



2024-2025 SECONDARY HANDBOOK



Welcome GAA Families!

Welcome to the 2024-2025 school year at GEMS American Academy of Abu Dhabi.

As we gear up for the new school year, I want to extend a warm welcome to all of you. We are excited to see our returning students and to meet those of you who are new to our school community. Our team has been working diligently to prepare for a successful and enriching year, and I am thrilled to share our key priorities for the year ahead:

1. Engaged Learners

Our foremost goal is to cultivate an environment where students are actively engaged in their learning. We believe that engaged learners are more likely to succeed academically and develop a lifelong love for learning. This year, we will be focusing on interactive and collaborative teaching methods and providing hands-on learning experiences that make education dynamic and relevant. Our focus on Project Based Learning will continue throughout the Secondary learning experience.

2. School-Home Partnership

We recognize that a strong partnership between school and home is crucial for student success. We are committed to fostering open communication and collaboration with parents and guardians. Throughout the year, we will provide various opportunities for you to be involved in your child's education, including regular updates, parent-teacher conferences, and workshops designed to support your role in the educational process. Your engagement and feedback are invaluable, and we look forward to working closely with you to ensure the best outcomes for our students.

3. Academic Rigor

We are dedicated to maintaining high academic standards and challenging our students to reach their full potential. This year, we will continue to offer a rigorous curriculum that fosters students to develop passion and demonstrate their achievements to future schools. Our focus will be on critical thinking, problem-solving, and developing the skills necessary for success in the 21st century. We will also provide additional support and resources for students who need extra help, ensuring that every student has the opportunity to excel.

In conclusion, we are excited about the opportunities that this new school year brings. By focusing on engaged learners, strengthening our school-home partnership, and maintaining academic rigor for all students, we are confident that we can provide a supportive and challenging educational environment for all our students.

Thank you for your continued support and cooperation. Together, we will make this school year a resounding success.

Garth Wyncoll
Secondary Principal

Table of Contents

OVERVIEW OF GEMS AMERICAN ACADEMY, ABU DHABI	5
Mission Statement	5
GAA Abu Dhabi: Statement Of Philosophy	5
GEMS CORE EDUCATIONAL VALUES	7
IB LEARNER PROFILE	8
INTRODUCTION TO THE MIDDLE SCHOOL	9
INTRODUCTION TO THE HIGH SCHOOL	10
Academic Expectations	10
Awards At Gaa	10
SCHOOL DAY	13
Schedules	13
Advisory	14
Textbooks, Musical Instruments, And Other Resources	15
Lockers	15
School Bag Weight Policy	15
Lunch	16
Break Times	16
Home Transportation	16
GAA - (GEMS/ADEK) Hot Weather Policy	16
EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES	17
Extracurricular Activities	18
Competitive Activities	18
Academic Eligibility Policies For Co-Curricular Activity Honor	19
Student Government	19
Field Trips	20
SCHOOL UNIFORMS REGULATION	21
Dress Code: Secondary	21
Dress Down Days	24
Spirit Days- every Friday, except the last Friday of the month	24
CURRICULUM	25
Graduation Requirements	25
Advanced Placement	25
Homework	26
ASSESSMENT	27
Late Submission	27
Reassessment Procedure	27
End Of Course Procedures	28
Grading Systems & Grade Point Average Scale	28
Progress Reports And Report Cards	29
Grade Change / Appeals	30

Failing Grades	31
Credit Recovery	31
Adek Compulsory Courses	31
Standardized Tests	31
ATTENDANCE	33
Attendance Procedure	33
School Dismissal	37
Bus Regulations	37
CODE OF CONDUCT - BEHAVIOR EXPECTATIONS	38
Student Rights And Responsibilities	40
Student Behavioral Expectations	41
Positive Behavioral Interventions and Support (PBIS)	41
Honesty / Ethics	41
Compliance with Rules	41
Cell Phone Use	42
Behavior Policy	42
General Behavior	42
Confidentiality	42
Behavior levels and consequences	44
Consequence definition:	48
Personal Property Search	49
Bullying Prevention	50
Cyber-Bullying	50
College Application Discipline Reporting	51
Academic Honesty Policy	51
What Is Academic Honesty?	51
Procedures For Investigating Academic Dishonesty:	53
Consequences for Acts of Academic Dishonesty	53
Academic Honesty And The Ibdp	54
Technology – Acceptable Use Policy (AUP)	55
BYOD (Bring Your Own Device)	55
Ethical Conduct	57
Educational Use	57
Respect For Others	57
Respect For Security	57
Respect For Property	58
Software Copyright	58
Hardware	58
Audio Visual Hardware	58
Internet/World Wide Web Usage	58
Responsibilities:	58

STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES	60
LIBRARY	61
Overview	61
Library Visits	61
Scheduled Library Visits	61
Borrowing Materials	61
Renewing Materials	61
Reserving Materials	62
Returning Materials	62
Overdue Materials	62
Lost And Damaged Materials	62
Collection Management Policy	62
HOME/SCHOOL COMMUNICATION	63
GAAPA (GAA Parent Association)	63
GAA Booster Club	63
Student/Parent/Teacher Conferences	64
Extended Parent Absences	64
Withdrawing From School	64
Transfer Certificates	64
SAFETY	65
Supervision Of Students	65
Students Leaving School During The Day	65
Fire Alarm/Lock Down Drills	65
Security	65
HEALTH	66
School Clinic Information	66
Emergency Contacts/Change Of Contact Details	66
Health Forms (LINK TO MEDICAL FORMS)	67
APPENDICES	71
I: Admissions Policy	71
II: Disenrollment	72
III: Procedures For Assigning Class Placement	72
IV: PE Student Expectations Policy	73
V: Complaints Procedure For Parents And Legal Guardians	74
QUESTIONS? WHO TO CALL FIRST:	76
GEMS AMERICAN ACADEMY PARENT & STUDENT CONTRACT	78

OVERVIEW OF GEMS AMERICAN ACADEMY, ABU DHABI

MISSION STATEMENT

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

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

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

Definition of Learning

Learning is a dynamic and holistic process in which attitudes, skills and knowledge are developed with purpose.

Well-being is the foundation of learning:

- Socio-emotional health is essential for learning
- A caring environment creates confidence in students
- A diverse learning experience helps students find direction for themselves

GAA ABU DHABI: STATEMENT OF PHILOSOPHY

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

We offer:

- an American-based curriculum within an international context

The success of our program is based on:

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

We provide:

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

We believe that:

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

We support our philosophy through:

- high standards of achievement and performance;
- a developmental, student-centered approach to teaching;
- a comprehensive and varied curriculum aimed at the acquisition of transferable skills and enduring understandings;
- the development of independent learning skills and self-reflection in the learning process;
- constructive feedback for learning;
- nurturing a strong sense of self-esteem, personal integrity and a respectful, caring attitude toward others;
- developing an understanding of, appreciation for and willingness to accept people whose ideas and experiences differ from our own;
- facing problems within a framework of fairness and shared values;
- nurturing a sense of responsibility for our environment.

GEMS CORE EDUCATIONAL VALUES

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

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

Growing by Learning - Strive to develop your potential.

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

Pursuing Excellence- Work to continually exceed expectations.

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

Leading Through Innovation - Find the courage to challenge convention.

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

IB LEARNER PROFILE

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

INTRODUCTION TO THE MIDDLE SCHOOL

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

INTRODUCTION TO THE HIGH SCHOOL

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

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

ACADEMIC EXPECTATIONS

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

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

For those students that continue to not meet academic standards, support will be provided in the means of parent-student-teacher meetings to determine the obstacles to the students' learning. Once identified the school will work with the family to put support in place so the student has every opportunity to succeed.

AWARDS AT GAA

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

- **Subjects Awards:** Each subject area will present an award to one student in each grade level. This award is given to the student who best demonstrates a combination of mastery of the standards, excellent approaches to learning and the IB Learner Profile traits.
- **Wildcat Victory Award:** The Wildcat Victory Award is given to one male and one female student in each grade level who has demonstrated the greatest growth in attitude, approaches to learning and performance.

- **Leadership Award:** This award is given to a student who leads inside and outside of the classroom. This student's integrity is without question. They participate in a wide range of activities at GAA and show personal development outside of GAA.
- **Culture of Kindness Award:** The Culture of Kindness Award is given to one male and one female student in each grade level who has contributed the most to our school climate and our culture of kindness.
- **IB Learner Profile Award:** The Top Student Award is given to one male and one female student in each grade level who best demonstrates all aspects of an exemplary student. This includes overall academics, contributions to the community, extracurricular participation, citizenship, school spirit, and all of the IB Learner Profile Traits.
- **CAS Student of the Year:** Awarded to the top CAS student with CAS a portfolio that is above expectations with a balance of creativity, activity and service experiences as well as high quality reflections and evidence fully addressing the seven CAS learning outcomes.
- **Most Outstanding Full DP Student:** Awarded to the overall student of the year as determined by the IB teachers and IBDP Coordinator. Anticipated grades, development and outcome of IAs, CAS portfolio, ATLs and embodiment of the Learner Profile will all be considered.
- **GAA Attendance Award:** This award is given to individuals who have achieved an outstanding rate of 98% attendance. This is to recognize their commitment and dedication to learning.
- **Advisor's Choice:** Each Advisor's Choice Award centers on character themes and GAA expectations. Advisory teachers will nominate students who have demonstrated those achievements during the month.
- **Shaikha Fatima Bint Mubarak Award:** This award is given to one female student in grade 11. The award is named after Shaikha Fatima Bint Mubarak, known as the Mother of the Nation. Shaikha Fatima, wife of the late founding president Shaikh Zayed Bin Sultan Al Nahyan, is known for her contributions to the empowerment of women in the UAE and her support for excellence in numerous areas. The award is given for outstanding academic success, commitment to social responsibility and global citizenship.
- **Laude System:** The Laude system recognizes the top grade point averages of the graduating class. To be eligible for this recognition, students must have attended GAA for a minimum of two years and must be in good behavioral standing. The Laude calculation is determined from Grade 11 and Semester I of Grade 12.
 - Cum Laude - With Honor - 3.86-4.02
 - Magna Cum Laude - With Great Honor - 4.03-4.13
 - Summa Cum Laude - With Highest Honor - 4.14 and higher

- **Athletics Team Awards:** The coach for each of our teams at GAA recognizes two players at the end of the season.
 - Team MVP
 - Coach's Choice Award
- **Athlete of the Year Award:** These awards are given to the best overall male and female athletes of the year based on overall athletic ability, dedication, contribution to the athletic program, leadership, sportsmanship, and respect for and from teachers, coaches, students, and athletes.
- **Scholar Athlete Awards:** These awards are given to the students with the best overall GPA representing the following programs:
 - Full IB Diploma
 - Half IB Diploma / AP Coursework (2 or more classes)
 - American Diploma

SCHOOL DAY

SCHEDULES

GAA Secondary School follows an eight-block rotating schedule with four blocks meeting per day as below. Monday's advisory is scheduled for Moral Education. Break times are built into the schedule to allow students the opportunity to move from class to class and use the washrooms. Students are not allowed to leave their classroom during the first and last ten minutes of class.

