rights of others using the technology resources.**

- Students are not permitted to tamper, use, or handle any technology (laptops, phones, tablets, headphones etc) which are the property of another student/
- Students are not permitted to take photos or videos of any individual (to include teachers, other students, staff and parents) at any time, as per UAE Law.
- Avoid deliberately attempting to disrupt network performance or interfering with the work of another user.

### RESPECT FOR SECURITY

Accounts on the systems at GAA are considered secure, although absolute security of any data cannot be guaranteed. Teachers can be provided access to student files for instructional or evaluative purposes.

- Use only your account/password. It is a violation to give your password to any other user.
- Any attempts to transmit software designed to compromise the operation or security of the network is prohibited.

### RESPECT FOR PROPERTY

#### Software Copyright

- Copyrighted software shall not be downloaded from the Internet or further transmitted in any form without compliance with all terms of a preauthorized licensing agreement. Infringement or violation of U.S. or international copyright laws or restrictions will not be tolerated.
- Any attempts to circumvent the licensing control or the copying of software from the network without the IT Coordinator's permission is prohibited.

#### Hardware

- Any attempts to move, repair, reconfigure, modify, or attach external devices to existing information and network systems without the Network Administration and/or IT Coordinator's permission is prohibited.
- Borrowing of school hardware is not permitted unless email authorization has been given from the IT Department.

#### Audio Visual Hardware

If a person checks out or borrows a piece of audio visual equipment, they are responsible for replacing it or repairing it if it is lost or damaged. All equipment must be properly signed out and documented.

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### INTERNET/WORLD WIDE WEB USAGE

Internet access is available to all students and teachers at GEMS American Academy. We believe these communication links offer vast, diverse and unique resources to both students and staff and their availability outweighs any possible access to information that is not consistent with the educational goals of GAA. Expected standards of conduct include:

- The acknowledgement that access to the Internet is a privilege and not a right.
- Respect for the use of copy-written materials.
- Respect for the rights and privacy of others.
- E-mail is allowed during school hours only in connection with a classroom assignment.
- Downloading of unauthorized programs is not allowed.
- Compromising the security of the school in any manner is unacceptable.
- Respect for the values and ethics of the local host culture.

#### Responsibilities:

- All users are prohibited from accessing portions of the Internet that do not promote the instructional mission of GAA.
- All school web pages are subject to initial approval of the Administration. All school web pages should reflect the mission of the school and adhere to the GAA Web Page Guidelines.

A violation of the above standards and any others included in the acceptable use policy will result in a denial of access and possible further disciplinary action ranging from after school detention to out of school suspension.

GAA reserves the right to contact Law Enforcement Authorities where applicable and hold students responsible for the replacement cost of damaged goods.

### CYBER-BULLYING

This involves the use of information and communication technologies to support deliberate, repeated and hostile behavior, by an individual or group, that is intended to harm others. Students will be held accountable for cyber bullying whether it occurs on or off campus or during the school year or on breaks. The negative impact on the academic environment at GAA will be the deciding factor.

The consequences of Cyber-bullying range from after school detention to out of school suspension.

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## STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

GEMS American Academy-Abu Dhabi is an inclusive school that accepts students who are English Language Learners (ELL) and/or children with learning differences who require Learning Support (LS) services, and/or students who have been identified as Gifted and Talented (G&T). In addition, GAA offers a counseling program that promotes learning.

**Co-Teaching Model:** The foundation of our support is based on a co-teaching model where ELL, LS and Gifted and Talented specialists work with the classroom teachers in the classroom as a collaborative team.



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This support is focused in core academic classes and allows students to:

- Participate as equally as possible in educational opportunities
- Make effective academic progress
- Make a positive contribution to their local and international communities
- Develop and maintain their physical, mental, social, and emotional health
- Transition to further educational and vocational opportunities beyond school
- Develop thinking and analytical skills that will allow them to be creative, compassionate, lifelong learners

**English Language Learner specialists** offer a support system that allows students to gain life-long learning skills and prepare themselves for higher education. As an English-medium school, GAA facilitates the attainment of English proficiency through immersion by students whose native language is not English while at the same time encouraging the learning of other foreign languages. Instructors and staff are dedicated to these goals, and are continuously developing their knowledge, skills, and abilities accordingly.

