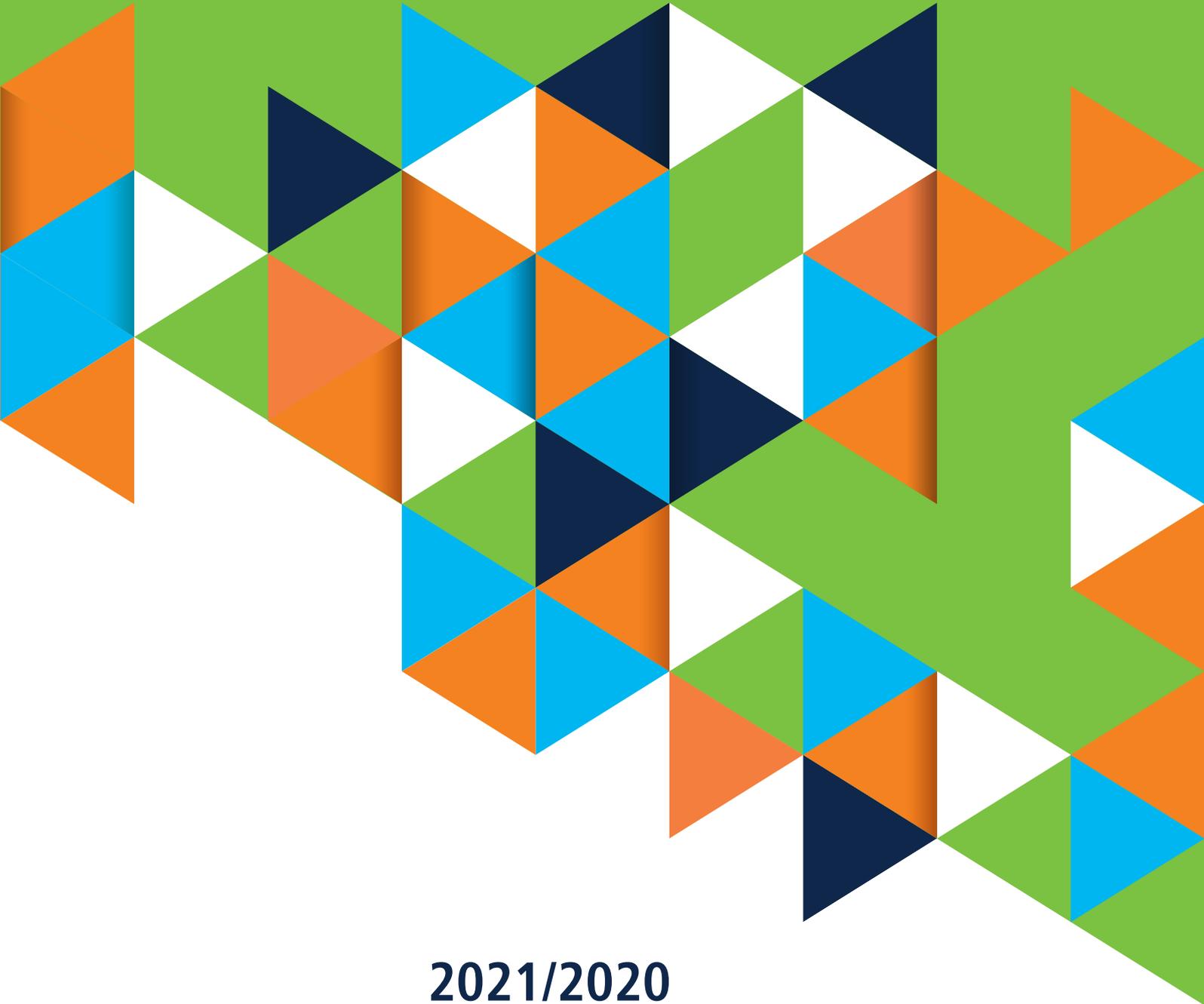




مدرسة اكاديمية جيمس الامريكية ابو ظبي الخاصة
GEMS American Academy
ABU DHABI



2021/2020
ELEMENTARY HANDBOOK



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GEMS American Academy
ABU DHABI

**2020-2021
ELEMENTARY
HANDBOOK**



Welcome to 2020/2021 Academic 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



Dear GAA Elementary Learning Community,

Welcome to the 2020-2021 school year at GEMS American Academy (GAA). With over **80** nationalities, we pride ourselves on being truly international while delivering the best of what American education has to offer through our enriched American curriculum within the IB Primary Years Program framework. Since its founding, both GAA's reputation of excellence and its student body have continued to grow. Accredited by the Council of International Schools, New England Association of Schools and Colleges and authorized as an International Baccalaureate Primary Years Program World School, the quality of GAA's American educational program with an international flavor has been verified.

Our premium international school in the Khalifa City A area of Abu Dhabi provides an exceptional learning environment and is an all-round great place for kids.

Our purpose-built facility is cutting-edge that houses numerous classrooms, library spaces, specialist teaching spaces, science labs, recording studios, laptop carts, a double gymnasium, fitness center, dance studio, indoor pool, auditorium, soccer pitch, tennis courts, cafeteria, and a parent café. These facilities demonstrate our understanding of the importance of intellectual, physical, and emotional balance in achieving personal well-being. GAA is forward thinking and Information and Communication Technology (ICT) feature prominently in both the design of our educational environment and teaching and learning in all classrooms. A focus on 21st century skills provides for a powerful authentic learning experience.

Student results on the Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) testing demonstrate the value of the overall GAA experience and the quality of teaching and learning at our school, with our students performing above international and American norms.

We thank you for choosing GEMS American Academy as the school for your child and supporting them in achieving their full potential as global citizens and leaders of the future. This year will be full of educational engagements, memories, and friendships that will last a lifetime for our global students.

We look forward to partnering with you to inspire learning and encourage personal excellence for your child.

Sincerely,

Michael Hopaluk
Elementary Principal



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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 delivered through the IB PYP framework for students from KG1 to G5 within an international context.