GAA HIGH SCHOOL TIMETABLE 2024-2025	
MONDAY - THURSDAY	FRIDAY
Period 1 (7:45 - 9:10)	Period 1 (7:45 - 8:45)
Passing Time (9:10 - 9:15)	Passing Time (8:45 - 8:50)
Period 2 (9:15 - 10:40)	Period 2 (8:50 - 9:50)
Break (10:40 - 11:00)	Passing Time (9:50 - 10:00)
Period 3 (11:00 - 12:25)	Period 3 (10:00 - 11:00)
Passing Time (12:25 to 12:30)	Passing Time (11:00 - 11:05)
Advisory (12:30 to 12:55)	Period 4 (11:05 - 12:00)
Lunch (1:00 - 1:30)	
Passing Time (1:30 to 1:35)	
Period 4 (1:35 - 3:00)	

GAA MIDDLE SCHOOL TIMETABLE 2024-2025	
MONDAY - THURSDAY	FRIDAY
Period 1 (7:45 - 9:10)	Period 1 (7:45 - 8:45)
Passing Time (9:10 - 9:15)	Passing Time (8:45 - 8:50)
Period 2 (9:25 - 10:40)	Period 2 (8:50 - 9:50)
Break (10:40 - 11:00)	Passing Time (9:50 - 10:00)
Period 3 (11:00 - 12:25)	Period 3 (10:00 - 11:00)
Passing Time (12:25 to 12:30)	Passing Time (11:00 - 11:05)
Lunch (12:30 - 12:55)	Period 4 (11:05 - 12:00)
Advisory (1:00 - 1:30)	
Passing Time (1:30 to 1:35)	
Period 4 (1:35 - 3:00)	

The rotating schedule below allows for each class period to meet at different times throughout a school day. This facilitates a balance of the schedule for learning.

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
White					Blue				
A	E	B	F	A	G	C	H	D	E
B	F	C	G	B	H	D	E	A	F
C	G	D	H	C	E	A	F	B	G
D	H	A	E	D	F	B	G	C	H

ADVISORY

In Secondary School, Advisory serves as a daily “home base” for students and allows for some time to check in with each student, to address any questions or concerns a student may have

and to provide a place for students to obtain school information and announcements. Additionally, it is a time to work on holistic development and teach study and organizational skills, cyber safety, building positive relationships, conflict resolution, building community and college readiness, and innovative and entrepreneurial skills. Advisory teachers serve as student advocates and should be an initial point of contact for students and parents with concerns.

TEXTBOOKS, MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS, AND OTHER RESOURCES

We provide these to all students on a loan basis. Students are held responsible for books checked out by them and must pay for lost or damaged books. Students will also be charged for deliberate damage (including writing and graffiti) to books. Secondary School students supply their own notebooks, paper, pencils, pens and other school supplies. Lost textbooks should be reported to the Secondary School Librarian as soon as possible. Students must replace or pay if a book is lost or damaged. The student will be charged the cost of the book plus 30% shipping, processing and handling costs. Once a receipt for payment from the Accountant is handed to the Secondary School Librarian, the book will be replaced. Those students with an outstanding fee from the library, art department or school will not receive their end of grade reports or transcripts sent to university.

LOCKERS

Each student has a locker assigned upon arrival at GAA. Each student is encouraged to bring their own lock. Students must ensure the safety of their personal belongings as GAA will take no responsibility for any valuables, money, mobile phones, games, etc. that are lost at school. Students should not store items of significant value or large amounts of food in the locker. They are responsible for cleaning out their respective lockers at the end of the year.

SCHOOL BAG WEIGHT POLICY

This policy has been written using information provided by ADEK and is designed to inform all staff, parents, and students. The health of our students is of paramount importance thus every member of the school community should ensure that they have read this policy and that they understand it. Guidelines:

- Recommended bag weight does not exceed 20% of the child's body weight
- No trolley bags please
- Use ergonomic school bags with individual compartments for books and equipment
- Students should wear both shoulder straps and not to sling a bag over one shoulder
- Bags should have wide, padded, adjustable school bag straps that fits the student's body
- Weigh the child's school bags to determine whether it is heavy or in compliance

Grade / Year (US) (UK)	Max. Backpack Weight (KG)
KG1 / FS2	2.2
KG2 / Year 1	2.4
Gr 1 / Year 2	2.6
Gr 2 / Year 3	3.0
Gr 3 / Year 4	3.4
Gr 4 / Year 5	3.8
Gr 5 / Year 6	4.1
Gr 6 / Year 7	4.5
Gr 7 / Year 8	5.0
Gr 8 / Year 9	5.8
Gr 9 / Year 10	6.5
Gr 10 / Year 11	7.3

Children's bags are stored in lockers. Some of these cubbies are small. We recommend that Pupils should only carry in their school bag the following:

- Lunch box (or carried separately)
- Water bottle
- Pencil case – ideally this should stay in school
- Home readers and Library bag only on those days required

Bags are monitored by the Class Teacher. If a bag is suspected to be too heavy the weight of the bag is checked by school receptionists. If the bag is 20% more than the pupil's weight, parents are informed by the Class Teacher and advised to reduce the amount their child is carrying. This communication can be logged in Pulse for parent communication.

LUNCH

Students have the option of bringing lunch from home or purchasing a school meal. We encourage students to eat healthy foods. Menus for each month are posted in the school newsletter. Water is available for purchase by students through Slices - however this practice is discouraged. Drinking water stations are located on each floor and students are encouraged to use their own refillable water bottles brought from home. Students are not permitted to go to the cafeteria to purchase food or water, outside of lunch time. We encourage students to bring healthy snacks from home to eat during our mid-morning class change. We suggest any food sent to school should be low in refined sugar and not contain any nuts or nut products.

Carbonated and energy drinks are not to be brought to school.

Ordering food from outside establishments is not permitted.

BREAK TIMES

Students have scheduled break times during the day. Depending on scheduled use by PE classes, the soccer pitch and/or tennis courts may be available for play during lunch times. All students are expected to play safely and fairly and to be respectful of each other and of any equipment being used. Availability of these areas during lunch will be stipulated by administration or through advisory in advance of lunch.

HOME TRANSPORTATION

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

GAA - (GEMS/ADEK) HOT WEATHER POLICY

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

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

1. Heat Index between 35°C and 40°C

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

2. Heat Index between 40°C and 45°C

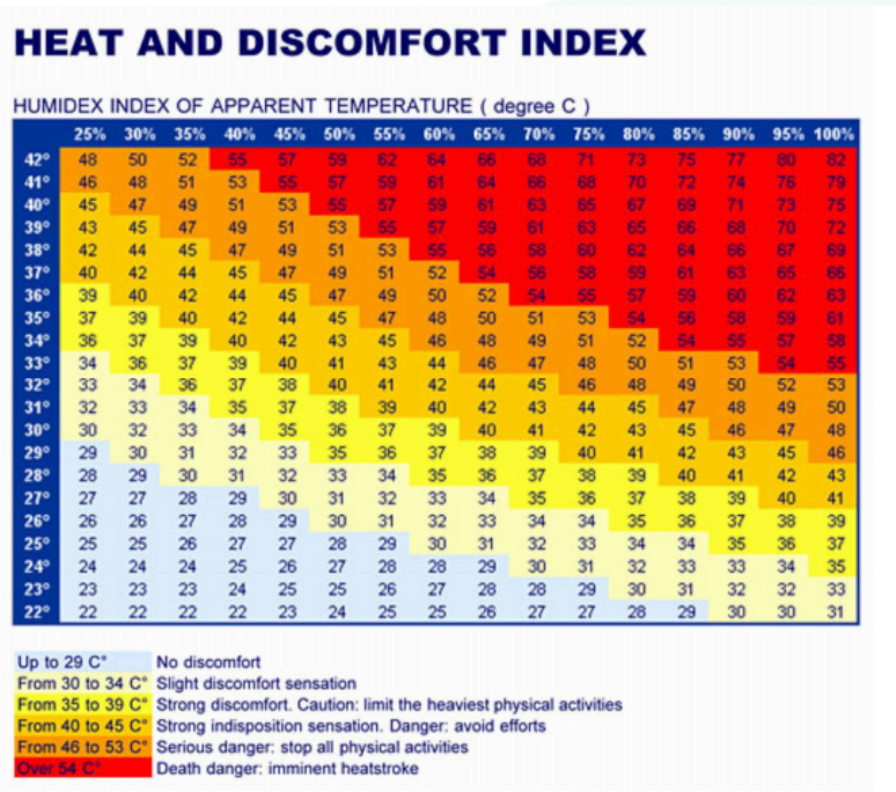
- a. Outdoor Physical Activity: Lower intensity activities are to be included only and for a maximum of ten minutes. 5-minute water breaks should be taken between activities.
- b. Breaks & Lunchtime: Students should remain indoors during break and lunchtimes due to activities being uncontrolled.

3. Heat Index above 45°C

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

Heat and discomfort index

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



EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

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

EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

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

Students not participating in an after school program are required to go home by their normal mode of transport at 3:05 p.m. The bus service leaves sharply at 3:14 p.m. Students participating in after school activities are able to sign up for a late bus service. While waiting for the bus service, students are not allowed to leave the campus and then return. They must stay on campus and wait quietly in the lobby until pickup time. Please help us keep halls and the reception area quiet as they are working environments, even during after school hours.

