

GAA Inclusion Policy

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1. Strategic Goals

GEMS American Academy (GAA) Statement of Purpose (strategy & targets):

GAA commits to students of determination experiencing a sense of belonging, safety, competency, a relevant curriculum, and a sense of autonomy in a common learning environment with similar-aged peers. This is promoted by committed leadership, collaboration of all stakeholders, students and families having a central voice, continuous professional learning, monitoring and evaluating at all levels to continually develop inclusive culture, policies and everyday practices.

GAA embraces the experience of inclusion where diversity is made visible as a strength, respectful relationships are continually enhanced and all students fully participate in learning through adjustments and teaching strategies tailored to meet the diverse range of learners reflected in wider society.

By working together we strengthen our capacity to provide the foundation for a richer global future for all and enhance the wellbeing of every member of the GAA community.

2. GAA Mission and Vision

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.

At GEMS American Academy (GAA) we provide each student with a holistic, inquiry based, engaging program of studies. We prepare each student to be an internationally minded citizen who takes action to contribute positively to their community and the world.

Our inclusive philosophy dictates that all learners 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 .

3. Targets

GEMS American Academy- Abu Dhabi welcomes students who are English Language Learners (ELL) and/or children with mild to moderate learning differences who require Learning Support (LS) services, and/or students who have been identified as Gifted, Talented and High Ability Learners.

GAA guiding principles require that school be a supportive and integrated learning community. These principles define a path towards creating an inclusive learning community.

- All children can, do, and will learn.
- All teachers can support students to reach their full potential.
- The teacher is the most important architect of a child's learning environment.
- Diversity enriches.
- Strategies that define and comprise good teaching are applicable to all students.
- Collaboration with teaching specialists enriches the delivery of classroom content.
- GAA strongly advocates an inclusive approach for the education of all children. When it is in the interest of the student and the class, short-term interventions out of the regular classroom may be more effective in meeting some learners with additional needs.

Our **inclusion provision** allows students to:

- Participate as equally as possible in educational opportunities for the benefit of all students
- Make effective academic progress to reach their individual potential
- 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 skills that will allow them to be engaged, creative, compassionate contributors to society

4. Strategy

In order for all learners to engage in successful learning, GAA recognizes the importance in setting goals and monitoring learning with intentionality and planfulness. At GAA we strive to intentionally design environments that reduce barriers, so that every learner can engage in rigorous, meaningful learning.

GAA offers a 3-Tiered System of Support for all learners:

<p>Tier 1</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Teacher designs lessons that allow all students to access learning ● Teacher monitors and provides specific adjustments for struggling students ● Students may need accommodations to access learning ● Meeting standard is within reach ● Teacher provides compacting, open ended/higher order thinking questions for GT students ● Inclusion Specialist collaborates on strategies ● ELL students receive accommodations within the classroom <p><u>Plans:</u> SSP T1, AP, ALP, ELP <u>Referral:</u> By teacher after 1 semester for additional support</p>
<p>Tier 2</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Some students have skills that are emerging/developing (1-2 grade levels below expectations) ● Inclusion Specialist may provide push in/ pull out support targeted interventions (in addition to regular instruction) ● Accommodations are provided to help student access learning ● GT students may receive our of class enrichment classes/extended learning ● ELL students need ELL English support ● May be long or short term support <p><u>Plans:</u> SSP T2, IEP, ALP, ELP <u>Referral:</u> By Inclusion specialist for external evaluation</p>
<p>Tier 3</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● A few students require intensive 1-1 support to access learning ● Curricular modifications are needed ● Students may follow an alternate pathway for academic classes ● Student likely has cognitive impairment/ intellectual disability ● ELL students are new to English and need ELL English Class as well as English Resource class ● Student may have an Inclusion assistant and receive push in/pull out support form inclusion Specialist ● Long term support <p><u>Plans:</u> IEP, ELP</p>

5. Standard Provision

5.1 GEMS Definition of Inclusion

The GEMS vision for Inclusive Education is that all students receive the support they need to meaningfully belong to their school and wider community, feel highly valued for their contributions, engage purposefully in learning and experience academic, cultural, social and emotional success in a common learning environment.