The success of our program is based on:

- Teamwork, collaboration and the broad participation of our community.
 - Continuous learning and professional development.
 - A thorough awareness of educational 'best practices' throughout the world.
-



IB LEARNER PROFILE

We are committed to providing an international learning environment grounded in best practice from the American education landscape. We develop the attributes of the International Baccalaureate (IB) learner profile.

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 analyse 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 others.

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 actions and their 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 our 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. We 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 the world.

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.



INTRODUCTION

All classes follow a full day program of studies from KG1 to Grade 5. Target class size is 25 students. Each class up to Grade 2 benefits from both a teacher and an Educational Assistant, and Grades 3 – 5 each share multiple Educational Assistants across the grade level.

The Kindergarten curriculum is based on the International Baccalaureate Primary Years Program (IB PYP) framework and Play Based Learning. Our shared vision for the early year's program at GAA is collaborative, incorporating best practices for early childhood development and education.

The Kindergarten program at GAA provides classroom environments arranged to incorporate a range of play-based learning that caters for a variety of interest areas and encourages opportunities for children to explore, discover and learn. Interest areas include block play, dramatic play, toys and games, art, discovery, library, sand and water, music and movement, technology, kitchen-lab and outdoor learning. Classrooms are safe and welcoming environments that provide areas for large and small group times, individual storage and classroom displays.

Students attend a variety of specialist classes which include Arabic, Visual Art, Drama, Dance, Library, Music, Physical Education, KG/Grade One Kitchen Lab and Swimming. These lessons are taught by specialist teachers who are integrated and connected to the enrichment of the Elementary school program.

Outdoor play is essential for the health and well-being of children. Beyond just physical development, outdoor learning helps children develop skills in each of the four core domains; physical development, social-emotional development, literacy development and cognitive development. While participating in small and large group games students develop their vocabulary, communication skills and cooperative skills. Outdoor time encourages children to explore and take risks, and learn to appreciate the natural environment.

Please note that in order for your child to start school, they will need to be confident when using the toilet by themselves and able to care for all their personal hygiene needs. **Nappies or training pants are not allowed to be worn in school.**

The Elementary curriculum is delivered within the International Baccalaureate Primary Years Program (IB PYP) framework, using the AERO (American Education Reaches Out) standards. We take advantage of our international student community and the cultural diversity that it offers. We celebrate and learn about different countries' cultures, traditions, habits and holidays.

The local UAE community is embraced within our program and this is reflected in the choice of concepts and topics underpinning the program of inquiry. GAA also fully implements ADEK's guidance with Arabic, Islamic Studies and UAE Social Studies.

The Elementary school community welcomes parent involvement, and parents are encouraged to become involved in the daily education of their children.

GAA Parents Association

GAA Parents Association supports the development of a sense of unity among parents, students and staff by cooperating in different capacities to enrich the lives of the students and to guide parents towards a better understanding of the aims, policies and philosophy of GEMS American Academy. The achievement of these aims relies upon the cooperation of every parent. All parents of students enrolled in GEMS American Academy are members of the Parent Association. GAA Parents Association has an elected Board of representatives and works with the school administration and parent engagement champions to support our community.



THE SCHOOL DAY

School Hours

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

The school day for all grades commences at **7:45am** Sunday through Thursday. Students are not permitted into the grade level hallways/classrooms before 7:30am. Dismissal time is **2:15pm** for Kindergarten and **2:55pm** for Elementary. The school cannot provide supervision for students **before 7:30am** or beyond **3:10pm**. Students are to be under parental supervision while on school premises before and after these times.

Students not collected within 15 minutes after dismissal will be escorted to the Reception area to wait while the parents are called. After repeated occurrences the parent will be contacted by the Vice Principal, and if this situation persists, the parent may be contacted by the Principal to enroll the student in the GAA BBT School Bus program.

Students may not re-enter the rear gate after **3:05pm** unless **accompanied** by a parent. In the event an unaccompanied student wishes to return to the school premises after school hours, entrance is **only** permitted via the **Main Entrance** of the school.

Attendance

Parents are expected to call or email the school as early as possible if their child is absent from, or will be late to school. Student participation in learning activities is important, so parents are urged to schedule medical, dental and other appointments after school hours or during vacations.

All students are expected to abide by the ADEK provided school schedule and attend school on the days before and after vacations. All students are also expected to follow ADEK Policy 55 on absenteeism which states those students with absenteeism rate of more than “10% should be regarded as a cause for concern.”

Parents are expected to attend conferences on the scheduled parent/teacher conference days in the fall and spring, and are encouraged to attend Parent Engagement functions. Together we can build skills and facilitate goal setting in support of learning at home.

Late Arrival/Early Pick-Up

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

All students arriving into class past 7:45am are considered tardy and must receive a late pass before entering the classroom. Parents must accompany their child/children to the Main Reception or KG Reception to sign in. If a student is leaving school early, parents should inform the classroom teacher in advance and come to the Reception before collecting their child from the class. Parents of students in grades Two through Five will wait in Reception. Students will not be accepted or collected from their classroom without a late/early pick up slip.



Change to Regular Home Transportation

If a child is going to leave GAA with a non-parent/guardian, two notes must be sent to school, one from the parent whose child is going to the friend's house and the other from the parent who is hosting the play date. These notes are best sent to the teacher through the student's passport booklet or email. If this involves using the school bus, the parent must call the school transportation department to ensure there is space on the bus, allowing sufficient time for arrangements.

GAA Student Dismissal Procedure

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

The GAA school day finishes at **2:15pm** for KG1 and KG2 and **2:55pm** for Grades 1-5. It is vital for the smooth running of the bus service (and the After School Activities Program) that students arrive on time for the bus service. Once dismissed from class, students will be handed into the care of a parent or guardian or will follow the bus collection procedure which is detailed below.