COMPETITIVE ACTIVITIES

Competitive activities are for students in Grade 4 and above and specific information about when these opportunities are available is communicated by the Athletic and Activities Director. Swimming is available to students in Grade 1 and above. Grades 4 through 6 competitive activities are inclusive in nature and as much as possible will allow all students to become involved. Competitive programs in Grade 7 through 12 are more competitive in nature and involve tryouts, league games and end of season tournaments. Students are expected to commit for the entire season. Participation is contingent upon meeting the Academic Eligibility check as stipulated by the Athletic and Activities Director.

Further information about the activities program at GAA is available in [the Athletics and Activities Handbook](#). Please contact the respective receptionist for a copy to be forwarded to yourself.

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

ACADEMIC ELIGIBILITY POLICIES FOR CO-CURRICULAR ACTIVITY HONOR

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

In order to participate in co-curricular activities at GAA, students must:

- Maintain a 2.0 or higher GPA with no F's. Eligibility will be reviewed on a bi-weekly basis; second semester Report Cards will determine eligibility for 1st season the following year
- Maintain good standing with their attendance

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

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

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

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

STUDENT GOVERNMENT

The Secondary School Student Government is dedicated to providing leadership opportunities for students, providing services to the school and community and making the lives of students more enjoyable. The organization serves as a link between students and teachers, organizes social activities and assists the greater school community in various events and activities throughout the year. Students from grades 6-12 are eligible to serve on the Student Government. It is considered a privilege to be selected, and students involved with the Student Government are leaders who demonstrate the qualities of exceptional and successful students. Student Government members will meet once a month with the Secondary Principal to provide a student perspective on school climate and culture.

FIELD TRIPS

Students may be invited to participate in educational field trips during the year. Teachers will always request parental permission for their children to take part in such events well in advance. Students need to complete the School Activities Form before any trips. Student participation is contingent upon them adhering to the school academic and behavior expectations.

SCHOOL UNIFORMS REGULATION

DRESS CODE: SECONDARY

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

GAA Student ID is required to be worn at all times (PE and Theater classes excluded).

All students must adhere to the GAA dress code policy.

This will be enforced by the following:

- Week One of Semester I - warning email sent home to parent and student
- Week Two and remaining school year - the student will be sent to the office of DoS to either go home or change into uniform
 - If a student repeats this behavior GAA will revert to the Behavior Policy for consequences

The GAA uniform supplier is Threads. Uniforms for GAA will only be distributed from Threads' Retail outlet in Dalma Mall. Uniforms can be purchased online at www.threadsme.com.

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

**COMPULSORY UNIFORM FOR ALL STUDENTS
2024-2025 School Year**

DAILY SCHOOL UNIFORM				
Grade	Gender	Tops	Bottoms	Shoes
Grades 6 to 8	Boys	Blue Navy Polo shirt with GAA logo (short or long-sleeved)	NAVY TROUSERS OR SHORTS (knee length) for Boys	COMFORTABLE SHOES (No open-toed, high heeled shoes or crocs allowed).
	Girls	Blue Navy Polo shirt with GAA logo (short or long-sleeved) (if wearing hijab or headscarf, please follow GAA school color - light blue, navy blue, white or black)	NAVY TROUSERS, SHORTS, SKORTS, OR SKIRTS for girls	
Grades 9 to 12	Boys	Grey Navy Polo shirt with GAA logo (short or long-sleeved)	NAVY TROUSERS OR SHORTS (knee length) for Boys	
	Girls	Grey Navy Polo shirt with GAA logo (short or long-sleeved) (if wearing hijab or headscarf, please follow GAA school color - light blue, navy blue, white or black)	NAVY TROUSERS, SHORTS, SKORTS, OR SKIRTS for girls	

ACCESSORIES	
REQUIRED	OPTIONAL
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> one-piece swimming suit (modest swimwear for both girls and boys) Swim Cap If students wear a sweater over uniform shirt: V – NECK SWEATER WITH LOGO or CARDIGAN SWEATER WITH LOGO 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> GAA SWIMMING COSTUME / TRUNK GAA BACKPACK If girls wear LEGGINGS/STOCKINGS/PANTYHOSE/TIGHTS FOR SKIRTS instead of socks, color must be SOLID NAVY BLUE or BLACK. If a belt is worn, it must be solid black

PHYSICAL EDUCATION UNIFORM				
Grade	When to wear	Tops	Bottoms	Shoes
Grades 6-8	Students will wear PE uniforms to school on their scheduled PE day.	SKY BLUE POLO Shirt with GAA logo	NAVY GAA SHORTS	QUALITY ATHLETIC SHOES WHITE SPORT SOCKS
Grades 9-12	Students will wear regular school uniforms to school every day. At the beginning of PE class, they will change into this PE uniform. At the end of class, they will change back into regular school uniforms.			

CORE UNIFORM PRE KG - G5

BOYS
 GREY / NAVY POLO UNISEX
 GREY / NAVY POLO FULL SLEEVE - UNISEX
 BUCKET CAP PRE KG TO KG2
 NAVY BASEBALL CAP
 PRE KG TO KG2 (FULLY ELASTIC) NAVY SHORTS
 G1 - G5 SOLID NAVY SHORTS
 SOLID NAVY TROUSER
 NAVY SOCKS

GIRLS
 GREY / NAVY POLO UNISEX
 GREY / NAVY POLO FULL SLEEVE - UNISEX
 BUCKET CAP PRE KG TO KG2
 NAVY BASEBALL CAP
 NAVY SOCKS
 PRE KG TO KG2 (FULLY ELASTIC) NAVY SHORTS
 G1 - G5 SOLID NAVY SHORTS
 SOLID NAVY TROUSER
 NAVY TIGHTS

CORE UNIFORM GRADE 6 - G8

BOYS
 LT. BLUE / NAVY POLO UNISEX
 LT. BLUE / NAVY POLO FULL SLEEVE UNISEX
 BLACK BELT
 NAVY BASEBALL CAP
 SOLID NAVY SHORTS
 SOLID NAVY TROUSER
 NAVY SOCKS

GIRLS
 LT. BLUE / NAVY POLO UNISEX
 LT. BLUE / NAVY UNISEX FULL SLEEVE POLO
 NAVY BASEBALL CAP
 BLACK BELT
 NAVY SOCKS
 NAVY TIGHTS
 SOLID NAVY LONG SKIRT
 SOLID NAVY TROUSER

CORE UNIFORM GRADE 9 - G12

BOYS
 GREY / NAVY POLO
 GREY / NAVY FULL SLEEVE POLO
 BLACK BELT
 NAVY BASEBALL CAP
 SOLID NAVY SHORTS
 SOLID NAVY TROUSER
 NAVY SOCKS

GIRLS
 GREY / NAVY POLO
 GREY / NAVY FULL SLEEVE POLO
 NAVY BASEBALL CAP
 BLACK BELT
 NAVY SOCKS
 NAVY TIGHTS
 SOLID NAVY LONG SKIRT
 SOLID NAVY TROUSER

PE & WINTERWEAR UNIFORM ALL GRADES

UNISEX
 G1 TO G5
 G6 TO G12
 G6 TO G12
 UNISEX SHORTS TRACKPANT
 UNISEX NAVY JACKET NAVY PULLOVER

NEW HOUSE UNIFORM From Aug-2024 Only ALL GRADES

Vipers
 FRONT (SS) FRONT (LS) RIGHT & LEFT VIEW BACK

Falcons
 FRONT (SS) FRONT (LS) RIGHT & LEFT VIEW BACK

Foxes
 FRONT (SS) FRONT (LS) RIGHT & LEFT VIEW BACK

Scorpions
 FRONT (SS) FRONT (LS) RIGHT & LEFT VIEW BACK

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 excessive makeup or jewelry is allowed.
- Students with pierced ears may wear studs or small hoop earrings.
- Rings should be small without sharp edges or loose parts.
- No visible body piercings or tattoos.
- Outerwear may not be worn in school; it should be kept in lockers.

Dress Down Days

On the last Friday of every month, students can wear their choice of clothing, as long as it is respectful of UAE culture and in line with our Handbook guidelines:

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

- No tight clothes (this includes no leggings or yoga pants)
- No spaghetti strap shirts
- No exposed midriffs
- No hoodies with hood up
- No holes in jeans
- No offensive logos or expressions on clothing
- No hats.

If a student is not in alignment with these expectations, their parents will be contacted to either drop appropriate clothing off or pick them up from school.

Spirit Days- every Friday, except the last Friday of the month

A day where students can wear items of clothing created and sold by GAA groups, such as Booster Club, Sports and Activity teams and Student Government. These may include:

- Powderpuff T-shirts
- Spirit Wear (cohort related)
- House Shirts
- Athletic's Sweatshirts
- Booster Sweatshirts
- Old Senior Sweatshirts

National Dress is not permitted on Spirit Days.

If a student is not in alignment with these expectations, their parents will be contacted to either drop appropriate clothing off or pick up the student from school.

CURRICULUM

GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

In order to receive a GAA High School Diploma, students must complete a minimum of 25 credits in Grades 9 through 12. These credits must include the following:

- 4 credits in English
- 4 credits in Mathematics
- 4 credits in Science
- 3 credits in Social Studies
- 3 credits in World Language (French, Spanish, Arabic or self taught language)
- 1 credit in PE
- 1 credit in the Arts
- 7 or more additional credits

High School students are expected to enroll in 8 courses per year. Students in grades 11 and 12, who are on track for meeting graduation requirements, may opt for a study hall in order to use their time effectively to meet their goals.

In GAA, courses in grades 6-12 are in three different categories:

1. GAA Core Academic Courses / IBDP Courses / AP Courses
2. ADEK Required Courses
3. GAA Elective Courses

Each student's program is made up of a combination of these different categories of courses. Department of Education and Knowledge (ADEK) requirements vary depending upon a child's nationality and religion. This determination is made based upon ADEK guidelines and the passports presented by the family during registration. Requirements for Arabic Language, Islamic Studies and UAE Social Studies courses vary according to each student's registered nationality and religion. In order to comply with ADEK regulations, every student has specific course requirements as stipulated by Decree 910 according to one of the following four categories:

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

ADVANCED PLACEMENT

AP courses are open to all non-full diploma students in grades 10-12, depending on teacher recommendations, past grades, completed pre-requisite courses, and other data points such as NWEA MAP test scores. Grade 10 students may take AP courses with teacher

recommendation, but priority for placement will go to grade 12 and 11 students respectively. Students will not be placed in an AP course in grade 10 if they have not gained teacher recommendation. Eligibility for AP courses will not guarantee admission to the course due to possible scheduling constraints. AP program offerings are reviewed on an annual basis and subject to change due to demand. Registration in an AP course requires students to sit the external exam in the course.