5.2 Inclusion for all Learners

Our aim is to provide an accessible and enriching curriculum for all groups of students, including, but not limited to:

Gifted and Talented Learners (GT) At GEMS American Academy we believe in providing the best possible education for students of all abilities. We plan our teaching and learning so that each student can aspire to the highest level of personal achievement. In accordance with GAA's ethos, all students will be given full access to all areas of learning and teachers will endeavor to ensure that all students reach their full potential. We acknowledge that gifted children think at such higher levels of complexity and, while they can benefit from some aspects of the school day, they also require access to a curriculum that allows them to move ahead faster and pursue their areas of interest and talent. Gifted and Talented (GT) students may have an advanced intellectual aptitude, or an exceptional talent in music, art or sport.

GT students may be identified through an IQ (WISC) assessment, or the CAT4 cognitive ability test; a mean score of 130-plus will indicate if a child's cognitive ability is beyond that of their age-appropriate level. This is used alongside data from teacher assessments, conversations with parents, and discussions with the children themselves. Teachers may also be asked to complete a questionnaire aimed at collecting information about the student's characteristics and learning styles.

Teachers support gifted and talented students within the classroom setting by enriching their learning with higher level thinking skills that encourage them to analyze, evaluate and create across the curriculum. Gifted and Talented students will be enrolled in honors classes, as well as given opportunities to take part in competitions, independent projects and/ or extension tasks that recognise their unique abilities. At GAA, there are opportunities for these students to lead clubs and activities, participate in music and drama performances for the school community as well as contribute to art exhibitions. In primary, an enrichment program aimed at STEM activities gives students an opportunity to think critically and engage with like-minded children.

English Language Learners (ELL) Particular care is given to students whose first language is not English. However, these students must not be regarded as having a learning difficulty solely because the language or form of language of their home is different from English, the language of instruction at GAA. It is necessary, consequently, to assess their proficiency in English using the WIDA MODEL (Measure of Developing English Language) before planning any additional support that might be required. Assessments to new students and existing ELL students are given 2 times per school year in September-October and again in April-May.

In Primary, support is provided through differentiated instruction, co-taught classes, and small group pull-out targeted support by inclusion specialists. *In Secondary*, support is provided in ELL English Classes (Grades 6-10), ELL Resource classes (Grades 6-10), IB Language B (Grades 11 & 12), as well as co-taught classes/ push-in support. Assessed students will receive an English Language Plan (ELP) based on the results of the WIDA assessment and assigned a case manager. Students with scores at or below 4.5 (Bridging) will have access to ELL classes listed above. Adjustments are made on a case by case basis. Teachers and specialists will monitor their progress across the curriculum.

- ELL English - Parallels grade 6-10 English curriculum units of study with adjustments made to standards timelines, materials/texts, assessment,
- ELL Resource - Support class for students acquiring the English Language
- English B - An IB English Acquisition Course (two-years in length - grades 11 and 12).

Students of Determination (SoD) These are learners who have additional learning needs. The UAE School Inspection Framework defines a special education need, as 'Educational needs which are different from those of the majority of students, and which arise from the impact of a disability or recognized disorder'. A student requires special education provision if they have a need arising from the impact of a disability or recognized disorder which requires the school to make specific modifications or provide specific supports to prevent, remove or reduce any potential barriers to ensure a student can access education on an equitable basis within the common learning environment with same-aged peers.

At GAA, students may present with one or more of the following learning needs including, but not limited

to:

- Specific learning disorder in literacy - Dyslexia
- Specific learning disorder in mathematics - Dyscalculia/Acalculia
- Dyspraxia/Developmental Coordination Disorder
- Speech and Language disorder with weaknesses in verbal skills which are sometimes associated with earlier delays in language development
- Developmental Delays in early childhood
- Attention Deficit Disorder, limited attention span, poor organizational skills, impulsive behavior, sound sensitive (students may receive medication for these difficulties)
- Executive Functioning difficulties
- Sensory Processing Difficulties
- Autism Spectrum Disorders
- Behavioral, Social and Emotional barriers to learning
- Medical reasons that affect learning
- Difficulties arising from disrupted educational experience

5.3 Inclusion Team Monitors Progress and Reviews Services

On a regular basis throughout the year, in each division, a Student Support Team consisting of Inclusion team members, principals/VPs, counselors and/or teachers convenes to assess the needs of students of concern at GAA (academic, social/emotional/behavioral).