**Learning Support at GAA** offers support to students with learning differences in a variety of settings using a variety of methodologies based on individual needs. Specialist teachers work in close collaboration with the subject area teachers to develop academic programs allowing each student to access the curriculum in a way suitable to their individual learning challenges.

**Gifted and Talented support** is met through differentiated instruction in the regular classroom for identified students. Giftedness refers to 'a student who is in possession of untrained and spontaneously-expressed exceptional natural ability in one or more domains of human ability.' (ADEK 2015-16)

**Counseling at GAA** is met through community services where counselors actively promote and encourage a sense of community characterized by students who are caring, cooperative, communicative, inquisitive, productive, and responsible. In addition, counselors work to promote citizenship by helping all students to develop a positive self-image and self-discipline.

**Our Middle School Counsellor** focuses primarily on social-emotional development, self-advocacy, organization and success strategies.

**High School Counsellors** extend the work of the Middle School, and support students as they develop personalized plans for their college and career futures.

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## LIBRARY

### OVERVIEW

GAA Libraries believe that **literacy is the keystone** to all learning, and that the Library is the **central hub** for learning. The vision of GAA Libraries is to provide a **welcoming and caring** environment where **appreciation for each learner's literacy identity** is nurtured, curriculum is supported through **collaboration**, and **access to quality resources** enhances learning experiences. GAA Libraries aim to provide access to quality resources that meet the needs of students, staff, and parents by:



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- engaging learners in inquiry, analysis, and communication
- offering a variety of reading materials
- promoting critical reading and thinking
- guiding learners in answering complex questions and solving real-world problems
- encouraging creativity
- facilitating collaborative learning
- guiding in ethical selection and use of resources

### LIBRARY VISITS

The secondary library is open between 7:45 am and 3:30 pm (Sunday - Tuesday) and between 7:45 am and 4:30 pm (Wednesday and Thursday) for the school community. There will be occasions when the library is closed earlier due to whole school events (e.g. Parent/Teacher conferences, staff meetings) or library practices such as inventory. Overall the library lends itself to flexible and active use by class groups and individuals.

### SCHEDULED LIBRARY VISITS

Secondary library times are flexible depending on the needs of the students and subject-area teachers. Students are encouraged to drop by the library for research appointments with the librarian and book check-out during the school day.

### BORROWING MATERIALS

Library members - students, staff and parents - may borrow items for a period of two weeks (renewable as many times as needed) There is not a limited number of materials to be checked out by library members in the secondary division.

### RENEWING MATERIALS

Library members can renew their books regardless if they are overdue. Items that have been reserved by another member may not be renewed.

### RESERVING MATERIALS

Library members may reserve items at any time by approaching the Librarian or a library volunteer.

### RETURNING MATERIALS

Materials may be returned to the drop boxes located in the secondary library.

### OVERDUE MATERIALS

We ask that materials be returned on a timely basis to enable access by all community members. We send weekly overdue notices to students and parents via email reminding them to return or renew their materials.



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GAA Library services do not operate on a fine system for the late returning of items. Members with overdue items or unpaid fines for damaged or lost materials on their record will not have their Report Cards released at the end of the semester.

### LOST AND DAMAGED MATERIALS

Any library member who loses or damages a library material will be billed for the original cost of the material in AED plus 25% shipping and handling plus VAT.

### COLLECTION MANAGEMENT POLICY

The collection management policy for the GEMS American Academy Libraries will adhere to all relevant legislation as directed by both the UAE government, Abu Dhabi Department of Education and Knowledge (ADEK) and GEMS Education.