HOMEWORK

Students will receive regular but manageable amounts of homework which will be given in class. Each student is encouraged to check the homework section of each teacher's class website for their daily assignments. Students are expected to complete these assignments. Approaches to Learning (ATL) standards are often assessed for these assignments as well as academic standards.

ASSESSMENT

GAA assessment beliefs and practices focus on mastery of the standards and proficiency of the learning objectives. Assessment results are reported as proficiency levels for each standard targeted. The proficiency levels of: **Mastery, Proficient, Developing, Emerging and Insufficient Evidence** provide feedback on the learning progressions of the student.

Our assessment practices include:

- Regular formative and summative assessments
- Formative assessments are completed and feedback provided prior to the summative assessment
- Assessments are aligned to and directly measure standards
- ATLs are developed and reported separately from the standards
- ATL feedback provides students with opportunity to reflect and grow
- ATLs support active learning and do not calculate toward grades
- Assessment success is reported on an online gradebook using proficiency levels for each standard targeted; not an overall score
- Rubrics define mastery criteria in relation to formative and summative assessments
- Letter grades are reported on semester reports for grades 9-12
- Letter grades, percentages and GPA are reflected on transcripts for grades 9-12

LATE SUBMISSION

If a student does not meet a submission timeline, that student must apply for an extension. The extension form asks students to state the reason why the timeline was not met, and the corrective behaviors that will be utilized for future assessments. The student will negotiate a new timeline for the original work and complete it on that agreed upon schedule. The student will receive Insufficient Evidence (IE) in the gradebook. Once the student completes the assessment the IE will be replaced by the grade earned.

If the student repeatedly misses timelines, the student will be asked to attend after school detentions to complete work in a timely manner.

[Late Submission Form](#)

REASSESSMENT PROCEDURE

- Reassessment opportunities will take place **within 2 weeks** of the original assessment and outside of class time
- All reassessments take place after school on Wednesday afternoon beginning at 3:15 p.m.

- In order to be eligible for reassessment, students will complete the GAA Reassessment Application which includes:
 - An action plan that outlines the learning that will take place between the first assessment and the reassessment
 - A reflection component articulating learning progression of the standard
 - The date and time of the reassessment
- Teachers will use their discretion when approving reassessment requests, and may consider factors such as completion of formative assessments, when making their decision
- Missing or late assessments/assignments will be reported in the online gradebook and reflected in the ATLs
- Proficiency levels will reflect reassessment in the gradebook
- Attainment on reassessments will replace original proficiency level, no reassessments are offered after the final grade report has been finalized
- Assessment events/deadlines are an opportunity to show learning progress and achievement as well as to receive timely feedback to support the learning journey
 - As such, if an assessment is missed without appropriate approval, there will be non-academic consequences in accordance with the behavior policy
 - Trends in absenteeism during incidences of summative assessment will be addressed through intervention with the Dean of Students and/or IB Coordinator
- Assessment events, such as an exhibition, concert or end-of-course exam, may not be eligible for reassessment, this would be communicated prior to the event
- IBDP assessments will adhere to the stated expectations above and IB Assessment policy and procedures

END OF COURSE PROCEDURES

End of Course (EOC) examinations or projects are completed by students in Grade 12 at the end of the year. These exams are cumulative and not eligible for reassessment. As with all assessments the GAA Academic Honesty policy is enforced. Incidences of plagiarism will result in attainment of a standard of insufficient (I) as there is no means by which the instructor can assess the student's understanding of the standards.

GRADING SYSTEMS & GRADE POINT AVERAGE SCALE

Letter grades (A to F) are awarded for all courses in Grades 9 through 12. IB courses will reflect the IB grading scale of 1-7. AP courses will reflect the AP grading scale of 1-5. For more

information on IB Course grading, please see the [GAA IBDP Handbook](#). Students' grades are communicated to (US) universities using the GAA transcript and the calculator of a student's GPA (Grade Point Average). GPA is an average calculation using course results weighted to their credit value over the high school years (Grades 9-12). The standard GPA is reported using a 0-4+ scale.

(Due to the rigor of IB coursework, SL courses receive an additional weighting of 0.25 and HL courses receive an additional 0.5 weighting.)

Grading at GAA								
%	A-F	Standards Based Grading		IB		AP	GPA	
Aligned to ADEK		I-M	50-100	1-7		1-5	0-4.3	
Grade Scales	Letter	Proficiency	Proficiency Value	SL	HL		GPA Scale	IB SL/HL Addition AP Addition
96-100	A+	Mastery	100	7	7	5	4.3	Additional 0.25 SL Additional 0.5 HL Additional 0.15 AP
93-95	A	Mastery		6	6	5	4	
90-92	A-	Mastery		6	6	4	3.7	
87-89	B+	Proficient	85	5	5	4	3.3	
83-86	B	Proficient		5	5	4	3	
80-82	B-	Proficient		4	4	3	2.7	
77-79	C+	Developing	73	4	4	3	2.3	
73-76	C	Developing		3	3	3	2	
70-72	C-	Developing		3	3	2	1.7	
67-69	D+	Emerging	62	2	2	2	1.3	
60-66	D	Emerging		2	2	2	1	
<59	F	Insufficient		50	1	1	1	0

PROGRESS REPORTS AND REPORT CARDS

Progress reports and report cards are a chance for students and parents to receive feedback on how students are achieving in their classes. This is an opportunity to strengthen the relationship between the teacher and the student by developing their inquiry, reflection and advocacy skills so that they can forge a stronger path to success. We encourage parents to contact teachers if they have questions or concerns about student progress.

The purpose of the progress and report cards are to clearly communicate with students, parents, and teachers, the students' level of proficiency towards GAA's adopted standards.

- Proficiency levels (Mastery, Proficient, Developing, Emerging and Insufficient Evidence) on progress and report cards reflect student's attainment on standards. Progress reports are sent home after the first and third quarters and are accompanied by comments from teachers.
- Grades on report cards reflect the letter grade for the course as a whole. These reports are received after Semester 1 (mid-year) and Semester 2 (end of year).

GRADE CHANGE / APPEALS

A grade appeal will be considered in cases of arbitrary grading or teacher error. It is not a guarantee that a change to a grade will be awarded. The appeal process provides a chance for the student to request a review of evidence that they provide to support a claim that a grade was incorrectly or unfairly determined. In the absence of evidence, the grade assigned by the instructor will remain the same.

Arbitrary grading- The grade awarded represents a substantial departure from accepted academic norms or established standards, as to demonstrate that the instructor did not exercise professional judgment correctly.

Error- The instructor made a mistake.

The grade appeal procedure applies only when a student initiates a grade appeal and not when the instructor decides to change a grade on his or her own. This procedure does not cover instances where students have been assigned grades based on academic dishonesty or academic misconduct.

Appeals Process

1. The student who wishes to request a grade change, must email the teacher **within one week** of the initial grade being issued.
2. If the issue is not resolved after emailing the teacher, the student may submit a written grade appeal, along with any necessary evidence, to the appropriate division principal or IB coordinator within one week of speaking with the teacher.
3. The principal will request a written explanation from the teacher for further clarification. The principal will work with the head of department and one other member of the department to gather any additional information and make determination if a grade change is warranted.
4. If the grade change is not warranted, the principal will notify the student, parent and teacher in writing.
5. If it is determined that a grade change is warranted, the principal will work with the teacher and head of department to determine the appropriate grade.
6. The principal, teacher, student and parent will sign the grade change form and the grade will be changed in the student information system by the system engineer.

*Prior to the finalizing of end of year grades, an instructor may change a grade for a course or assessment on his or her own initiative. An instructor may request a grade change by emailing the appropriate division principal and student information systems engineer of the change.

FAILING GRADES

If a student fails to meet passing levels of attainment in a course, the student will not earn the associated credit. If the course is required to meet GAA graduation / diploma requirements then the student must enter the Credit Recovery process.

CREDIT RECOVERY

Should a student earn a failing grade (F) for any course, the student will not earn the credit associated with the course. This jeopardizes the student's ability to graduate from GAA, particularly if the course credit represents a required credit for graduation. At this point, the student will enter into Credit Recovery.

In order for the student to make up for the lost learning, the student will complete one of the following three opportunities, based upon the recommendation of the teacher of record for the original course and the Vice-Principal:

- Successfully reassess on a particular unit(s) of study at GAA
 - This route replaces the F with a new grade once successfully completed
- Successfully complete an online course over the summer from an accredited program
- Take the same course the following academic year
 - This route will affect the student's academic schedule the following year

ADEK COMPULSORY COURSES

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

STANDARDIZED TESTS

Students in Grades 6 to 10 take the Measure of Academic Progress (MAP) test in the Fall and the Spring. This is an adaptive standardized comprehensive test that measures a student's abilities and achievements in Reading, Language Usage, Mathematics and Science. Scores are reported to parents and become part of the student's school records. This data is used to help our instructors measure attainment of proficiency and craft meaningful lessons aligned with our students' academic needs.

Students in Grades 6, 8 and 10 will also write the Cognitive Ability Test (CAT4) in the first few months of the year. The CAT4 measures ability, however, it also measures students' learning

competencies and styles which allows teachers to modify and adapt their instruction to further meet the needs of each student.

Data from MAP and CAT4 tests are used in decision making for placement in honors and IB courses.

The Practice Standardized Achievement Test (PSAT) will be given each October to students in Grade 10. The PSAT is a standardized test from the College Board (USA) that is used as a predictor for how students will fare on the Standardized Achievement Test (SAT) used for some US college entrance as well as eligibility for some US scholarships.

Students will also participate in the The Pupil Attitudes to Self and School (PASS) survey. It is a short self-evaluation survey conducted at the start and end of the school year to gain insight into attitudes that could be hindering achievement. It can capture feelings about school and teachers, and help to detect possible barriers to learning, including issues around confidence, resilience, motivation, concentration, disaffection and alienation.