The Inclusion Specialist schedules an annual review report of all inclusion services and makes recommendations for the next school year. If a student continues to reach their IEP goals and no longer requires academic intervention, they can be moved to Tier 2 and placed on an accommodation plan or can be removed from the program if agreed upon by the case manager and parents.

If a student no longer requires accommodations within the classroom, they may be removed from the inclusion program with a case manager and parent's permission.

The student will be monitored for at least 1 semester to ensure they are successful without support.

5.4 Least Restrictive Environment

At GAA, students with additional needs are placed in the least restrictive environment and receive the majority of their instruction within the general education classroom setting. The standard services provided in this inclusive environment include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Differentiated instruction
- Various classroom accommodations
- Various testing accommodations
- Assistive technology
- Small group instruction
- Small group interventions
- 1:1 interventions
- 1:1 support from a Learning Support Assistant
- Modified curriculum and assessment

Additional considerations and services include:

- Using "people first" language when speaking about our students of determination.

- Development, implementation, and annual reviews of Individual Education Plans (IEPs).
- Ensuring that all who are involved with students of determination are aware of the procedures for identifying, supporting, and teaching them.
- Ensuring students have full access to all school activities, including extracurricular activities, so far as it is reasonably practical and relates to the child's needs.
- Ensuring the identification of all students of determination as early as possible in their school career so that attainment can be raised.
- Ensuring that parents of students of determination are kept fully informed of their child's progress and attainment.
- Ensuring that students of determination are involved, where practicable, in decisions affecting their future education.
- Recognizing the important role of external agencies being involved in meeting the needs of the student and referring families to these agencies in a safe and responsible manner.

5.5 A 3-Tiered Model of Support

GAA employs a 3-tiered model of support to meet the different needs of students which acknowledges that most needs can be met by the teacher (Tier 1: Universal), whilst some may require specific interventions (Tier 2: Targeted), and a few may require a high degree of personalization and possibly external support by specialists (Tier 3: Intensive and Individualized).

- **Tier 1 - Universal Support**

At GAA, our teachers know their students best, as they interact with them daily. When teachers are concerned about a student's learning, they will make adjustments to the way a student can access learning by differentiating instruction, modifying their environment. They will talk to parents, collaborate with colleagues, consult with the student support team, counselors and/or leadership. The classroom teacher will create a Student Learner Profile to monitor strategies that are being implemented in the classroom. The student will be monitored for up to one semester.

- **Tier 2: Targeted Support**

Tier 2 support is targeted support to students who don't respond to Tier 1 classroom adjustments and interventions and who continue to need additional support in a particular area. These supports may be for academic, language, behavioral or emotional needs. Students may have an Individual Education plan, Accommodation plan, behavior support plan, English Language support plan to articulate strategies and goals.

- **Tier 3: Individualized Support**

Tier 3 is individualized and intensive intervention designed to help students with severe and persistent academic, social, emotional, and/or behavioral needs, including students with disabilities. They may also be students with little to no English. Students will have a learning plan (IEP/ELP) and may also require the support of a 1-1 inclusion assistant. These students may require a modified curriculum or alternate learning pathway.

5.6 GAA will provide students with additional learning needs an opportunity to follow an appropriate curriculum pathway and achieve appropriate outcomes by:

- Ensuring all students with additional learning needs have access to a broad and balanced school curriculum that includes access to the full range of extracurricular activities, which shall be adapted to meet their needs, where appropriate.
- Ensuring that where any agreed modified curriculum pathway may not fulfill equivalency requirements, parents are made aware of this and sign an undertaking of acknowledgment.
- GAA offers the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme (IB DP) and it is available to all qualifying students in Grades 11 and 12 who meet course prerequisites. Students with learning differences wanting to enroll in the IB DP or take certificates must present their educational psychological evaluation report to the IB for eligibility of inclusive assessment arrangements

(IAA). Students with Individual Education Plans (IEPs), Accommodation Plans(AP/504) or English Language Acquisition (ELP) plans are guided to choose the appropriate combination and load of IB courses in conjunction with the GAA diploma. This occurs in their 10th grade year. In Grade 11, the Student Support Team and IB Diploma Coordinator meet to review relevant student documentation and accommodation plans to ensure that these supports are in place and applied for 12 months prior to the IB exam, and valid for the duration of the program- 21 months. The IB believes that all candidates should be allowed to demonstrate their ability under assessment conditions that are as fair as possible. Therefore, the DP Coordinator works with the Student Support Team to identify and offer accommodations for students that are in line with the IB Inclusive Assessment Access philosophy and policies.