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## HOME/SCHOOL COMMUNICATION

Great schools provide parents with timely information so that they can be informed participants in the learning process. With our move to embrace 'blended learning' we must communicate well and build capacity in parents to support a very different kind of 'homework'.

- **PowerSchool Parent Portal:** Provides a parent portal for parents to view assignments and grades, and provides curriculum and homework information for students and parents.
- **The GAAzette:** Communication between parents and school is a high priority at GAA. Parents will receive notices throughout the year about school events as well as the GAAzette, a school-wide bi-weekly (fortnightly) newsletter sent by email.
- **Back-to-School Night:** In September, a Back-to-School Night is held to introduce parents to classroom expectations, a description of the year's curriculum, grade level policies on homework and other details of the functioning of each class.
- **Parent Information Sessions:** Occur throughout the school year, both during the day and in the evening, to provide information about our curriculum, the IB Program, and other relevant topics.

**\*Please be aware that GAA and ADEK policies may require changes in regards to Back to School Night and Parent Information Sessions because of health and safety regulations in response to COVID 19.**

### GAAPA (GAA PARENT ASSOCIATION)

Parents are encouraged to be actively involved in the school. GEMS American Academy has an active parent association (GAAPA). GAAPA is an important part of our school community and we encourage all parents to get involved and/or support the Association's activities throughout the year. In the past, these have included fund-raising activities, coffee mornings, movie afternoons, Iftar dinner during Ramadan and the very popular International Food Festival. In addition to GAAPA, volunteers are always welcome to help in the library and in the classrooms.

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### STUDENT/PARENT/TEACHER CONFERENCES

Student, parent and teacher conferences take place in fall and spring for all Grades KG-12 on the same days for parental convenience.

Student/Parent/Teacher conferences are an important part of our educational program and provide an opportunity for parents and teachers to discuss with the student personal goals as well as overall progress. Parents are expected to attend parent/teacher conferences and encouraged to bring your child with you to the conference.

**\*Please be aware that GAA and ADEK policies may require changes in regards to conferences because of health and safety regulations in response to COVID 19.**

### EXTENDED PARENT ABSENCES

GAA students should always have proper home supervision by a parent. If, due to an emergency, you will be out of town and your child will not be under your direct supervision, please send a formal letter to let us know who will have guardianship responsibilities.

### WITHDRAWING FROM SCHOOL

All notices of withdrawal must be in writing to the Registrar. The school requires a minimum of two weeks notification of withdrawal. Parents are responsible for completing and returning a Student Clearance Form. In the event of outstanding books, fees or fines the school will neither release records nor issue a Transfer Certificate.

Parents who wish to hand carry their children's records may do so. However, they should notify the school of this intention with ample time to assemble records. Hand carrying of transcripts at the end of the year may be delayed due to scoring of exams - in this case, transcripts and/or records will be sent to the new school or to the parents. Parents should leave their forwarding address and a stamped envelope at the earliest possible date. Records cannot be released until all outstanding fees are paid.

### TRANSFER CERTIFICATES

The Ministry of Education in the UAE requires that all students from Grade 2 onward submit a Transfer Certificate when they change schools. After the 1<sup>st</sup> of November each year, students in all grades require a Transfer Certificate to move schools. GEMS American Academy will be pleased to prepare a Transfer Certificate for all students who have completed the Withdrawal Process described above.

For students new to the school, please see the Application Package (available from the Registrar or online) for more information about Transfer Certificates.

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### **SAFETY**

#### **SUPERVISION OF STUDENTS**

When on campus, students are expected to follow school rules even after school and on weekends.

We operate a daily, period by period, attendance system for all students arriving or departing school between 7:45 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. Communication with home is made to confirm all absences – usually before 8.30 am each morning. Students arriving after 7.45 am must sign in with the Secondary Secretary and receive a ‘tardy slip’ before going to class. Students wishing to leave before 3:00 p.m. must provide notification to the school from their parents. Please note that we do not provide adult supervision before school in the morning and after school in the afternoons.