ATTENDANCE

The school day for all grades commences at **7:45 a.m.**, dismissal time is **3:00 p.m.** School doors open to students at 7:00 a.m. Students are welcome to wait in the lobby until 7:30 a.m. Students are required to attend school everyday and be mindful of when doctor appointments and early dismissals are requested. Parents/guardians should communicate all early dismissal requests to the Secondary Secretary. The hours for after school activities vary. Most activities start at 3:00 p.m. and finish at 4:00 p.m. Some activities conducted off-campus may finish later than this. **The school cannot supervise students before 7:30 a.m. or after 3:00 p.m.** We request that students are under parental supervision while on school premises before and after these times.

ATTENDANCE PROCEDURE

Good attendance is essential for success at GAA. Therefore, parents are urged to schedule medical, dental and other appointments after school hours or during vacations and align family celebrations to school holidays wherever possible.

Definitions concerning Attendance (directly from ADEK):

Attendance - refers to the total number of school days attended by the student during the school year based on the ADEK approved GAA calendar.

Absence - absence refers to the days when students fail to attend

- **Authorized absence** - a student is allowed up to 10 authorized absences a year. The following types of absences may be regarded as authorized when confirmed by a signed letter from Parents/Guardians or by way of official documents:
 - Illness.
 - Scheduled doctor appointments.
 - Official community task.
 - Mandatory appearance before an official body.
 - Essential urgent family travel for matters such as medical treatment or the death of a family member.
- **Unauthorized absence** - The following types of absences are to be regarded as unauthorized:
 - Unnecessary travel.
 - Other types of absences not included in the authorized absences list.

Truancy - is an unauthorized absence without Parents'/Guardians' knowledge or consent, or if Parents/Guardians have colluded with the student so that the student is absent without authorization.

Dismissal - Students are expected to leave campus within 15 minutes of dismissal time unless they have an Extracurricular activity. Once students leave campus, they may not return unless

they have a note or phone call from parents/guardians to the school or are accompanied by a parent/guardian.

Tardy - a student is considered tardy if they are not in their assigned seat, ready to learn by the time the bell goes for the start of the period.

10% Absence Rate - Absence rates above 10% should be regarded as a cause for concern and will be logged as a child safeguarding issue with GEMS.

Attendance Percentage	GAA/ADEK Descriptor
Greater than 98%	Outstanding
Greater than 96%	Very good
Greater than 94%	Good
Greater than 92%	Acceptable
Less than 92%	Weak
Less than 90%	Cause for Concern

Attendance Procedure

All teachers will report attendance during the first 5 minutes of class each period as well as keep an accurate record for each class.

Parental Responsibility

If your child will be absent it is the parents responsibility to inform the school with the reason for the child's absence. Parents are asked to contact the attendance secretary by email no later than 7:30 a.m. In the case of a prolonged absence due to a medical issue, a medical certificate is required after 3 days of absence.

Parents must apply for *Authorized Absence* from school prior to the dates of the absence. If granted, the secretary will mark attendance data accordingly. It may be the case that after the 10 days of authorized absence, the school may decide that the remainder or any additional absence is not authorized and the student will be marked accordingly for those continued days of absence. Extended leave is reviewed on a case by case basis.

Parents are encouraged to respect the school calendar and avoid extending holidays past the scheduled breaks. This includes the days after the gradebook has been closed and graduation ceremonies completed (grades 5 and 8).

Student Responsibility

It is crucial that students take responsibility for their learning during any period of absence. This includes:

- **Communicating with Teachers:** Proactively reach out to teachers to inform them of absences and ask for any assignments or lessons missed.
- **Missed Work:** Ensure the completion of any missed assignments and study any material covered during your absence. Utilize available resources such as class notes and Google Classroom.
- **Meet Deadlines:** Make arrangements with your teachers to submit any due assignments and to schedule make-up tests or quizzes, if applicable.

Active engagement and responsibility in managing absence will help maintain academic progress.

Tardy Behavior Management

- *First period of the day*

If a student arrives late to school, they are required to go directly to the Secondary Office immediately after arriving on campus in order to get checked in to be recorded as late and present.

- *In School tardies*

School staff will record every time a student is late to school. During the day, teachers will record tardies in PowerSchool. Consequences for tardiness will escalate with repeated infractions.

	Communication	Consequence
Level One	Email per tardy	Information provided
Level Two	Warning I Email home by attendance secretary	Logged in PowerSchool
Level Three	Lunch reflection with HOG to make support plan emailed home to parents Logged in PowerSchool	Logged in PowerSchool
Level Four	Meeting with parents, student and Dean of Students Level I Warning Letter signed	Logged in PowerSchool
Level Five	Meeting with parents, student and Dean of Students and Vice Principal Level II Warning Letter signed	Behavior contract Participation in Extracurricular activities will be curtailed Logged in PowerSchool

Level Six	Meeting to communicate Blocked enrollment for following School Year	Blocked re-enrollment for following school year, communicated in a meeting. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Parent - Dean of Students - Vice Principal - Principal
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Attendance Management

Based on the 10% ADEK guidelines, a student who has been absent for 18 days of school in a given academic year will be a cause for concern. The student and family will be logged as a child safeguarding issue with GEMS.

GAA will communicate concerns on the following timetable. It is our expectation that parents/guardians will partner with us to ensure their student commits to the school calendar and attends school throughout the academic year.

	Communication	Consequence
Level One	Automatic email sent to student and parent.	Information provided
Level Two	Email home and cc Dean of Students and Vice Principal in the communication. Log communication in PS as a warning email sent home about absences.	Logged in PowerSchool
Level Three	Schedule a meeting with parents and the Dean of Students. Log communication in Power School as an email sent about absences - parent meeting.	Meeting regarding absences <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Parent - Dean of Students - Vice Principal
Level Four	Schedule a meeting with parents and the Dean of Students and Vice Principal. Log communication in Power School as an email sent about absences - parent meeting.	Meeting regarding absences <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Parent - Dean of Students - Vice Principal - Principal Notice of Blocking for following School Year should absences go over 18 - 10%
Level Five	Meeting to communicate Blocking for following School Year	Blocked re-enrollment for following school year, communicated in a meeting. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Parent - Dean of Students

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Vice Principal - Principal
5 consecutive with no parent communication	Log in GEMS Child Safeguarding portal	

Truancy Management

If a student is 20 minutes late to class or more but has been previously recorded as present at school, GAA will regard the student as having been truant.

If a student is truant for a portion (>20 minutes of a class) or the entire class, his/her parents will be informed by the teacher. The student will meet with the Dean of Students, who will take appropriate action, in line with our behavior policy (Level 2 infraction).

SCHOOL DISMISSAL

Students are expected to leave campus within 15 minutes of dismissal time unless they have a school-sponsored activity. If students have not been picked up by 3:15 p.m. they will be asked to move to the cafeteria where they can wait to be picked up. Once students leave campus, they may not return unless they have a later activity or are accompanied by a parent/guardian. Students may use Gates 1 (Main) and Gate 5 (Tennis Courts). Gate 4 (Bus) is reserved for bus-rider students.

Late to bus: Buses leave promptly at 3:15 from Monday to Thursday and 12:15 on Fridays. In respect to all bus users and their families, buses will not wait for late bus-rider students. In case a student is late to a bus, the parents will be called for pick up or for authorization to take the late bus (4:30 departure).

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.

CODE OF CONDUCT - BEHAVIOR EXPECTATIONS

GAA will provide a secure and safe learning environment, to help our students achieve. 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 and model appropriate positive behavior among all students in order to create a positive culture of kindness in our community that promotes learning. Acknowledging students who exhibit positive behaviors reinforces this culture of kindness and leads to improved academic and behavioral outcomes for all students. Students are acknowledged for positive behavior in a number of ways, such as through celebration of “Advisor’s Choice Awards”.

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

- ▶ Be Safe
- ▶ Be Respectful
- ▶ Be Kind
- ▶ 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. Respect also means valuing the dignity given in peacefully agreeing to disagree and moving away from conflict.


Be a Learner

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

Be Kind

GAA fosters a culture of kindness. Students are taught values of kindness and are expected to treat others with kindness.

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



At GAA a proactive, collaborative and restorative approach is used to solve issues. This involves reflecting upon harm that has occurred, and how relationships can be repaired in our community. Students, parents, teachers and administrators are committed to working together to maintain high standards of behavior, to support students in feeling physically and emotionally safe. Students are expected to abide by school rules and procedures whenever they are at school, or participating in after-school and school events. Additionally, students are held responsible for their online behavior, if it impacts the learning environment at GAA.

STUDENT RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

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

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

STUDENT BEHAVIORAL EXPECTATIONS

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

The primary responsibility for a student's behavior rests with the individual student. Students not adhering to GAA rules / policies will receive consequences, in line with the behavior policy. They will be supported in understanding how their behavior has caused harm to the community, alongside working to repair relationships.

Positive Behavioral Interventions and Support (PBIS)

The GAA High School follows the PBIS framework for discipline and behavioral support. In this framework, desired behaviors are directly taught to the students and practiced until they become routine. Positive behaviors are recognized and acknowledged regularly while negative behaviors are consistently addressed through stated consequences in accordance with the Handbook. Restorative practices are used to equip students with schools to navigate these situations, supporting themselves, and others in feeling emotionally and physically safe.

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

Honesty / Ethics

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

Compliance with Rules

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

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

CELL PHONE USE

Cell phone procedures:

1. During class time student phones will be placed in a plastic bin at the beginning of the lesson and turned off. After the lesson, students pick up their phones.
2. Students are not permitted to make any phone calls during the school day. We appreciate that there are sometimes life events or situations where a student may feel they need to contact home during the day. We ask parents/guardians to inform us of this as soon as possible and students will be allowed to use the school phone.
3. If a parent needs to contact their child, we ask that you please go use the school reception at (+971) 02 2019 555.
4. Students who do not adhere to the above will have their phone confiscated by the Dean of Students or Vice Principal. It can be picked up at the end of the day.
5. If infractions continue to occur, the phone will have to be picked up by the parent/guardian from the school.

BEHAVIOR POLICY

General Behavior

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

Confidentiality

GAA does **not** disclose consequences of student behavior(s) with anyone but the parents/guardians of the student. Please understand this limitation is in place to protect the privacy and safety of all minor individuals involved. It ensures that the handling of sensitive information remains within appropriate legal boundaries.