Adjusted Curricular Pathway

For certain students with cognitive impairments in one or more areas, the traditional learning pathway/curriculum may not be accessible or appropriate. For these students, a modified program of studies will be recommended.

1. Students are identified and referred via:
 - Educational Psychological evaluation
 - Triangulation of MAP, CAT4, Classroom assessments, other internal assessments
2. Parents are informed and signed approval for modified program of studies is given
3. Students enrolled in 1 modified program of studies (eg Math foundations) may be eligible for GAA HS diploma with modification in 1 subject area identified on transcript with attached IEP.
4. Students enrolled in 2 or more modified programs of study may not be eligible for a GAA High School diploma, and will receive a Certification of High School Completion instead.
5. Current Adjusted curricular offerings are:
 - Middle School Math Foundations grade 6-8 (Modified: Program of studies is adjusted to meet individual student needs. Learning is scaffolded and skills are not at grade level standards.
 - English Language Arts Acquisition(ELL English) grades 6-11 (not modified: Program of studies follows Grade level standards adjusted for English language learners (firm goal, flexible means)
6. All efforts are made to return students from Adjusted Curricular pathways to mainstream curriculum. However, by Grade 9 the student's pathway will be fixed and reflected on the report card and transcripts.

5.7 Assessment Accommodations: GAA will ensure that students with additional learning needs are not disadvantaged during any form of assessment by:

- Ensuring all accommodations and modifications reflect the student's normal way of working in the classroom.
- Ensuring permissions for accommodations and modifications are sought and adhere to policies/guidelines stipulated by external assessment providers and examination boards, where necessary.

5.8 Roles and Responsibilities

The Senior Leaders will:

- Ensure inclusive provision is a standing agenda item of senior leadership and Board of Trustees meeting
- Develop and review their inclusive provision as part of their School Development Plan including measurable targets, in order to evaluate and improve provision and accessibility for students with additional learning needs.
- Ensure a member of the senior leadership team has direct oversight of inclusive provision in the school
- Appoint a member of staff to be responsible for the coordination and provision for gifted and talented learners and work in conjunction with middle leaders

- Ensure all staff have access to a program of CPD opportunities related to adaptive teaching and ensure staff are trained in student protection and safeguarding awareness measures which include how to identify concerns which may be specific to students with additional learning needs, as per the ADEK policy on Child Protection
- Establish a risk assessment procedure of all structures within the school to be undertaken to identify and mitigate any hazards which may present heightened risks to those with communication, mobility, sensory, and behavioral needs
- Ensure data on the identification of students with additional learning needs is submitted to ADEK as per any request
- Ensure all incidents of maltreatment (particularly bullying or discrimination) against students with additional learning needs are recorded and resolved, as appropriate
- Establish a system for the emergency evacuation of all people of determination (students, staff, and visitors), ensuring that key persons identified are aware of their roles, and that training and awareness sessions have been delivered in a timely and appropriate manner to the school community
- Undertake overall responsibility for the safe evacuation of all people of determination during emergency situations

The Director of Inclusion will (1):

Retains a specialized Special education qualification.

- Collaborate with Admissions to accept students with special needs who have a reasonable expectation of success with GAA's curriculum, and to provide them with opportunities to learn
- Ensure that the requirements of every student with special needs are met
- Apply and monitor the implementation of the principles and systems of GAA's inclusion program
- Promote a culture of inclusion and concern for the rights of all students
- Create an appropriate school environment that ensures high-quality inclusion programming
- Maintain a system of recordkeeping for the Inclusion Program
- Monitor the efficacy of GAA's Inclusion program and the work of the school's inclusion specialists
- Monitor the student identification, referral, and tracking system
- Coordinate all aspects of educational, behavioral, social, and emotional provision for students with additional learning needs through liaison with other teachers and professionals
- Cooperate with the requirements of ADEK, the Department of Special Education in the Ministry and Directorate of Special Education and participate in meetings, courses, and activities (as required)
- Strengthen relationships with parents and to create awareness about inclusion services
- Provide opportunities for professional development for inclusion teachers and learning support assistants

Inclusion Teacher (at least 1 per cycle) will:

Retains a specialized Special education qualification.