#### **STUDENTS LEAVING SCHOOL DURING THE DAY**

Parents who require their children to leave school for any reason during the school day must contact the Secondary Secretary and students must report to the Secretary who will issue a note for Security to allow the student out of the school gate.

#### **FIRE ALARM/LOCK DOWN DRILLS**

The buildings on the campus are fitted with a fire alarm system. Periodically, throughout the year, fire drills will take place in order to familiarize pupils with the procedures of emergency evacuation.

1. When the alarm is sounded, students and visitors should leave the building immediately in an orderly fashion using the designated exit.
2. After leaving the building, students and visitors should report to their designated assembly point for an attendance check. The assembly point for all students is at the rear of the sports field.
3. Emphasis is placed on staying quiet and observing rules and directions during the fire drills.
4. Lock down drills will be practiced immediately following fire drills early in the year so that students are familiar with the term and the procedures of getting inside and under cover.

#### **SECURITY**

Security officers are on duty on the school campus at all times. Their duties include assisting families on weekends and making certain that academic buildings are properly locked during non-school hours. The security officers have access to a telephone for use in an emergency. Security officers are directed to follow specific procedures to ensure the safety of all students. Please respect their efforts to keep your child safe. Any concerns can be made through the school office.

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### HEALTH

#### SCHOOL CLINIC INFORMATION

A Registered and Health Authority of Abu Dhabi (HAAD) licensed nurse is on duty during school hours. The nurse provides health screenings; assesses and manages chronic and acute illness; administers medications; provides first aid for school-related injuries; promotes health and safety and maintains student medical records. The nurse is available to consult with parents as needed regarding health concerns of students, either in person, by telephone or e-mail. Students needing to visit the nurse during school have to report to the Secondary Secretary who will issue a yellow Clinic Pass.

***The role of the clinic is to address minor and/or temporary ailments. Students who require care that exceeds the expectations of our nurses, or whose illness prevents them from returning to class in a timely fashion will be sent home with a parent.***

If a student has special health needs (medication, chronic illness or condition, allergies or requires a special procedure or intervention), the parent is encouraged to schedule a time to meet with the school nurse to arrange for these needs to be taken care of during the student's school day. All medications and treatments require clear, written instructions by physician's order, as needed, and a parent/guardian's signature. The school nurse will assist the parent by preparing a plan of care for their child and advising them as to what supplies the student will need at school.

Several first aid kits are located throughout the campus (gymnasium, offices, art rooms, science labs, etc.) and certain teachers and members of staff are qualified to administer first aid.

#### EMERGENCY CONTACTS/CHANGE OF CONTACT DETAILS

The School Registrar, the School Office and the School Nurse should always have current details of your address, email, telephone number and mobile number(s). The accuracy of this information is vital in the case of an emergency. We also request a phone number of a friend we can call if we cannot reach the parents. When able, make sure your child knows how to reach you during the day. At the start of the school year we will send an Emergency Contact Sheet home with your child - please return this as quickly as possible. If your details change, it is your responsibility to give the updated information to the School Office, preferably by email.

The Emergency Care Form will be utilized for school trips and events; as a quick contact resource to get in touch with parents; for emergency personnel if the student is transferred to an emergency care facility; or to ensure that the parents/guardians have authorized emergency medical treatment.

#### FORMS

Each year school health forms will be required for all students. They are: Health information Form; Emergency Care Form; Medication Consent Form; School Screening Form. New students will be required to fill out an Immunization Record to accompany their child's personal Immunization Record.

A physician-signed form to use or administer an inhaler or Epi-pen will be required if a student is asthmatic or has a life-threatening allergy. If your child has a short-term or chronic illness which requires any medical intervention/procedure during the school day, a Special Procedure Form will be required. (For example: blood glucose monitoring, dressing change, tube/catheter management, etc.)



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If your Middle School or High School student athlete plans to participate in competitive sports at school, then a Pre-Participation Examination Certificate must be completed by a medical provider and submitted prior to the commencement of that sport.