GAA will disclose details of a case, incident reports and CCTV footage, if requested by ADEK personnel and or Abu Dhabi Police.

ACCESS TO CCTV RECORDINGS CCTV recordings are considered confidential. The School Principal, Vice Principal, and Dean of Students are the only School-based staff authorized to view and retrieve CCTV recordings at their School. CCTV recordings of female students and

staff shall only be monitored by female School Principals and Vice Principals. All other School-based staff members are strictly prohibited from accessing recordings.

CCTV records must be retained for a period of 180 days. In the event that an incident captured in a CCTV recording requires clarification beyond the School level, the School Principal or Vice Principal must immediately notify the PSQA Sector, Licensing and Accreditation Division, in order to deal with the incident.

No copy of any recordings may be shared with any person or entity unless requested by a judicial order or by prior written approval from PSQA Sector's Executive Director. Copying or distribution of CCTV recordings is strictly prohibited and punishable by law, in 187 compliance with Federal Law No. (2) of 2006 on the prevention of information technology crimes.

Behavior levels and consequences

Level 1 - Level one behaviors are typically dealt with by classroom/homeroom teachers. Level one focuses on primary behaviors and immediate solutions. Repeated Level 1 behaviors will lead to Level 2 consequences.

Behaviors <i>examples merely serve as possible behaviors and are not limited to the list below</i>	Consequences
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Unprepared for class - no stationary, computer charged etc. ● Inappropriate use of language ● Poor sportsmanship ● Disrespect ● Littering ● Pushing or tripping ● Low level teasing ● Tardies to class ● Dress code violation (including sports uniforms). ● Disrupting hallway, class, and/or school functions ● Defying orders from School management and staff. ● Disruptive behavior on School buses (e.g. vandalizing bus seats). ● Off-task behaviors including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Chat/text messaging and using social networking sites (ex. Snap chat during class time) ○ Viewing websites that are not part of the assigned class work. ○ Gaming during class ● Neglecting requested parent signatures ● Misbehavior as determined by teachers and/or school administration ● Misuse of school facilities – including pool, gym, elevator, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The student will be reminded of the behavior agreement and encouraged to modify his/ her behavior accordingly. ● Continued disruptive behavior in class, playground, or extracurricular activities will result in parent conferences, detention, and other forms of restorative actions. ● Restorative conversation with classroom teacher or head of grade will take place ● A formal log within PowerSchool ● Parental contact will occur by the teacher/advisor who logs.

Level 2 - These behaviors are moderately serious behavior concerns or repeated Level 1 misbehavior. Any behavior that results in severe disruption to the teaching and learning environment or that may cause harm to self or others and or property damage. Logical consequences for Level 2 breach of conduct will be decided by the Head of Grade and/or Dean of Students in consultation with the classroom teacher. A record of the incident will be recorded. Parents will be notified by the Head of Grade or Dean of Students.

<p style="text-align: center;">Behaviors</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>These examples merely serve as possible behaviors and are not limited to the list below</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Consequences</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Repeated level one behaviors ● Skipping Class/Unexplained Absence ● Sneaking into School after school hours without the presence of supervisors. ● Continued Dress Code violations ● Dishonesty ● Inappropriate display of affection ● Having food delivered to school ● Walking out of lesson without permission ● Repeated pushing/tripping ● Discrimination/Mocking others ● Disrespect of property ● Viewing offensive material ● Academic dishonesty ● Providing false documents (e.g. forging Parents'/Guardians' signatures). ● Violation of Information Technology Acceptable Use Policy (Eg. Unauthorized online gaming, web browsing, etc) ● Downloading programs and games that interfere with student learning or Acceptable Use Policy (This includes sharing games via USB sticks) ● Sending unwanted and/or offensive (e)mail or messages (e.g. via chat) ● Aggressive or constant teasing ● Possession of items that are unacceptable in school ● Reoccurring unexcused tardies ● Indirect bullying ● Inappropriate use of electronic devices* (phone, laptop, etc.) ● Blatant or repetitive defiance of a staff member ● Selling items in school- candy, caffeinated drinks, food etc 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● A formal log within PowerSchool ● Restriction of privileges and activities ● Athletics Director will be informed regarding extracurricular activities ● Detention or making up for missed work at lunchtimes, after school or at home ● Mediation sessions ● Parent contact will occur ● 3-way conference between a member of the pastoral team, student and parent. ● Individual behavior plan/contract ● Confiscation of unacceptable items ● Individual counseling, with ongoing instruction in personal and social development. ● School-based community service. ● Replacement/repair of damaged property. ● Internal or external suspension. ● All actions taken with regards to the Behavioral Protocols and expectations are decided by the High School Leadership Team.

- Mobile phones, smart watches and earbuds distract from the learning environment and are not to be used during class time. Students are required to silence all phones and Smart Watches and follow classroom protocol with regards to putting them away. This is without exception. Students are not allowed to use their phone during bathroom breaks.
- GAA assumes no responsibility for replacing these items if brought to school. Phones/smart watches on display, in use and/or that ring or buzz during class, may be confiscated and turned into the Secondary Office and subject to consequences. In the event that a student's Phone/Smartwatch/Earbuds has been confiscated, it will be returned at the end of each day. Students must hand the phone/watch

Level 3 - Level 3 behaviors are the most serious breaches of the GAA behavior expectations and/or repeated Level 2 behaviors. Level 3 behavior is any behavior that results in physical danger to others, or which violates applicable laws in the UAE. A record of the incident will be recorded on the student's file. The Dean of Students, Vice Principal or Principal in consultation with the classroom or duty teacher will initiate a follow up with the student involved and decide on appropriate consequences. Parents will be notified by a member of the Secondary Leadership Team (Dean, Vice Principal or Principal).

Examples of level three behaviors	Consequences
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Repeated Level 2 behaviors ● Compromising safety for self and/or others ● Racist comments or actions towards a community member ● Physical intimidation or verbal abuse towards a staff member ● Distributing (or participating in the distribution of) pornographic material. ● Wilful damage to, or destruction of, School and personal property. ● Possessing or selling weapons or explosives. ● Smoking (including tobacco products and electronic cigarettes)* ● Possession of Drugs / Alcohol on campus* ● In possession of illegal drugs or substances in violation of public order and morals e.g. vapes. ● Exchanging any inappropriate materials, such as letters or photos. ● Sexual harassment/ assault* ● Theft of property ● Encouraging/Provoking Unlawful Behavior ● Bullying - Physical/Verbal ● Fighting with other students ● Hacking ● Violation of Information Technology Acceptable Use Policy E.g. Sharing or taking unauthorized photos or recording video of others- this includes any school activity, and school infraction etc. ● Cyberbullying ● Gross or flagrant violation of school guidelines that endangers the reputation of the school or other students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 3-way conference between administrator, student, and parent ● Individual behavior plan/contract ● Consultation with Counselor ● School-based community service ● Replacement/ repair of damaged property ● Denial of privileges, activities, or participation within sports teams ● Internal or external suspension ● Referral to Principal for possible dismissal or nonrenewal ● All actions taken with regards to the Behavioral Management Procedures are decided by the Pastoral School Leadership Team.

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

*Unlawful possession, use, or sale of any controlled substance or alcoholic beverage (including being under the influence of) is a serious matter, and a violation of the laws of our host country, the United Arab Emirates. Any infraction, including possession of drug paraphernalia while under the supervision of the school, subjects a student to expulsion and potential incarceration. GAA honors the local authority's guidelines as it relates to illegal substances.

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

Consequence definition:

- **Restitution** is intended to help students correct their wrong-doings by fixing the problem or by providing service to the school that restores the damage done to individuals, the facility, or the school culture.
- **Detention** can be issued in two ways:
 - **Lunch hour detention** is served – usually the day of the infraction – at lunch break in a supervised room.
 - **After school detention** is from 3.30 - 4.30 p.m. Parents will be notified by email at least one day in advance so that transportation may be arranged.
- **Behavior Plan** is created for students who show a pattern of repeating behavior(s). Students may be required to have their behavior signed off by classroom teachers and reported to administration on a daily basis. Failure to meet the expectations of the day may result in subsequent discipline.
- **Suspension** is the temporary removal of a student from school for various reasons which include but are not limited to disrespect for an adult, lack of cooperation, or disrupting the teaching and learning process. Students who are suspended lose their social privileges and

extra-curricular eligibility for the duration of the suspension. Suspended students are not allowed to participate in school activities.

- **In-School Suspension** is served in the office or a classroom designated by administration during the school days. Students will work independently on their assigned work and will have alternate break times.
- **Out of School Suspension** is served at home. The student is responsible during the period of suspension for obtaining and completing the assignments given during the period of absence from classes. Students suspended out of school are not allowed on the premises at any time during their suspension. In order for a student to return to school a parent meeting with either the Dean of Students, Vice Principal, or Principal must take place.
- **Behavioral Probation** is determined by the administration for chronic or serious violations of school conduct. Behavioral probation includes a designated period of time, usually with disciplinary sanctions, given to the student to prove him/herself as a responsible member of the student body. Students on behavioral probation are restricted from participation in school activities unless Principal approval has been given.
- **Expulsion** is the permanent removal of the student from the student body and may occur for serious and/or repeated offenses. Only the Head of School, following the policy stated in the school board policy handbook and after recommendation of the Principal, has the authority to make the decision to expel a student. Students who are expelled for disciplinary reasons are not allowed to return to campus to attend any activities, nor may they re-enroll at a later date.

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

PERSONAL PROPERTY SEARCH

GEMS American Academy reserves the right to search the personal property of students - this includes the student's device if necessary. A search will be conducted if a GAA Faculty/Staff suspects a student of having brought an unsuitable or expressly not allowed element into school. Any search will follow the protocols below:

1. The students will be treated with dignity and respect.
2. The search will always occur with another staff member present.
3. If a classroom needs to be searched, the students will leave their bags in the classroom and wait outside.
4. The search will be documented for school purposes to include the time, result and any actions taken with regards to the result of the search.

If a search yields results:

1. A student behavior plan will be implemented or amended should one already exist.
2. Parents will be notified via formal communication.