- Provide support for identification of the specific needs of individual students
- Lead the development, implementation and annual review of individual education plans (IEP), Accommodation plans (AP) and Student Support Plans (SSP) including the development of instructional and educational strategies and the modification and adaptation of curriculum structures
- Regularly review student IEP/SSP goals and communicate termly progress/updates to parents
- Ensure that IEP/SSP goals are reviewed with teachers and other staff and accommodations are implemented across all areas of learning

- Model appropriate teaching strategies as co-teaching or team teaching with the classroom teacher and other staff
- Collaborate with classroom/subject area teachers on student specific intervention strategies
- Provide individual or small group work inside or outside of the classroom environment
- Maintain effective communication with parents/service providers/counselor
- Support the Learning Support Assistant (LSA) assigned to their caseload students with instructional strategies, feedback, including year end appraisal

Teachers will:

- Implement the guidelines of the Inclusion policy on a daily basis, by taking responsibility for the progress and development of every student in their class, including those experiencing additional needs
- Create a learning environment where all students are able to access the curriculum. Ensuring the appropriate accommodations or modifications are in place to ensure students can successfully engage with learning
- Participate in the development of IEP learning goals with the Inclusion Specialist
- Participate in annual review meetings where possible with the parents and Inclusion Specialist
- Communicate regularly with parents
- Implement student specific strategies and adjustments as mandated by the IEP/ recommended by the inclusion specialist
- Co-teach/ team teach/co-plan with the Inclusion specialist
- Support the LSA with specific learning/lesson adjustments

Inclusion Assistants will:

- Work with an individual student or with small groups of students through the guidance of the Inclusion Support Team to assist classroom teachers in providing effective instruction to students with diverse learning needs
- Facilitate the modification, implementation and outcomes of the students' educational programmes with the guidance and support of the classroom teacher who is responsible for the educational programme provided
- Engage in class-wide monitoring of student learning (e.g., independent or small-group work) identified and planned by teachers and the Inclusion Support Team
- Collect formative assessment data on student performance and progress, based on systems designed by teachers or Inclusion Support Team
- Build self-help skills and independence in the student
- Apply current best practice and strategies learned through professional development courses, in-service training, mentoring and workshops
- Follow all processes outlined in a memorandum of understanding (MOU) when employed by parents of students with additional needs that clearly sets out the terms and conditions of employment within the school

Parents and Guardians will:

- Work in partnership with the school to support their child and play a central role in the development of inclusive practices including the development of Individual Education Plans (IEP) and attend the annual review meeting of the IEP
- Parents/guardians will sign a school contract & other agreements in relation to additional provision agreements based on identified needs (assessment/LSA/Therapies)
- Collaborate with the school regarding the education services provided to their children including assessments, accommodations, and provision

- Share feedback regarding provision, accommodations and service provided including use of assessment procedures, education service planning and the evaluation of support and assessment services

Students will be supported to:

- Take responsibility for their own learning and centrally contribute to IEPs and related programme design and review at a developmentally appropriate level
- Advocate for their learning needs
- Take their place in society with confidence

5.9 Physical Accessibility

GAA will ensure school buildings and learning spaces are reflective of a universal design approach and provide equitable access to education for all students.

- Parking, pathways and playgrounds are accessible to all
- Entry points to the buildings are wheel accessible and have ramps and automatic doors
- Stairs have handrails
- An elevator is available for students with mobility challenges
- Evacuation chairs are available to ensure safe exit from the building (As per PEEP).
- Bus transportation is available to all students with additional learning needs and adjustments are made as needed to accommodate them adequately.
- A risk assessment plan is developed for all tier 3 students attending field trips.
- All classrooms are accessible and resourced with a variety of tools that meet individual needs
- One bathroom stall per floor will be wheelchair accessible

6. Admissions

At GAA we value the unique contributions of all learners and believe that when diverse students learn side by side, everyone benefits. We welcome children with a range of learning preferences and abilities, including students of determination (SoD), students who are gifted and talented (GT) and students who are English Language Learners (ELL). GAA follows the ADEK inclusion policy and procedures and makes every attempt to accommodate all students in their age appropriate grade level, provided we have the capacity to admit them within that grade. In order to maintain a reasonable balance of support, GAA will cap the number of students at each grade level at approximately 20%.