The class EA (Educational Assistant) from KG-GR 2 will escort those students who use the bus service to the bus waiting area. There will be a collection point for each bus: clearly visible bus number signs are posted in the area. The EA will hand students over to the respective conductors in turn. Once students have been handed over to the care of the conductors, they will sit quietly until all students have arrived. When it is confirmed that all students are present, the conductors will escort the students to their bus and make sure they are safely buckled before the bus moves.

Bus Regulations

Students who use the school bus either regularly or as a guest at any time on special occasions must observe the following expectations:

- Students are expected to demonstrate respect for the driver, the conductor and other passengers at all times.
- Students must be seated with a buckled seat belt at all times.
- Students are not permitted to shout or engage in horseplay (kind hands and feet) or use disrespectful language at any time on the bus (kind words).
- Students are expected to keep the buses tidy and not dispose of rubbish on the bus floor.
- Students are not permitted to eat or drink on the bus.

Please be aware that all school buses are equipped with CCTV. Please be aware that students can lose the privilege of riding the school bus if they have challenges meeting the transportation expectations.



Lunch/Snack

At GAA we encourage students to eat healthy, nutritious foods. Monthly menus for our cafeteria are posted on the Slices website. Water is provided for all students, and students are required to bring their own refillable water bottles. Children should bring a healthy snack from home to eat during the morning break. Any food sent to school should not contain any nuts or nut products. Students have the option of bringing lunch from home or purchasing a school meal. Please ensure you send your students to school with a healthy packed lunch or money.

Recess

Students have scheduled recess times. Each division has a dedicated playground area with engaging outdoor educational equipment. All students are expected to play safely and fairly and to be respectful of each other and of the equipment. GAA has a **“No hat-No water-No field play”** policy. Students are required to wear a hat and carry a water bottle when they go outside, otherwise, they must remain in the shaded areas.

Assemblies & Community Shares

An Elementary Community Share is held each week on a rotational basis. Sharing helps us to promote community, foster school pride, and celebrate learning and success. Parents are always encouraged to attend. Each Community Share is documented photographically and shared with parents.

Birthdays

Birthdays can be celebrated in Kindergarten from 1:30pm onwards. Birthday celebrations in grade levels above Kindergarten are limited to a sharing of a cupcake/muffin or healthy snack during the class’s allocated snack time as these celebrations take away time from our teaching and learning. All snacks sent into to school must be pre-approved by the class teacher and/or Vice-Principal. Reception must be informed of a delivery at least 24 hours in advance. Deliveries will be sent back if not approved.

Class celebrations are arranged with the classroom teacher in advance. This will ensure that there are not multiple celebrations on one day.

In connection with our ‘healthy food’ initiative, parents are encouraged to make appropriate choices when planning the celebration for their child. For birthdays we prefer snacks to be individually wrapped or in individual portions, such as fruit and vegetables. No birthday cakes please. For drinks, water is preferred. Please be aware that no soft drinks are allowed.

Please arrange cups, plates or napkins, as the school does not provide these items.

Please do not send hats, balloons, party favors or gift bags. Invitations to out of school birthday parties can only be sent via school if all students in the class are invited. If you plan to invite only a few classmates, please be aware that this can cause uncomfortable or awkward situations, and/or hurt feelings.



LEARNING ACTIVITIES

GAA Library

Hours: 7:30am - 3:30pm

GEMS American Academy is committed to helping students develop a solid foundation of information literacy skills and a lifelong love of reading. With online database subscriptions, breakout learning spaces, a collection of over 20,000 books, magazine subscriptions, an iPad cart and more, we are well-equipped for exploration and discovery.

Students in Kindergarten-Grade 5 have regular library visits. Students are encouraged to drop by the Library for research and book check-out at appropriate times during the school day. We ask that Elementary students be accompanied by an adult during after-school hours (after 2:55pm).

All GAA students, staff and parents, are encouraged to check out Library resources. A maximum of 5 resources may be checked out at any one time per family/guardian of a child. We ask that materials be returned on a timely basis to enable access by all community members. New books will not be checked out until the families/ guardian's or child's books are returned. Students leaving the school must have a form signed by the library acknowledging the return of all materials. Year-end report cards will be issued once all library books have been returned or accounted for, this includes library resources checked out to parents.

Lost or damaged items may need to be replaced at your cost.

Specialist Classes

Our specialist teachers integrate their programs with the grade level curricula in order to expand students' understanding of concepts taught in the classroom. Students attend such specialist classes, as Arabic, Creative Arts, Physical Education, and Kitchen Lab. Some students will also receive specialist instruction in Islamic Education and UAE Social Studies in line with ADEK requirements.

Parents are not allowed entrance in the changing and/or locker rooms for grades 2 and above.

Bilingual and Multilingual Learners (BML)

BML in-class support is a service designed to enable non-native speakers of English to reach a sufficient degree of proficiency in the English language and to enhance participation in the mainstream classes. BML support is aligned with mainstream programs and adapted to meet the needs of students still learning the fundamentals of listening, speaking, reading and writing in English. The Inclusion Coach also provides support for the mainstream subjects by reviewing class assignments, giving further explanations and reinforcing concepts and subject specific terminology in the classroom setting.

WIDA placement tests are given whenever a child enters GAA and WIDA tests are made throughout the year to determine the student's readiness and ability level to differentiate in homeroom classes.



Student Support Services

The Student Support Team (SST) is tasked with supporting children with academic, social, emotional or transitional needs. They may involve specialist teachers and the Principal, if deemed necessary. The purpose of this process is to establish an understanding of a child's strengths and to define concerns so that we can discuss ways to adapt the school program or to design a more efficient and appropriate means of maximizing success at school. If the need for the service arises for your child, you will be contacted by your child's teacher for more information.

Extended Learning Activities (ELA)

All students are recommended to complete extended learning activities at home on a regular basis. ELA might be work that was not completed during the school day; reinforcement of skills introduced that day, web-based activities, reading, math games or project work. Additionally, parents should also include time after school to read with their child and time to play educational games. Meaningful ELA will be assigned by grade level and is collaboratively identified as a grade level focus which supports in-class learning and is expected to be completed. Please do not expect "busy work" or worksheets.