### MEDICATION

Administration of medications, especially short term, should be done at home whenever possible. However, if a student is required to take prescription or non-prescription medication during the school day, the following guidelines must be met:

- Physician, dentist or practitioner-prescribed medications must be clearly transcribed and all medication forms should state the student's name, the name of medication, the dosage, the time, the route (oral, inhaled, patch, etc.), and the duration of time that it is to be given (e.g., one week, the school year, etc.), along with the parent's/guardian's signature. Medication forms are available for your convenience in the school clinic.
- Medication must be in the original packaging by the pharmacy and not out of date. Over-the-counter medication to be held in the clinic must be in a sealed, unopened, new bottle. (For short interval dosage, ask a pharmacist for a separate bottle to be kept in the clinic to prevent missed doses.)
- The parent/guardian, not the student, must deliver medication to the school clinic.
- All medicine must be picked up by a parent at the end of the school year.

In the case of students with asthma, severe allergic reactions or diabetes - they may self-administer their inhaled asthma medication, auto-injectable (epi-pen) medication or insulin. If medication is to be hand-carried, a back-up should also be kept in the school clinic. These situations require written health care plans along with other specific details for care.

When necessary, the nurse will accept verbal consent via phone to administer an over-the-counter (not prescription) medication. Medication will not be dispensed without written parental permission.

### ILLNESS OR INJURY

If you are contacted by the school to pick up your sick child, please make every effort to do so promptly. If your child visits the clinic and we recommend you follow-up, or be informed of an intervention, you will receive a written note from the clinic. You will also be informed if your child sustains a head or neck injury while at school. If the nurse requests follow-up by your doctor for illness or a school-sustained injury, you will receive a Medical Referral Form. This is a formal way to receive a specific diagnosis and treatment plan while your child is at school.

Students with contagious infections need to stay home so they will not expose others. If your child is home with a communicable illness, please contact the school nurse so the parent(s) of other classmates may be alerted of symptoms.

As a rule of thumb, your child must stay home for any of the following:

- A fever > 37.5 C (100 F); must be fever-free for 24 hours without fever medication
- Vomited more than once; feeling of nausea
- Diarrhea (return to school after 48 hours or 24 hours on medication)
- A frequent cough; productive cough



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- Persistent pain (ear, stomach, etc.)
- A widespread rash; contagious rash or skin spots
- Head lice (Pediculosis): please notify the school nurse to be given proper instructions
- Bacterial conjunctivitis/Pink Eye; awakens in the morning with thick or sticky eye drainage; eye lashes stuck; redness of the whites of the eyes throughout; can return to school after 24 hours of physician prescribed treatment.

Injuries that happen at home or over the weekend should be taken care of prior to returning to school along with a physician's note with instructions and limitations if needed. If your child has an out-patient procedure or surgery, you must provide a physician's certificate stating when they can safely return to school and with any limitations/instructions.

Before students return to school after surgery, injury or trauma the nurse and parents must meet to formulate a care plan and carry out a risk assessment (including a fire/evacuation risk assessment).

At times the medical advice provided for a student may be in variance with the school's recommendations. In all cases, the school nurse is the final arbiter and, if necessary in discussion with the Head of School, will signal when a child is "safe" to return to school.

### IMMUNIZATIONS

The Heath Authority of Abu Dhabi (HAAD) promotes a successful immunization program and the Emirate is free from vaccine-preventable diseases. Parents are required to submit applicable vaccination documents to the School Nurse (or Registrar) for record purposes. Any parent who wishes to discuss their child's immunizations with the school nurse is welcome to do so.

### HEALTH SCREENINGS

Per HAAD, the clinic promotes the screenings recommended annually. This consent form is part of the annual school health forms given out at the beginning of the school year. Please refer to the sheet with specific guidelines for your child's grade.