Considerations in admitting students with limited proficiency in English and/or additional learning needs to the GAA Student Support Services include:

1. GAA would like to ensure that it will be able to meet the academic, social, behavioral, and/or emotional needs of the student.
2. These needs can be met in an inclusive classroom environment with the support of the teacher and Support Services Staff.
3. For students to fully participate in the school's instructional programs, students need to have a level of English language proficiency. .
 - a. Applicants in Grades 6-10 with limited English proficiency will enter the ELL program and may be included in a foundational English class and ELL resource class.
 - b. Applicants for Grade 11 and 12 benefit from being fully proficient in English, as the ELL program is not available in these grades.
 - c. Applying students may be asked to take a GAA admissions placement test to determine the level of English support they will require.
4. If the student is identified as having limited English skills and/or Additional Learning Needs, they may be admitted if:

- a. Parents elect to enroll them in a support program
- b. Parents will employ, if required, additional supports so as to help their child make effective academic progress which may include (and not limited to):
 - Occupational Therapy
 - Speech and Language Therapy
 - Behavioral Therapy
 - Educational Psychology evaluation
 - One-to-one Learning Support Assistant (LSA)

5. After a student has been admitted to GAA, the school will regularly evaluate the student's progress and needs to determine the school's continued ability to meet that child's educational needs.

6. Parent partnership is highly valued to ensure the best learning outcomes for students with additional learning needs.

- GAA offers an academic-based educational program. Students who are unable to access traditional learning in an academic based program will be considered eligible to enroll in an alternate pathway leading to an Individualized Diploma or Certification of High School Completion.
- During the Admissions process, some students may be placed on a probationary status to ensure placement is appropriate at GAA. Every attempt is made to meet the needs of all students, however, GAA may need to deny admission to any student for whom an appropriate educational programme and support services are not available.
- Admission decisions are made by the Head of School upon recommendations by the Principal, Inclusion Director, counselor and any other relevant teachers after a review of previous school records and references, admissions assessments, and any external psychological educational assessments and documentation.
- In cases where a student is not able to access the curriculum adequately, despite the accommodations and modifications provided, it may be necessary to consider a further evaluation. This evaluation will help us gain a comprehensive understanding of the child's specific needs and abilities, enabling us to provide the most appropriate educational environment. If it is determined through the evaluation process that our school may not be able to meet the child's needs effectively, we will work collaboratively with the parents to explore alternative educational options. Our primary concern is the overall well-being and educational success of each student, and we are committed to ensuring that they receive the best possible education.

Inability to Accommodate

Though GAA seeks to support students with a wide variety of skills and aptitudes, careful consideration is given to what we can offer, based on the resources we have available and grade level capacity. Our responsibility is to ensure that each student is in their best educational placement to meet their needs. Because of this, GAA reserves the right to disenroll a student for the following reasons:

1. The class/grade level that the student wants to enroll in is at capacity.
2. The family has not made the school aware of any pre-existing learning needs.
3. The family does not comply with the request of the school to provide professional testing or support services for learning needs.
4. Despite all efforts by the inclusion program, the student does not make satisfactory progress and the family agrees that GAA is no longer the best learning environment for their child.

7. Inclusive Education Priorities

7.1 Admissions, Participation and Equity

- In order to maintain a balanced provision of support for all students, GAA will limit enrollment of students with additional needs to a maximum of 20% of the total student body.

- GAA will prioritize the enrollment of students with additional learning needs and their siblings in the same school.
- GAA will request the original clinical assessment reports from parents completed by any relevant specialists such as a therapist, psychologist, or pediatrician. Failure to produce such documentation may result in disenrollment.
- Should an Individual Assistant be needed to provide individualized support, parents will sign a contractual agreement with the school and IA, and assume responsibility for the LSA salary
- GAA may be able to enroll and provide support for students with high needs in the early years where a play-based curriculum is the predominant mode of learning, with the understanding that enrollment at GAA may not be for the long term.
- Students who require a modified curriculum due to the high level of learning needs may graduate with an Individualised Diploma (or certificate of completion from GAA) given the acknowledgement and consent of a parent or guardian.
- In the event that GAA is unable to meet the needs of any students with additional learning needs, the school will submit an inability to accommodate notification to ADEK and the parents within 7 days of the admission decision being issued .
- GAA will support the transition process for all students with additional learning needs.
- Admissions will ensure that the school Admissions Policy reflects GEMS guidelines on Inclusion.