Co-Curricular Activities

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

At GEMS American Academy we offer both non-competitive and competitive sporting opportunities for our students from Grade 1 to 5. In addition, we also offer a wide range of academic and creative pursuits to enrich the 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 and this will be communicated before the activity begins. Students who participate in the non-competitive programs should be picked up promptly at 4:00pm at the end of the activity. All students, including siblings, not participating in an after school program go home by their normal mode of transport at 2:55pm.

Competitive activities

Grade 2 through 5 competitive activities are inclusive in nature and as much as possible will allow all students to become involved. Specific information about when these opportunities are available will be communicated through the Athletic and Activities Director. Further information is distributed throughout the year as the opportunities arise.

Field Trips

Throughout the year, field trips which are authentically linked to each Unit of Inquiry, are arranged including visits to theaters, museums, historic buildings, etc. They are considered part of the program and participation is required. Permission forms must be signed by a parent or guardian. Nannies and other non-parental caregivers are not to attend school field trips. Students must depart from school with their class. The families will pay for all transportation, entrance fees and guided tours.



Standards of dress and behavior are the same on field trips as during a regular school day (school uniform) and students are expected to conduct themselves appropriately. Full school uniform is to be worn including shirt, tie, black socks and black shoes. Please see the Parent Relations Executive for the GAA uniform policy.

SCHOOL UNIFORMS

Uniform Guidelines

GAA uniform guidelines are communicated at the time of admission and the GAA website has further information. The student uniform is compulsory and students are to arrive at GAA in their complete school uniform, including:

- All black shoes
- Socks: Solid black, blue or white
- If girls wear leggings/stockings/pantyhose/tights under their skirts, color must be solid navy blue or black
- Ties must be worn with the oxford shirt at all times during the school day
- For Physical Education, Athletic shoes must be worn
- Students wear the PE uniform for the entire school day on days when the student has scheduled PE classes.
- On swim days, students should wear their GAA school uniform and bring the recommended school swim kit.

GAA may not require uniforms whilst participating in after or out of school activities or on designated special dress 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 midriff
- No offensive logos or expressions on clothing

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:

- No makeup or loose jewelry is allowed.
- Necklaces should not be visible.
- Non-regulation outerwear may not be worn in school; it should be kept in lockers.



KG School Backpacks and Lunch Bags

Kindergarten has a no backpack policy (this includes carried and rolling backpacks).

Students will need their lunch box and a water bottle for school. If you would still like a small book bag for your child, we advise bags with measurements no greater than 9.5 inches (width) and 10.5 inches height, to fit inside our cubby space. Students may still need to bring bags for swim kits and there will be common areas to store these, yet for most days the smaller bag and their lunch bag will be the only required bags for KG1 and KG2 students.

Please note: Large backpacks and rolling/wheeled backpacks take up space we want to use for your child's learning.

Required swim kit includes:

- Dark blue/navy swimwear.
- Dark blue/navy swim cap for all students.
- Towels to dry off.
- No watches or bracelets.
- Flip-flops/sandals should be brought to be used in case of fire alarm, school shoes will be used in lieu of forgotten flip-flops/sandals.
- Goggles are recommended.
- Plastic bag is recommended to put wet swimwear in after class.

The school uniform is available for purchase at GAA. To view the uniform guide, please visit the website from THREADS, GAA's uniform service provider: <http://www.threadsme.com>

For any further uniform information please contact the GAA Parent Relations Executive.

All **Kindergarten** students need to have an extra set of clearly labeled uniform clothing (shirt, shorts, underwear, and socks) sent to school in a Zip-Lock bag in case a spare is needed.

INFORMATION COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

Technology

The effective integration of ICT into the curriculum has many benefits. GAA provides access to a wide range of instructional technologies. As students get older and more responsible and their creation of complex multimedia and written assignments increases, the use of a personal device that mirrors the technology used in the class may be approved. Students in the upper years of elementary may eventually seek to bring their own device to school. Such a device should be similar to those used in class so that teachers can effectively extend their direct teaching of applications, troubleshooting, publishing and internet safety to the context of the student device.



Internet Use at School

Students have age appropriate, filtered access to the Internet to conduct research and communicate about academic topics. As a condition of enrolment, every GAA students accepts our school-wide Acceptable Use Policy that outlines user privileges and responsibilities.

Internet Acceptable Use Policy

Use of the Internet is available to students at GAA through our network. The Internet expands classroom and library resources by making information and images available to students, teachers, library and media specialists. Access to these resources supports individual and group projects, collaboration and the exchange of ideas. Internet access also makes a contact with people all over the world a possibility, providing access to experts and expertise in every content area. GAA student Internet users and their families should understand that neither the School nor our faculty can completely control the content of the information obtained from other systems. There are always risks involved in internet use, but we believe used properly and intelligently, the advantages of access to the worldwide community outweigh the possible risks. GAA is proactive and provides students with cyber safety and digital citizenship curriculum.

Use of the GAA network is a privilege extended to students who act in an ethical, considerate and responsible manner. Abuses of the Internet, including participation in chat lines, plagiarizing the work of others, trespassing in another student's space, displaying or downloading information or images that are offensive, dangerous and/or objectionable, and giving our personal information, may result in loss of Internet access privileges. Violations may also lead to disciplinary actions outlined elsewhere in this Handbook.

PARENT COMMUNICATION

The school maintains close relations with parents, facilitating communication and cooperation. Keeping abreast of regular school communication is essential and parents are encouraged to actively read the various modes of communicating through the Student Passports, Seesaw, and the GAA Newsletter. Please make sure your email address is up to date so you receive essential GAA communication. If you are not receiving emails regularly from GAA please speak with the Parent Relations Executive to update your contact information.