### HELPFUL REMINDERS

- Encourage your child to eat breakfast every day before school.
- Make sure your child gets 8 or more hours of sleep each night.
- Always send your child to school with a refillable water bottle.
- Sneakers or tennis shoes are preferred for active participation and safety.
- Encourage good hand-washing; before and after meals, after toileting, etc.
- The school has a "No Hat, No Play" policy. Without a hat, your child will sit out for recess.
- Please inform the school if your child has any allergies. Nuts are not banned at GAA, but we ask that any food brought in for sharing is free of nuts/nut products.

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Please contact your school nurse if you have any questions or concerns. By working together we can strive to ensure the health and well-being of your children so that they can gain the most from their experience at school.

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## **MISCELLANEOUS**

### **LOST AND FOUND**

Personal items found in the school are collected and passed along to GAAPA. Parents are encouraged to label all items, especially water bottles and lunch boxes, and to check the Lost and Found frequently. Unattended school books will be returned to the TRC/Library for processing. At the end of each semester, all lost and found items are donated to charity.

### **CHARITABLE CAUSES/ COMMUNITY SERVICE**

Our school community supports a growing number of organizations and charitable causes. These provide valued opportunities to our students to demonstrate initiative and further develop their skills and understandings of citizenship and leadership. All monetary fundraising goes to the Red Crescent. Charitable drives and Community Service activities are often organized through the Student Council or other student organizations. It is important that charity work is carefully planned and strongly supported so that activities can be integrated into the school calendar. Ideas for service projects should be brought to the attention of Secondary Administration for presentation to the Student Council and, with their endorsement, to the School Leadership Team and the GAA Parents' Association. Generally, these groups will come together early in the school year to decide what charities will be the foci of activities and events for the school year. However, proposals can be considered at any time of the school year, particularly if the proposal relates to an emergency aid situation.

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### **APPENDICES**

#### **I: ADMISSIONS POLICY**

A student applying for admission must be accepted by the Head of School, based on the school's ability to meet the educational needs of the student. While GAA can accommodate mild reading, learning and behavior challenges, it is not staffed or equipped to meet the needs of moderate or severely disabled children.

In general, the Registrar places students by continuation of grade from previous school. The school will determine the student's grade placement based on prior records and recommendations. If the school has doubts regarding the student's placement, or if records are not available, or if the parents feel that the recommended grade placement is not suitable, MAP test results generated during the admissions process are an important indicator of student readiness and experience and will help inform the placement decision. GAA may request prospective student applicants to take the CAT-4 cognitive assessment test.

#### **II: PROCEDURES FOR ASSIGNING CLASS PLACEMENT**

We believe strongly in the importance of well-balanced mixed groups – we want students to work within a heterogeneous group so that all benefit from the diversity of backgrounds, talent and thinking skills that makes GAA a special place. It is important that each class is representative of the whole school and can be held accountable to the same academic standards. In order to create the optimal class environment, we need to know as much as possible about the social, emotional, physical and academic needs of each student. A well-balanced learning environment has to take into account many different factors. The obvious ones are gender, nationality, whether new or returning family and level of English fluency but just as important are social relationships, emotional and physical needs, academic levels, learning styles and past experiences.

During the months of February and March students will select courses that include the academic core and electives. Students will select electives and will indicate 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 3<sup>rd</sup> choices. Although every effort is made to grant first choices in electives, they are not guaranteed due to competing scheduling constraints.

Because our overriding value is to create balanced groups of students who will work well together, we are not able to entertain requests for placements with specific teachers. We ask that you refrain from asking for a particular teacher so that we are not being asked to compromise the integrity of this process for any student. You can be confident that all the teachers on any grade level work and plan together and provide similar learning opportunities and experiences for students.

Right up to the day school starts, our student lists are changing so we are not able to post class lists before the start of school. Despite the fact that we will have done the best job we can, not everyone will think his or her placement is ideal. We have found that the best advice we can give you if your child expresses disappointment with his or her new class group is to acknowledge a child's disappointment as genuine but to show your child that you have confidence in his or her social ability to live through the disappointment and to settle successfully in the new situation. Your child will be heavily influenced by your reaction!