7.2 Leadership and Accountability

School leaders will:

- Empower all stakeholders to develop the attitudes, approaches and strategies to build the expertise and culture where students who experience additional needs are welcomed, accepted, valued and well prepared for their next stages of development and education
- Ensure that there is a clear structure within the school for inclusive education as outlined in this policy and the GAA Inclusion Handbook
- Follow local legislation requirements about Inclusive Education practices

7.3 Systems of Support for Inclusive Education

GEMS staff will:

- Establish learning environments that encourage and support the active involvement and inclusion of every student- physically, academically, socially, emotionally and culturally
- Ensure that all staff are trained in inclusive education techniques and that they are appropriately proficient and resourced to meet the needs of diverse learners
- Have a memorandum of understanding that clearly sets out the terms and conditions of employment within the school when a parent has employed a LSA to support a student
- Ensure that Individual Education Plans and English Learning Plans are implemented and direct the strategies used by teachers to meet the educational goals for students with additional needs. This information will be shared, with parental consent, to support transition processes.

7.4 Cooperation, Coordination and Partnerships

GAA staff will:

- Collaborate with parents and caregivers of children with additional needs to ensure high quality and appropriate provision, accommodations & services so children are well prepared with the skills and abilities to take on further education, training, employment and community engagement
- Centrally involve parents and caregivers in the use of assessment procedures, education provision planning and review, as well as review of overall inclusive provision in the school
- Work collaboratively with special education centers, medical facilities and other supportive

agencies in the provision of assessments, therapies and accommodation guidelines

7.5 Fostering a Culture of Inclusion

GAA staff will foster a culture of inclusion through:

- Ensuring all stakeholders have an awareness, understanding and appreciation of neurodiversity
- Providing training to educators at all levels to ensure they are confident at meeting the needs of all learners
- Increasing the representation of all types of learners in education and promotional materials (e.g. newsletters, online sources) to highlight the abilities and capacities of individuals of determination

7.6 Resourcing for Inclusive Education

GAA staff will:

- Ensure an appropriate percentage of the school budget is allocated for the development and support of school based provision for inclusion
- Invest in professional learning for all staff to ensure they are knowledgeable and effective in the use of evidence-based instructional strategies, personalized planning techniques and appropriate use of curriculum
- Ensure that wherever possible, costs to families for required services are reasonable and, reflect good value for money indicated by efficiency of delivery and impact upon student outcomes
- Ensure that additional fees represent the actual costs of the services; there is a clear rationale for additional services, including an IEP, targets and impact measures for students who experience particularly complex and severe levels of special education needs which require the addition of high levels of specialists provision, funding and contractual agreements. There will be regular review and evaluation of the quality of delivery and impact upon student outcomes, including progress towards intended learning outcomes
- Ensure that buildings and learning spaces are reflective of a universal design approach and provide equitable access to education for all students

8. Glossary of Terms

Student Support Team (SST) – the team that makes decisions concerning actions to provide all students with an optimal learning environment to meet their needs. These actions could focus on an individual student or the entire school. The team consists of divisional principals, programme coordinators, school counselor, inclusion specialist early intervention teacher and a school nurse (if appropriate).

Special Educational Needs (SEN) - a recognised disability, impairment and/or learning difference.

Learning Support (LS) – the support for students whose individual needs are outside the range of standard educational programmes and who are not language support students.

Gifted and Talented learner- a student who gives evidence of **high** performance capability in such areas as intellectual, creative, or artistic capacity or in specific academic fields and who requires accelerated or differentiated curriculum programmes in order to develop those capabilities fully.

Inclusion – the practice of educating students with learning support needs within the mainstream classroom.

Referral Process – the process used to identify individual students who may be in need of formal programme support. The Student Support Team (SST) will deem the level of support.

Annual Review- annual meetings during which Individual Learning Plans will be revised or closed at this time. Students are assessed, externally, every 3 years to determine the current level of support needed.

Universal Design for Learning (UDL)- an approach to teaching and learning that gives all students equal opportunity to succeed. The goal of UDL is to use a variety of teaching methods to remove any barriers to learning by building in flexibility that can be adjusted for every person's strengths and needs.