At the beginning of the academic year, a *Back to School* information session will be held to introduce parents to the faculty and the general curriculum. This is followed by transition reports, three-way conferences and student led conferences

Visit the Classroom

During the academic year, parents are welcome to visit their child's classroom. **Please arrange a convenient time to visit with the classroom teacher in advance.** Individual appointments should be scheduled during the teacher's non-contact time or before or after the end of the school day. Please avoid discussing your child when other students are present.



If an emergency arises and you must contact your child or his/her teacher without a prior arrangement, please contact Reception in the first instance. Please do not go directly to the classroom during school hours as this disrupts in-class learning.

Parental Engagement

GAA has a firm understanding of the benefits of Parental Engagement. GAA parent engagement champions provide a full schedule of parent engagements. We believe in an organic approach, where the bridge between home and school is open and collaborative. Working together we become 'a school without walls' where students learn and grow in all surroundings.

GAA is focused on giving families the skills and resources to engage meaningfully in the learning and growth of their children. GAA is committed to partnering with parents in this endeavor, for the benefit of all our students.

Appointments with the Counselor

If you would like to discuss a specific issue, please contact the relevant counselor for your child's grade level. It is important you have already discussed the issue with your child's classroom teacher and the concern/grievance policy has been adhered to. Please see the appendix for contact information.

Change of Contact Details

The School Registrar, the Classroom Teacher, the Reception 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 to ensure consistent collaboration. We also request a phone number of a friend we can call if we cannot reach the parents.

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 not release records nor issue a Transfer Certificate.

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 1st 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 previously mentioned.



ASSESSMENT

Reporting to Parents

At GAA we communicate with parents about what students know, understand and can do. We describe the progress of a student's learning and identify areas for growth.

Reporting includes:

- Formal written reports (February & June)
- Transition report (October)
- Student Led Conferences (November & March)
- End of unit Summative Assessments

Student Led Conferences

Student Led 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, and celebrate achievement. Parents are expected to attend and participate in all conferences. **There are no classes for students on these days.**

Standardized Tests (MAP)

Three times a year, students in Grades 2 through 5 sit the MAP (Measure of Academic Progress) test, which is an adaptive comprehensive test that measures a student's abilities and achievements in language, mathematics and science. The assessment data that these tests create is used to assist in differentiating the curriculum to enhance student learning and set goals for future growth.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

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; 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.

Please be aware that medication may only be distributed by the GAA school nurse.

If a student has special health needs (medication, chronic illness or condition, allergies, or requires special procedure or intervention), parents must meet with the school nurse to arrange for these needs to be met. 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 parents by preparing a plan of care for their child and advising them as to what supplies the student will need at school.

Emergency Contacts

Parents must keep the school and the clinic informed of current work, cell, and home phone numbers, where they can be contacted should the need arise. This information can be updated with the Parent Relations Executive and/or the GAA Registrar. When able, make sure your child knows how to reach you during the day.

Forms

Each year school health forms will be required for all students. They are: Health information Form; Emergency Contact 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. If your child is asthmatic or has a life-threatening allergy, a physician-signed form to use or administer an inhaler or EpiPen will be required. 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.). If any allergies or asthma or any other conditions should inform the clinic and fill the concerned forms.

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 should 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 outdated. Over-the-counter medication to be held in the clinic must be in a sealed, unopened, new bottle. (For short time medication, ask a pharmacist for a separate bottle to be kept in the clinic, to prevent missed doses.)
- Parent/guardian must deliver medication to the school clinic - not the student. If you are giving it to the bus conductor, please write the details and attach the prescribed note from the physician.
- All medicine must be picked up by a parent at the end of the school year.
- The parents should give us the emergency medications that should kept at the clinic during school hours.



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

Any students with serious health concerns will have their names, pictures, and needs shared with the GAA school nurse and faculty by the parent.

Illness or Injury

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. Parents are requested to contact the classroom teacher and elementary secretary providing detailed information regarding their child's contagious disease. When fully recovered and the student returns to school, they need to bring the medical certificate regarding the illness or clearance certificate – one copy to the teacher and one to the nurse. 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.

Your child should 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 in the past 24 hours; feeling of nausea
- Diarrhea (return to school after 48 hours or 24 hours on medication)
- A frequent cough; productive cough
- 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 Pink Eye/Conjunctivitis; awakens with thick or sticky eye drainage; eyelashes 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 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 outpatient procedure or surgery, you must provide a physician's certificate stating when they can safely return to school and with any limitations/instructions. In all cases, the school nurse is the final arbiter and, if necessary in discussion with the Vice Principal, will signal when the child is "safe" to return to school.



Immunizations

The Health Authority of Abu Dhabi (HAAD) promotes a successful immunization program and 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. As per HAAD recommendation the school age vaccination will be in grade one regardless of the age of the students.

In Al Khaleej / SEHA clinic they will not accept the students from KG, they cover defaulters which mean the students who pass grade one to other grades and didn't receive the vaccine in the school for any reason. In this situation, the school will give an official letter to the parents to say that this student he/she didn't receive vaccination in grade one.

Students will be eligible to receive the vaccine in grade one only. As per the HAAD recommendations- for **grade 1 they will receive DPT-5th dose, OPV-5th dose, MMR- 2nd dose and Varicella- 2 doses; those who didn't receive MMR vaccine at grade 1 will receive it in school as per the consent as MMR defaulters; Grade 11 – DT, OPV and HPV-3 doses (HPV only for Females). These are administered by School health department at schools as per the schedule.**

When the school academic year starts, we will send the consent forms to the parents of the concerned classes as per the request from the school health department. As per the consent forms we receive, only SEHA will administer the vaccination at schools. All the parents should send a copy of the vaccination record at the time of admission itself and those who took any vaccination during their school year please update it to the clinic.