This is an opportunity for social growth and independence. Trust your child to grow and learn. Children are so open to new and different experiences, relationships and learning when we encourage and support them in their efforts.





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### III: GAA SECONDARY PE STUDENT EXPECTATIONS POLICY

**Course Description:** Students in grade 6 to grade 9 will participate in a wide range of physical activity designed to give students a varied and balanced sporting experience. These courses emphasize regular participation and promote lifelong healthy active living. Students will learn movement skills and principles, ways to improve personal fitness and physical competence, and safety and injury prevention. These units include but are not limited to the following: Volleyball, Swimming, Basketball, Rugby, American Football, Soccer, Fitness, Softball, Athletics, tennis, Badminton and Gymnastics.

#### PE Student Uniform:

Grade 6 through Grade 9, Student PE uniform requirements:

- Shirts with GAA logos
- Navy shorts with GAA logo. Shorts should be mid-thigh length.
- Quality Athletic Shoes (non-marking soles)
- Water Bottles must be brought to class
- If hair is longer than collar length it must be tied up in the back
- No Jewelry or watches are allowed to be worn during PE class and valuables must be left in student lockers. PE Teachers accept no responsibility for personal items.
- If it is a scheduled Swimming lesson, they are to wear appropriate swimming apparel, in which will be explained by PE teacher

A register of attendance will be taken at the start of each lesson. If a student is injured or returning to school after sickness and may not be able to fully participate, they will need to supply a note or communication from their parent/guardian supporting their reasons for not fully participating. They will still be expected to bring their P.E uniform and take part in some way, this may be in the form of coaching or completing a written assignment. In the case of a forgotten PE uniform, secondary PE teacher's work on a 3 strikes policy (bullet description below). In the case of a medical excuse supported by a note from parents / guardian, the student is asked to participate in a supporting role (e.g. observation / evaluation, peer mentoring, clean-up, etc.).

- 1<sup>st</sup> offense: Verbal warning toward student and a mark in the teacher's attendance book. Student is still expected to participate in PE Class, unless it is a swimming lesson
- 2<sup>nd</sup> offense: Contact made with parents via e-mail or phone call home. Student is still expected to participate in PE Class, unless it is a swimming lesson.
- 3<sup>rd</sup> offense: After school or lunch detention on teacher arranged time and place.

**Changing:** During a 60 minute time frame afforded to secondary PE, students are asked to change from their school uniforms to their respective PE uniform in 5 minutes from the start of the period. Students will be provided 10 minutes to change back into their school uniform at the end of the class. Students must change back into their school uniforms under all circumstances unless the student is participating in a sport related after school activity, in which PE occurs during the last period of the day. The aim of this policy is to maximize the amount of instructional time in the lesson. Students are prohibited from entering the changing rooms located in the gym or outside by the playground until a member of P.E staff is present and allows them to enter. All P.E facilities, apart from the outside playground, are strictly out of bounds to students unless a member of staff is present.

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### IV: COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE FOR PARENTS AND LEGAL GUARDIANS

At GAA we recognize the importance of regular interaction between faculty and parents so that support for student learning and development is consistent. In the circumstance that parents have a complaint with a teacher, the school will treat it in accordance with the following procedure.

#### 1. Informal Resolution

It is hoped that most complaints and concerns will be resolved quickly and informally.

1. If parents have a complaint or concern they should, in the first instance, contact their son's/daughter's teacher. In most cases, the matter can be resolved in this way. If the matter cannot be resolved between the parents and teacher, it may be necessary for the Division Principal to be contacted.
2. Any complaint made directly to the Division Principal will normally be referred back to the relevant teacher unless the Division Principal deems it appropriate to deal with the matter personally.
3. Teachers and the Division Principal will keep anecdotal records of concerns and complaints on the date when they were received and reviewed. The Division Principal/teacher will document the outcome in a letter to the parent/guardian.

Most complaints will be resolved informally. If this does not happen, parents will be advised that they may address the complaint to the head of school for reconsideration.