BULLYING PREVENTION

What is bullying? Bullying is the repeated 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 do you do if you are bullied or you notice others bullying?*

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

For Parents *If your child is a victim of bullying:*

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

If your child is responsible for bullying:

- Never ignore it.
- Make it clear that such behavior is unacceptable.
- Work with the school to develop strategies to change behavior.

CYBER-BULLYING

This involves the use of information and communication technologies to support deliberate, repeated and hostile behavior, by an individual or group, that is intended to harm others.

Students will be held accountable for cyber bullying whether it occurs on or off campus or during the school year or on breaks. The negative impact on the academic environment at GAA will be the deciding factor.

The consequences of **Cyberbullying** range from after school detention to out of school suspension.

COLLEGE APPLICATION DISCIPLINE REPORTING

On school reports provided to university admissions offices, specifically those associated with The Common Application, **GAA is obligated to report any disciplinary violations from the ninth grade forward**, as related to academic misconduct or behavioral misconduct that results in disciplinary action. These actions could include, but are not limited to, academic malpractice (including plagiarism and academic dishonesty), academic probation, suspension, or expulsion.

ACADEMIC HONESTY POLICY

GAA expects and requires that students will uphold the highest standards of ethics and academic excellence. We expect our students to show integrity and develop into principled learners and we do our best to guide them. The Academic Honesty Policy represents our effort to guarantee that students are committed to building and maintaining a learning community of the highest integrity by carrying out academic tasks with honesty in all situations.

What Is Academic Honesty?

Academic honesty promotes integrity and respect of other peoples' work and ideas. Academic honesty is a commitment by the author to share his/her own ideas with an audience and if using someone else's ideas to properly cite those giving recognition to the author. Academic honesty is a principle informed by the attributes of the Learner profile.

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

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

permission from the teacher; also, carrying such materials with the intention of using them on a test or exam.

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

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

Procedures For Investigating Academic Dishonesty:

- The teacher will express concerns about the work that has been submitted by the student to the Dean of Students.
- Together, they will investigate the matter which will include a discussion with the student and a written statement.
- If, after investigation, it is found that the malpractice was not deliberate, the student will be given guidance and support in order to avoid such errors in future followed by a second chance to submit the work. (*please note that no malpractice is acceptable and that for IB internal assessments, the IB DOES NOT take into consideration ones intent)
- If the investigation reveals intent to engage in academic dishonesty, the work will not be graded, a record will be kept and the parents will be notified. The student will be provided adequate time to redo the original assignment for a grade. The record will be an internal GAA record.
- If academic dishonesty is detected in work submitted as an IB internal or external assessment, the work will be retained by the school, the student will be identified as having “nonsubmission”, the IB will be informed and an N Grade will be awarded, thereby barring the award of an IB Diploma. Subject teachers will issue cover sheets for all such assessments that students will sign to acknowledge this consequence.
- School administration will be involved as needed during the consequence phase.

Students should recognize that they are ultimately responsible for their own work and that the consequences of any breaches of the standard of academic honesty will be theirs alone. They should speak to teachers regularly about their work and show drafts at various stages in the production process. They should ask teachers for advice if they are at any time unsure of what they have done in relation to referencing sources. Any breach of the academic honesty policy will be taken very seriously.

Consequences for Acts of Academic Dishonesty

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

First Offense at GAA:

1. Students will receive a mark of Insufficient Evidence for the assignment, test, quiz, project, or exam.
2. Students will be required to meet with the teacher, and, if deemed necessary, the HOD, IB/AP Coordinator, DoS, VP and P as required to discuss the importance of academic integrity and develop a plan to address and correct the infraction.
3. Students will receive a notation of the violation in Powerschool.

4. Student's parents will be informed of the violation.
5. The Student will be required to complete an alternative assessment aligned to the original standards being assessed.

Second Offense at GAA:

1. Students will receive a mark of Insufficient Evidence for the assignment, test, quiz, project, or exam.
2. Students and parents will be required to meet with the Principal and/or Vice Principal to discuss the importance of academic integrity.
3. Students will receive a notation of the violation in Powerschool. This incident will be reflected on future school applications - including post-secondary applications.
4. The Student will be required to complete an alternative assessment aligned to the original standards being assessed.

Third Offense at GAA:

1. Students will receive a mark of Insufficient Evidence for the assignment, test, quiz, project, or exam.
2. Students and parents will be required to meet with the Principal to discuss the importance of academic integrity.
3. Students will receive a notation of the violation in Powerschool. This incident will be reflected on future school applications - including post-secondary applications.
4. The Student will be required to complete an alternative assessment aligned to the original standards being assessed.
5. The student's future placement at GAA will be in jeopardy.

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

ACADEMIC HONESTY AND THE IBDP

It is the responsibility of GAA as an IB World School to uphold the integrity of all IB Examinations and internal assessments (IAs). As such, our academic honesty policy is in line with the IB expectations of and requirements for us as an IB World school. Please see details in the IB Handbook.

For those assignments that are to be formally submitted to the IB, a student will receive an 'N' (not graded) in the subject where the malpractice has occurred, subsequently the student will not receive his/her diploma and can re-sit for the diploma after 6 months. In more serious cases

where there has been breach of the regulations especially during the exams, the IB will deny the student the right to enter any future examination session. (General regulations-28.5-28.8)

The IB Learner Profile is embedded into GAA's daily life and is the cornerstone of this policy. Further guidance comes from the IB Publication's *Academic honesty: Guidance for Schools, September 2003*. In developing GAA's academic honesty policy we encourage our students to be:

- **Inquirers** – who acquire the skills necessary to conduct inquiry and research
- **Knowledgeable** – who explore concepts, ideas and issues
- **Principled** – who act with integrity and honesty, take responsibility for their own actions
- **Open-minded** – who are accustomed to seeking and evaluating a range of points of view
- **Risk takers** – who are brave and articulate in defending their beliefs

An IB Internal Assessment that meets Academic Dishonesty criteria will not be considered for submission and therefore the student will not be allowed to sit for the corresponding World Exam. This is a failing condition for an IB Diploma Candidate (IB Assessment fees will not be returned)

These qualities when applied to learning and student work will establish skills and behavior which support good practices to be found in the classroom, used for homework and continued to examination level. The good practices are expected to be introduced, modeled and used throughout the school.

TECHNOLOGY – ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY (AUP)

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

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

BYOD (BRING YOUR OWN DEVICE)

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

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

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

These suggested minimum specifications only apply to secondary school:

- Platform Mac or Windows
- Operating System macOS 12 (Monterey) / Windows 10
- Screen Size 11 inches
- Processor Intel i5 (4 cores) / Apple M1/M2 / AMD A8-7680
- RAM 8GB
- Hard Drive 128GB
- Wireless 802.11n
- Ports 2 USB ports, VGA or HDMI / 2 USB-C ports & Audio in/out
- Battery Life 8 hours
- Warranty (highly recommended) 3 year warranty with damage protection

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

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

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

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

ETHICAL CONDUCT

It is the responsibility of all users:

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

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

EDUCATIONAL USE

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

RESPECT FOR OTHERS

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

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

RESPECT FOR SECURITY

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

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

RESPECT FOR PROPERTY

Software Copyright

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

Hardware

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

Audio Visual Hardware

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

INTERNET/WORLD WIDE WEB USAGE

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

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

Responsibilities:

- All users are prohibited from accessing portions of the Internet that do not promote the instructional mission of GAA.

- All school web pages are subject to initial approval of the Administration. All school web pages should reflect the mission of the school and adhere to the GAA Web Page Guidelines.

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

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

STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

GEMS American Academy is an inclusive school that welcomes students who are English Language Learners (ELL) as well as students with learning differences who require mild to moderate Learning Support (LS) services, and/or students who have been identified as Gifted and Talented (GT). In addition, GAA offers a counseling program that promotes learning, Social and Emotional assistance and career and college counseling.

Inclusion at GAA offers support to students with additional learning needs in a variety of settings using methodologies to support their individual needs. Inclusion specialists work in close collaboration with the subject area teachers to develop academic programs that enable each student to access the curriculum in a way that allows them to achieve their potential.

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

Resource: In addition to in-classroom or small group pull-out support, GAA offers resource classes for identified students. These classes focus on developing ATLS (Approaches to learning skills) such as self management, study skills, note-taking, organization, communication etc. as well as support with IEP (Individualized Education Plan) goals.

English Language Learner specialists offer a support system that allows students to gain life-long learning skills and prepare themselves for higher education. As an English-medium school, GAA facilitates the attainment of English proficiency through immersion by students whose native language is not English while at the same time encouraging the learning of other foreign languages. Instructors and staff are dedicated to these goals, and are continuously developing their knowledge, skills, and abilities accordingly. Students may be recommended for ELL English, ELL Resource or mainstream support based on data gathered through WIDA, MAP and CAT4.

Gifted and Talented (GT) support is met through differentiated instruction in the regular classroom. Honors classes, HL IB, enrichment clubs, and student led opportunities are available for identified students. GT students who are identified through external evaluations or MAP, CAT4 and class performance will be assigned a case manager and have an advanced learning plan (AP) that is shared with all teachers.

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

College Counseling is provided by High School Counselors who extend the work of the Middle School, and support students as they develop personalized plans for their college and career futures.

LIBRARY

OVERVIEW

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

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

LIBRARY VISITS

The Secondary Library is open from 7:30 am to 3:30 pm, Monday through Thursday, and from 7:30 am to 12:30 pm on Fridays for the school community. There will be occasions when the library is closed earlier due to whole school events (e.g. staff meetings) for library practices such as inventory. Overall the library lends itself to flexible and active use by class groups and individuals.

SCHEDULED LIBRARY VISITS

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

BORROWING MATERIALS

Library members—students, staff, and parents—may borrow items for a period of two weeks (renewable as many times as needed). There is no limited number of materials to be checked out by the students and staff in the secondary division. Parents may borrow up to 5 books at a time.

RENEWING MATERIALS

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

RESERVING MATERIALS

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

RETURNING MATERIALS

Materials may be returned to the book drop boxes located in the secondary library and middle school lounge.

OVERDUE MATERIALS

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

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

LOST AND DAMAGED MATERIALS

Any library member who loses or damages a library material will be billed for the original cost of the material in AED plus 25% shipping and handling plus VAT or given the option to replace the book with the same title in good condition.

COLLECTION MANAGEMENT POLICY

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

HOME/SCHOOL COMMUNICATION

Great schools provide parents with timely information so that they can be informed participants in the learning process.