Health Screenings

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

Helpful Reminders

- Encourage your child to eat a healthy 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 required for participation and safety in PE.
- Encourage good hand-washing;
- The school has a "No Hat, No Play" policy and heat stress- air quality policy.
- Please inform the school if your child has any allergies. **Any food brought in must be free of nuts/nut products.**



Heat Policy

The GAA Manager of School Operations sends out warnings which limit outdoor play opportunities in the hotter seasons which follow GEMS Health and Safety Policy.

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	58	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	28	29	30	31	32	33	33	34	35
23°	23	23	23	24	25	25	26	27	28	28	29	30	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

Depending on the Heat Index reading, below steps to be followed

Heat Index between 35 C and 39 C

- 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 activities. Teachers to use discretion in modifying activities so that students participate in moderate-lower intensity activities. Regular water breaks will be offered.
- Breaks & Lunchtime: Students are advised to stay under shade during breaks and lunchtimes.

Heat Index between 40 C and 45 C

- Outdoor physical activity: Lower intensity activities are to be included only and for a maximum of ten minutes. Five-minute water breaks should be taken between activities.
- Breaks and Lunchtimes: Students remain indoors during break and lunchtimes.

Please contact your classroom teacher and 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.



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. Parents, please exit the building. GAA faculty take the lead role in evacuating your children. No one will be allowed to enter the school building when a fire alarm is sounding.
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 the field.
3. Emphasis is placed on remaining quiet and observing rules and directions during the fire drills.

Lockdown drill will be practiced immediately following announcement from GAA intercom.

MISCELLANEOUS INFORMATION

Lost and Found

Personal items found in the school are collected and passed along to the GAAPA. Please check with Reception for the location of the GAAPA lost and found. Parents are encouraged **to label all items with name/grade/section (e.g. KG1F)**, especially water bottles and lunch boxes and to check the Lost and Found frequently for labelled clothing. If items are not labeled it is difficult to return them to the appropriate student. Teachers are not responsible to look for items and will direct parents to the lost and found. Unattended school books will be returned to the TRC/Library for processing. At the end of each month, all lost and found items are donated to charity. If students bring valuables to school (e.g. smartphone, iPad) it is the students' responsibility for these items.

Telephones

The telephones are for official use only. In the case of emergency, the Receptionist will call the student's home. Please call the Reception when trying to contact a teacher. The teacher will call back as soon as he/she is free. Teachers are encouraged not to share their phone numbers or personal email addresses with parents. Students should not use their personal phones to call home, order food, or photograph without explicit permission. "Phone passes" are available to students for extraordinary circumstances.

Security

A security officer is on duty on the school campus at all times. GAA utilizes CCTV to monitor the campus 24 hours a day. The GAA officer is there to assist families during school operational hours and to make certain that academic buildings are properly locked during non-school hours. In case of an emergency, the security officers have access to a telephone.



Charitable Causes/ Community Service

Our school community supports a growing number of organizations and charitable causes. The Varkey GEMS Foundation (VGF) and the school-based champion takes a lead role in fundraising following the ADEK guidelines. These causes and services provide valued opportunities for our students to take action and demonstrate initiative and further develop their skills and understandings of citizenship and leadership. ADEK approved charitable drives and Community Action activities are organized through the Student Leaders in combination with authentic action from different class inquiries. It is important that charity work is carefully planned and strongly supported so that activities can be integrated into the school calendar. Ideas for fundraising should be brought to the attention of the Varkey GEMS Foundation representative, Vice Principal and Parent Relations Executive for endorsement. Proposals are considered throughout the school year in connection to the PYP Units of Inquiry and/or Global events.

Procedures for assigning class placement

GAA believes strongly in the importance of well-balanced mixed groups – we want children 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. 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.

SCHOOL BEHAVIOUR

Code of Conduct

In this school, a proactive and collaborative approach is used to solve discipline problems. The staff are committed to working together with children, parents, teachers and administrators to maintain high standards of behavior. Students are expected to behave appropriately and respectfully at all times. They must observe rules established with their teachers for classroom and playground activities.

Students are expected to abide by school rules and procedures any time they are at school, including after-school and evening activities, weekends and during any parent-sponsored events. Parents are asked to model and enforce GAA expectations and rules when on school grounds.



STUDENT RELATIONS POLICY (Code of Conduct)

Our aim is to create a community of learning in which every member has a right to receive an education in a safe and secure environment free from the threat of harm from others. GAA is committed to developing social awareness and reinforcing ethical and moral values among students so that they demonstrate respect for each other and value individual differences. If you have any questions or concerns regarding appropriate student or parent behavior, please see the previous behavioral plan or GAA counselor or Vice Principal.

Responsibilities

Community members, including students, parents and staff at GAA model how to take personal responsibility for conducting themselves at all times so that their individual behavior does not intimidate or harass any other community member or student for any reason whatsoever. Parents of GAA students are responsible for reporting to the appropriate teachers or counselor any instances of bullying type behaviors or other forms of intimidation that may come to their attention.

The academic and administrative staff at GAA is responsible for taking immediate action when instances of bullying type behaviors, intimidation or other anti-social behavior come to their attention, whether through personal observation or by a report from another student or a parent. Staff and parents should regularly remind students of the standards of behavior that are expected of them. All faculty follow the discipline with dignity approach and focus on encouraging positive behavior.

The Effects of Antisocial behavior

Anti-social behavior can take many forms ranging from the extremes of violence to less obvious acts such as deliberately excluding an individual from a group activity. Whatever forms this kind of behavior takes, it will be unwanted and unpleasant.

Bullying and intimidation perpetrated by fellow students can have a very adverse effect on a student's self-esteem, learning effectiveness and general health and well-being.

Commitment

GAA commits to its students that all reported incidents of bullying, harassment or other forms of antisocial behavior by one student or group of students towards another will be taken seriously and dealt with sensitively.

What is bullying?

Bullying is a pattern of behavior which includes the willful, conscious desire to hurt, threaten, frighten, intimidate or distress someone. Bullying can be:

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



For Students

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

Telling about bullying type behaviors is not telling tales. Bullying type behaviors are wrong and should be reported. 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. You should tell your parents about what is happening. Also tell your teacher, your counselor, the school nurse, Vice Principal, Principal 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 incident.