Individualized Education Plan (IEP)- This is a plan or program developed to ensure that a child with an

identified disability who is attending an elementary or secondary school receives specialized instruction and support services.

Accommodation Plan (AP)- When a student with a diagnosis is able to access the grade-level curriculum, an accommodation plan can help teachers, parents, and students work together to understand what the student will need to ensure success in school.

Accommodations and Modifications – accommodations change *how* a student learns the material. A Modification changes *what* a student is taught or expected to learn. Modifications will be acknowledged on the student transcript.

Push-In Support – the Inclusion specialist enters the classroom to provide direct instruction and support to children. In order to promote inclusion within BIS, push in support is preferred to pull out support when possible.

Pull-Out Support – on a limited and case-by-case basis, the Inclusion Specialist provides instruction or support outside of the general education classroom. Pull out support is reserved for a small percentage of students only.

Co-Teaching – the Inclusion Specialist collaborates with the classroom teacher to co-plan, co-instruct, and/or co-assess a whole class lesson, unit or subject area.

Teacher Consultation – the inclusion specialist provides instructional support and guidance to the Classroom Teacher and/or helps provide strategies for differentiation.

Differentiation – the practice of modifying instruction and assessment in ways that accommodate a broad range of abilities. Differentiation impacts assessment, ways in which students are grouped, how instruction is delivered and how evidence of mastery is collected.

Mild needs- students can access grade level material with accommodations or differentiated instruction in one or more areas. They may have memory, processing, focus or organizational challenges. Students may require check-ins and short term interventions to stay on track.

Moderate needs- students have much greater difficulty than their peers in acquiring basic literacy and numeracy skills and in understanding concepts. They may also have associated speech and language delay, low self-esteem, low levels of concentration and underdeveloped social skills. Students will require regular support and accommodations to access learning within grade level expectations. Student may require 1-1 support (LSA) and access to a modified curriculum.

High needs- students have significant intellectual or cognitive impairments. This has a major effect on their ability to participate in the school curriculum without support. They may also have difficulties in mobility and coordination, communication and acquisition of self-help skills. They require help in all areas of learning, independence and social skills. The student will require 1-1 support (LSA) and access to a modified curriculum.

Learning Support Assistant (LSA) - an LSA is employed by the school with costs being met by the family if the SST determines that the student's learning needs are greater than can be provided by a teacher and or inclusion Specialist alone.

External Service Providers – professional educators, therapists, psychologists or medical doctors not employed by GAA who work with students outside of school at the expense of parents. Open communication between the inclusion Specialist and Outside Service Provider is encouraged.

9. Legislation and Guidance

This policy is currently based on the UAE Disability Act, Federal Law (29) 2006 and 2009, which guarantees a Person of Determination access to equal opportunities of education within all educational institutions. Additionally, this policy follows all of the guidelines outlined in the 2023 ADEK Inclusion Policy (October 2023).

The principles of inclusion and equity lie at the heart of the legislative and guidance frameworks above and below. These are to ensure that students who experience learning differences have equitable access to quality inclusive education with their peers.

This policy is also based on the following guidance and legislation :

- Policies for the empowerment and effective inclusion of persons of determination are an integral

part of key national and local strategies such as the UAE Vision 2021.

- The UAE 'School for All': General rules for the Provision of Special Education Programmes and Services' (2010) guidance.
- The National Policy for Empowering People of Determination, which aims to provide quality inclusive education in the UAE (2017).
- Abu Dhabi Education Council (ADEC). Child Protection.
- Federal Decree Law No. (29) of 2006 Concerning the Rights of People with Disabilities and its amendments.
- Federal Decree Law No. (31) of 2021 Promulgating the Crimes and Penalties Law.
- Ministerial Resolution No. (647) of 2020 on the Policy of Inclusive Education.
- Ministry of Education. (n.d.). *School for All: General Rules for the Provision of Special Education Programs and Services (Public & Private Schools)*.

10. Appendix: Links with other policies and documents

This policy links to our policies and guidance on:

Admissions Policy

[IB DP Inclusion Policy](#)

Assessment Policy

Behaviour Support Policy

Supporting Students with Medical Conditions

GEMS Intimate Care Policy

[GEMS Safeguarding Policy](#)

[ADEC Inclusion Policy](#)