#### 2. Formal Resolution

1. If the complaint cannot be resolved on an informal basis, then the parents should put their complaint in writing to the GEMS Director of International Schools (DIS). After considering the complaint, a decision will be made on the appropriate course of action to take.
2. In most cases the DIS will contact the parents concerned, normally within 3 days of receiving the complaint, to discuss the matter. If possible a resolution will be reached at this stage.
3. The DIS may need to carry out further investigations.
4. The DIS will keep written records of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint.
5. Once the DIS is satisfied that, so far as is practicable, all of the relevant facts have been established, a decision will be made. Parents will be informed of the decision, with an explanation, in writing.



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### QUESTIONS? WHO TO CALL FIRST:

GAA Telephone Number	(+971) 02 557 4880
GAA Fax Number	(+971) 02 557 4990

### EMAIL CONTACT DETAILS:

DEPARTMENT	NAME	EMAIL ADDRESS
Head of School & CEO	Robert Rinaldo	hos_gaa@gemsedu.com
Secondary Principal	Kain Klinkhammer	ssprincipal_gaa@gemsedu.com
Middle School	Scott MacDonald	s.macdonald1_gaa@gemsedu.com
High School	Erin Lumpkins	hsvprincipal_gaa@gemsedu.com
Secondary Secretary	Roshan Xavier	secsecretary_gaa@gemsedu.com
IBDP Coordinator	Monica Martin	m.martin1_gaa@gemsedu.com
Curriculum Coordinator	Becca Donnell	r.donnell_gaa@gemsedu.com
High School Counselors:	Lynn Brown	l.brown2_gaa@gemsedu.com
	Kimyanna Bradford	k.bradford_gaa@gemsedu.com
Middle School Counselor	Yvette Cuenco	y.cuenco_gaa@gemsedu.com
Curriculum Director	Justin Kirby	j.kirby_gaa@Gemsedu.com
Athletics & Activities	Iliana Jaltova	i.jaltova_gaa@gemsedu.com
Registrar	Naseera Timm-Holland	n.timm-holland_gaa@gemsedu.com
Accounts		finance_gaa@gemsedu.com
Nurse		nurse_gaa@gemsedu.com
Parent Relations Executive	Fatma Chabanova	pre_gaa@gemsedu.com
Transport Operation Executive	Natasha D'Souza	natasha@bbt.ae
Executive Secretary	Ruba Alhemsy	r.alhemsy_gaa@Gemsedu.com
GAA Security		security_gaa@gemsedu.com
Main Reception		info_gaa@gemsedu.com

### SCHOOL RELATED ISSUES:

IB Diploma	IB Coordinator
After School Activities Program	Athletics & Activities Director
Facilities Usage	Manager – School Operations via Reception
Finance/Tuition Fees	Accountant via Reception
Health	Nurse's office
Bus Transport	Transport Manager via Reception
Food Services	Leave a message with Reception
Teachers	Leave a message with Secondary Secretary

### COMMUNICATION:

Activities/Calendar	Reception
GAAzette Newsletter	Parent Relations Executive
Parent Association (GAAPA)	GAAPA Representatives



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### GEMS AMERICAN ACADEMY PARENT & STUDENT CONTRACT

*(This form will be provided separately for return to school upon completion)*

At GAA, we recognize that a successful partnership between school and home is one of the cornerstones to a child's educational success. We would respectfully ask parents to support this partnership by completing and returning this Parent/Student contract to the child's first block teacher.

In order to best support my child's learning, I will

- Provide him or her with a quiet, orderly place to study
- Ensure my child is prepared for class
- Deliver my child to school on time every day
- Attend special activities sponsored by GAA to build my understanding of learning outcomes and my capacity to support learning at home.

I have read and understood both the Parent and Student Contract and the Community Handbook. I have read and agree to adhere to the guidelines and expectations set out in the Secondary Community Handbook.

Full Name of Student: \_\_\_\_\_ Grade: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Parent: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Student: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_