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 classroom teacher and then the counselor immediately. Check that your child is not inviting the bullying. Your child may have weak social skills. This does not justify bullying but may cause a child to receive negative attention. We recommend working with the school to develop strategies to support your child. Using the term “bullying” is taken very seriously at GAA and parents are advised to speak with their children regarding the full situation before identify bullying.

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.

Consequences

When students choose behavior, which falls below the basic expectations of the school, disciplinary action will be positive rather than negative in its approach and, while maintaining respect for the student, will ensure that the classroom learning environment is preserved.

Failure to choose to follow school rules and regulations is treated seriously. Our goal is for students to accept responsibility for their actions and begin to understand the link between their behavior and its effect on others.

Conferences and Problem Solving

After initial parent communications, some concerns about student behavior are referred by teachers to the counselor. In order to gather information about a problem, it is normal for a counselor and/or Vice Principal to schedule a meeting with the students involved. At this meeting, students discuss what occurred and they are counseled regarding appropriate behavior. With serious problems or those that repeat, a conference between the parents of the child and classroom teacher and counselor is scheduled.

Loss of Social Time (Lunch, recess, breaks, before or after school)

If students choose to demonstrate lack of control, they may be removed from the class activity



or lose the privilege of socializing with their friends for a designated length of time. The teacher who administered the appropriate consequences is responsible for the implementation of the loss of social time.

In-School Exclusion

GAA employs a progressive model of disciplinary consequences, and students who choose to repeatedly violate school rules or where the behavior concerned is more serious may receive an in-school exclusion. This takes place in school, under organized supervision. Students will complete work provided by teachers and will receive counseling and advice which relate to the reason for the suspension.

Home-Based Exclusion

If a serious problem occurs where any student's safety is threatened or there are concerns which remain unresolved after other techniques have been tried, a student may be placed on exclusion for a designated period of time while the matter is investigated and considered. In order for a student to be readmitted to school, a conference between the Vice Principal and the parents will be required. During a home exclusion, a student is not permitted to be on campus or to participate in any school related activity. If exclusions continue the principal and the parent will conference on the best placement for the student.

Expulsion

The school reserves the right to expel without refund of fees any student who chooses conduct that seriously disrupts the academic program or exerts a negative influence on other students. GAA follows ADEK protocols when removing a student permanently from the instructional environment.

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 inclusive. In the circumstance that parents have a complaint with a teacher, the school will treat it in accordance with its procedure.

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 contact their son's/daughter's teacher first. In most cases, the matter will be resolved. If the teacher/parent cannot resolve the matter alone, it may be necessary for him/her to contact the grade team leader.
2. Any complaint made directly to the Vice Principal or Principal will be referred back to the relevant teacher.



3. Teachers, Vice Principal, and the Principal will keep anecdotal records of concerns and complaints on the date when they were received and reviewed. The GAA teacher will document the outcome of any meeting in an emailed letter to the parent/guardian.

Most complaints will be resolved informally. If this does not happen, parents will be advised that they may follow the formal procedure below.

The grievance procedure would first include the classroom teacher, grade team lead, counselor, Vice Principal, Principal, and finally Head of School.

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) who will decide, after considering the complaint, 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 and parents will be informed of this decision in writing. The DIS will also explain the decision.

ACADEMIC HONESTY GUIDELINES

Failure to credit information that is not your own, whether in a research paper, homework or test, is known as plagiarism. Such activity is discouraged in the Elementary at GAA.

Plagiarism is using the ideas or words of others without clearly acknowledging or crediting the source of that information. Plagiarism is regarded as a type of theft and there are laws against it.

To avoid plagiarism, you must give credit whenever you use:

- Another person's idea, opinion, or theory
- A presentation that is not your creation
- Quotations
- A paraphrased version of an original.

If a student is found to have presented the work of another as their own, he/she will be required to re-write the assignment during recess. Parents and the Principal will be notified and a record of the infraction will be maintained. Further offences will have serious consequences.



STUDENT RELATIONS POLICY

Code of Conduct

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 prosocial 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:

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



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. This principle also values following the Primary Years Program learner profile attributes and attitudes.



Code of Conduct	Classroom	Hallways	Recess	Cafeteria
Be Safe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stay in designated areas. Use supplies and equipment appropriately Follow instructions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Walking feet Walk in class groups Keep hands, feet and body to self 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Be sun smart Use equipment properly Stay in designated playing areas Run only when permitted Kind hands and feet Wear appropriate footwear Report danger 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stay with your class Kind hands and feet Walking feet Sit down to eat Eat your own food Keep food on your plate or in your mouth
Be Respectful	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Raise hand to speak Use kind words Wear appropriate uniform Ask permission to use things Use manners Care for the environment Treat others the way we wanted to be treated 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Walk quietly respecting the learning of others Keep hallways neat and clean Acknowledge and greet others quietly and politely Smile Help others in need Hold doors for people with their hands full 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Follow instructions Share equipment Return all equipment Clean up after yourself 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Follow adult directions Use manners Wait to be dismissed by an adult Use inside voices Clean up after yourself Keep your area clean
Be a Learner	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Follow instructions Use whole body listening Be on time Do your best Be honest and fair Cooperate with teacher and classmates Accept differences Take care of property 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Walk with a purpose Be responsible Use time wisely Listen to instructions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Play fair and follow the rules Share and take turns Include others Cooperate with others 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Be on time Have lunch card or money ready Wait your turn in line Dispose of waste through recycling Aim to eat a balanced meal Eat your own food



Code of Conduct	Bathroom	Bus	Auditorium	PE	Swimming
Be Safe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Walking feet Use equipment appropriately Flush Wash hands with soap Report problems or danger 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sit down Wear your seatbelt Drink water only Keep hands, feet, and body to self 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Follow teacher instructions Kinds hands and feet Sit in one place Sit up straight in seat Enter and exit auditorium in an orderly manner 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Show integrity by waiting at entrance if unsupervised Be conscious of your surroundings Think before you do Keep hands, feet and body to self 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use walking feet Enter pool safely Stop, look and listen when whistle is blown Give swimmers space Always listen to lifeguards
Be Respectful	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Respect time Respect privacy Use a quiet voice Keep toilet area clean 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use a quiet voice Use kind words Move punctually Follow driver and bus conductor instructions Follow bus code of conduct 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Walk safely Pay attention Focus on the speaker & or program Stand respectfully for the UAE national anthem Remain seated during entire performance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Show empathy towards other's feelings Use kind words Move compassionately through space Respect equipment Care for personal fitness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tolerate different abilities Use equipment wisely Put equipment away after use Respect personal space & privacy Listen to instructors
Be a Learner	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have a purpose Have teachers' permission to use bathroom Use only enough water to wash your hands Return directly to class Be responsible 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Be on time outside waiting Sit in assigned seat if requested Be cooperative 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Listen watch and learn Remain silent during presentation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Be on time and ready Stay engaged at all times Reflect on movement Commit to best effort Be fair and follow rules 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Listen, watch and learn Focus in and out of pool Know your level and challenge yourself Set personal goals Come on time and be ready Change quickly



Minor Behavioral Infractions

Minor Infractions are to be managed in the situation by the staff member or the teacher. It is not necessary to document all Minor Infractions through an incident report. However, once a pattern of minor infractions emerges it will be necessary to document to the possible escalation to Major Infraction.

Infraction	Definition	Regular Strategy	Possible Consequences
Inappropriate Language	Non-threatening, non-directed verbal messages or gestures used within conversation that include swearing, name calling, or use of words in an inappropriate way	<p><u>Classroom/General</u></p> <p>Step 1: Verbal Redirection (Warning)</p>	<p>Moved to another area</p> <p>Separation</p> <p>Timeout/ Cool down</p> <p>Assigned play area</p> <p>Parent contact</p> <p>Lunch timeout</p> <p>Letter home</p> <p>Recess privileges revoked</p> <p>Other consequence to match the behavior</p>
Defiance/ disrespect	Refusal to follow classroom or school rules, or staff directions, talking back and/or socially rude interactions	<p>Step 2: Age appropriate timeout in Class and reflection</p> <p>Step 3: Buddy Class (if needed)</p> <p>Step 4: Home contact</p>	
Disruption	Intentional behavior causing an interruption in class or activity. Disruption includes loud talk, noise with materials or body parts, or getting out of seat	<p><u>Playground/Lunchroom</u></p> <p>Step 1: Redirection (Warning)</p> <p>Step 2: Age appropriate timeout next to duty teacher</p>	
Rough play	Non-threatening overly physical interactions	<p>Step 3: Timeout at bench or table for the duration of the remaining recess/lunch</p>	
Lying	Student delivers message that is untrue and or deliberately violates rules	<p>Step 4: Home contact</p> <p>* Age appropriate time out would be one minute for each year of a child's age.</p>	
Dress Code Violation	Not wearing the appropriate school uniform Repeated uniform infractions will result in a phone call home		

Major Behavioral Infractions

Major behavioral infractions such as fighting, continued minor infractions, harassment/bullying and abusive interactions with peers and/or adults may result in more severe consequences, including removal from the classroom, immediate parent meeting, and the involvement of administration. For more details and definitions of other major infractions, please contact the Vice Principal.



IMPORTANT CONTACTS WHOM TO CONTACT FIRST

If you have a concern or grievance, please follow the appropriate steps below to schedule a solution of oriented meetings:

Teacher - Team Leader - Counselor - Vice Principal - Principal - Head of School

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

DEPARTMENT	NAME	EMAIL ADDRESS
Head of School & CEO	Robert Rinaldo	hos_gaa@gemsedu.com
Elementary School Principal	Mike Hopaluk	esprincipal_gaa@gemsedu.com
Elementary Vice Principal (Gr1-3)	Joe Aldus	eslgvprincipal_gaa@gemsedu.com
Elementary Vice Principal (Gr3-5)	John O’Neill	esugvprincipal_gaa@gemsedu.com
KG Vice Principal	Niamh Callanan	kgvprincipal_gaa@gemsedu.com
Elementary Secretary	Jihu Lee	elemsecretary_gaa@gemsedu.com
PYP Coordinator	Tiffany Pulci	t.pulci_gaa@gemsedu.com
KG-Grade 1 Counsellor	LaTanya Weaver	l.weaver_gaa@gemsedu.com
Grade 2-5 Counsellor	Melanie Moses	m.moses_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
Manager School Operations	Biju Mathai	b.vadakethalikal_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

COMMUNICATION:

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



GEMS AMERICAN ACADEMY PARENT CONTRACT

At GAA, we recognize that a successful partnership between school and home is one of the cornerstones of a child’s educational success. We would respectfully ask parents to support this partnership by completing and returning this Parent Contract to Reception.

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. No student will enter a GAA classroom without a late slip.
- Attend special activities sponsored by GAA to build my understanding of learning outcomes and my capacity to support learning at home.
- Read all communications from the school: Student Passport, Class Communication and GAA Newsletter
- Actively follow the GAA grievance policy and be solution oriented.
- Support the GAA Uniform Policy
- Model the behavior that GAA expects from its faculty and students.
- Support GEMS Culture of Kindness demonstrating appropriate and respectful communication (including email) with all GAA staff.

I have read and understood both the Parent Contract and the Community Handbook.

Parent of: _____

Grade: _____

Signed: _____

Date: _____



IB Learner Profile Attributes

Inquirer, Knowledgeable, Thinker, Communicator, Principled, Open-Minded, Caring, Risk-Taker, Balanced, and Reflective

By embodying the IB Learner Profile Attributes and Attitudes we will develop and strengthen our GAA learning community together.