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

GAAPA (GAA PARENT ASSOCIATION)

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

GAA BOOSTER CLUB

The GAA Booster Club is a parent volunteer organization that helps support our Secondary Athletics and Fine Arts departments, with the mission of providing fun and community building events for the students and families of GAA. Support is shown in many ways, including volunteering time, raising money and contributing funds to better enhance the team or organization's performance. Booster Club is an important means of connecting parents and other community members with the curricular and co-curricular activities of students. In addition to supporting our students, we are members of the GAA Community and we work with other volunteer groups on campus to promote community as well as partnering with GAAPA for events throughout the year.

STUDENT/PARENT/TEACHER CONFERENCES

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

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

EXTENDED PARENT ABSENCES

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

WITHDRAWING FROM SCHOOL

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

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

TRANSFER CERTIFICATES

The Ministry of Education in the UAE requires that all students from Grade 2 onward submit a Transfer Certificate when they change schools. After the 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 described above.

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

SAFETY

SUPERVISION OF STUDENTS

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

We operate a daily, period by period, attendance system for all students arriving or departing school between 7.45 am and 2.55 pm. Communication with home is made to confirm all absences – usually before 8.30 am each morning. Students arriving after 7.45 am must sign in with the Secondary Secretary and receive a ‘tardy slip’ before going to class. Students wishing to leave before 2.55 pm must provide notification to the school from their parents. Please note that we do not provide adult supervision before school in the morning and after school in the afternoons.

STUDENTS LEAVING SCHOOL DURING THE DAY

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

FIRE ALARM/LOCK DOWN DRILLS

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

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

SECURITY

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

HEALTH

SCHOOL CLINIC INFORMATION

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

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

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

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

EMERGENCY CONTACTS/CHANGE OF CONTACT DETAILS

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

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

HEALTH FORMS ([LINK TO MEDICAL FORMS](#))

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

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

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

MEDICATION

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

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

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

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

ILLNESS OR INJURY

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

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

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

- A fever > 37.3 C (100 F); must be fever-free for 24 hours without fever medication
- Vomited more than once; feeling of nausea
- Diarrhea (return to school after 48 hours or 24 hours on medication)
- A frequent cough; productive cough
- Persistent pain (ear, stomach, etc.)
- A widespread rash; contagious rash or skin spots
- Head lice (Pediculosis): please notify the school nurse to be given proper instructions
- Bacterial conjunctivitis/Pink Eye; awakens in the morning with thick or sticky eye drainage; 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 or over the weekend should be taken care of prior to returning to school along with a physician's note with instructions and limitations if needed. If your child has an out-patient procedure or surgery, you must provide a physician's certificate stating when they can safely return to school and with any limitations/instructions.

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

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

MASK USE

The use of face masks is limited to those individuals who are well enough to attend school, but who may be coughing or sneezing after experiencing a cold or flu.

IMMUNIZATIONS

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

HEALTH SCREENINGS

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

HELPFUL REMINDERS

- Encourage your child to eat breakfast every day before school.
- Make sure your child gets 8 or more hours of sleep each night.
- Always send your child to school with a refillable water bottle.
- Sneakers or tennis shoes are preferred for active participation and safety.
- Encourage good hand-washing; before and after meals, after toileting, etc.
- Please inform the school if your child has any allergies. We ask that any food brought in for sharing is free of nuts/nut products.

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

MISCELLANEOUS

LOST AND FOUND

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

CHARITABLE CAUSES/ COMMUNITY SERVICE

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

APPENDICES

I: ADMISSIONS POLICY

A student applying for admission must be accepted by the Secondary Principal, based on the school's ability to meet the educational needs of the student.

GAA offers an academic-based educational program. Students who are able to access an academic based program within 2 grade-levels of their peers (based on age/ability), will be considered eligible to enroll.

In general, the Registrar places students by continuation of grade from their previous school. The school will determine the student's grade placement based on prior records and recommendations. If the school has doubts regarding the student's placement, if records are not available, or if the parents feel that the recommended grade placement is not suitable, MAP test results generated during the admissions process are an important indicator of student readiness and experience and will help inform the placement decision. GAA may request the applicant to take the CAT4 test. ADEK approval is a must to enroll the student.

During the Admissions process, some students may be placed on a probationary status to ensure placement is appropriate at GAA. GAA reserves the right to deny admission to any student for whom an appropriate educational programme and support services are not available.

GAA is a credit-based school, students must complete 25 credits between grades 9 and 12 in order to graduate successfully with a high school diploma. Credits are determined by the high school counselors after being approved by the Secondary Principal.

The minimum passing grade in each subject should not be less than D (or 60%). or (3) in the British curriculum.

While GAA can accommodate mild learning and behavior challenges, any student with learning needs must be disclosed upon applying and supporting documentation must be provided (Individual Education Plan) for the application to be approved by the inclusion director. *(Please refer to GAA's Inclusion Policy)*

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.

Passing the National Emirates Standardized Tests (EmSAT), is a mandatory requirement for university admission in UAE, as per the relevant rules and regulations.

A student may transfer between Schools in the Emirate (taking into account the curriculum and equivalency requirements of the high school certificate in the UAE).

Students applying to the IB diploma in Grade 11 must be interviewed by the IB coordinator and approved by the Secondary Principal. GAA will not accept any IB students in Grade 11 or 12 after October 1st.

II: DISENROLLMENT

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. 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 family has failed to notify the school of any pre-existing learning needs.
2. The family does not comply with the request of the school to provide outside professional testing for learning needs.
3. The student fails to make satisfactory progress in the learning support programme and is unable to function in the regular programme with minimal support.

III: PROCEDURES FOR ASSIGNING CLASS PLACEMENT

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

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

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

teachers on any grade level work and plan together and provide similar learning opportunities and experiences for students.

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

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

IV: PE STUDENT EXPECTATIONS POLICY

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

PE Student Uniform:

Grade 6 through Grade 9, Student PE uniform requirements:

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

A register of attendance will be taken at the start of each lesson. If a student is injured or returns to school after sickness and may not be able to fully participate, they will need to supply a note or communication from their parent/guardian supporting their reasons for not fully participating.

They will still be expected to bring their P.E uniform and take part in some way, this may be in the form of coaching or completing a written assignment. In the case of a forgotten PE uniform, secondary PE teachers work on a 3 strikes policy (bullet description below). In the case of a medical excuse supported by a note from parents / guardian, the student is asked to participate in a supporting role (e.g. observation / evaluation, peer mentoring, clean-up, etc.).

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

Changing: During a 90-minute time frame afforded to secondary PE, High School students are asked to change from their school uniforms to their respective PE uniform in 5 minutes from the start of the period. Students will be provided 10 minutes to change back into their school uniform at the end of the class. Students must change back into their school uniforms under all circumstances unless the student is participating in a sport related after school activity, in which PE occurs during the last period of the day. The aim of this policy is to maximize the amount of instructional time in the lesson.

For Middle School, students will be expected to come to school in appropriate attire ready for PE class (**ONLY ON DAYS THEY HAVE PE**). For those students that wish to change into school uniform at the end of class will be provided with 10 minutes to do so.

Students are prohibited from entering the changing rooms located in the gym or outside by the playground until a member of P.E staff is present and allows them to enter. All P.E facilities, apart from the outside playground, are strictly out of bounds to students unless a member of staff is present.

V: COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE FOR PARENTS AND LEGAL GUARDIANS

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

1. Informal Resolution

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

1. If parents have a complaint or concern they should, in the first instance, contact their son's/daughter's teacher. In most cases, the matter can be resolved in this way. If the matter cannot be resolved between the parents and teacher, it may be necessary for the Division Principal to be contacted.

2. Any complaint made directly to the Division Principal will normally be referred back to the relevant teacher unless the Division Principal deems it appropriate to deal with the matter personally.
3. Teachers and the Division Principal will keep anecdotal records of concerns and complaints on the date when they were received and reviewed. The Division Principal/teacher will document the outcome in a letter to the parent/guardian.

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

2. Formal Resolution

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

QUESTIONS? WHO TO CALL FIRST:

GAA Telephone Number	(+971) 02 2019 555
GAA Fax Number	(+971) 02 557 4990
Main Reception Email:	info_gaa@gemsedu.com

EMAIL CONTACT DETAILS:

DEPARTMENT	NAME	EMAIL ADDRESS
Head of School & CEO	Robert Rinaldo	hos_gaa@gemsedu.com
Secondary Principal	Garth Wyncoll	g.wyncoll_gaa@gemsedu.com
High School Vice Principal (9-10)	Zahra Bhatti	hsvprincipal_gaa@gemsedu.com
High School Vice Principal (11-12)	Monica Martin	
Secondary Secretary	Salma Abdelnaby	secsecretary_gaa@gemsedu.com
IBDP Coordinator	Elliot Brodie	e.brodie_gaa@gemsedu.com
Curriculum Coordinator	Andreia Barbu	a.barbu_gaa@gemsedu.com
Teaching, Learning and Innovation Coordinator	Zaynah Welcome	z.welcome_gaa@gemsedu.com
High School Counselor (Aaa - Alh, B-H)	Lia Noronha	l.noronha_gaa@gemsedu.com
High School Counselor (Ali - Alp, I-P)	Catherine Sciolis	c.sciolis_gaa@gemsedu.com
High School Counselor (Alq - Azz, Q-Z)	Keisha McCray	k.mccray_gaa@gemsedu.com
Athletics & Activities Director	Rodrigo De Marco	r.demarco_gaa@gemsedu.com
Registrar	Asma El Derby	registrar_gaa@gemsedu.com
Accounts		finance_gaa@gemsedu.com
Nurse		Nurse_gaa@gemsedu.com
Parent Relations Executive	Fatma Chabanova	pre_gaa@gemsedu.com
Transport Operation Executive	Rameez Rasheed 02-2019511	rameez.rasheed@sts-group.com info@bbt.ae
Executive Secretary	Mirna El Haj Ibrahim	m.elhajibrahim_gaa@gemsedu.com
Government Relations Executive	Shahd Hamdan	s.hamdan_gaa@gemsedu.com
GAA Security		security_gaa@gemsedu.com

SCHOOL RELATED ISSUES:

ISSUE RELATED TO	CONTACT PERSON
IB Diploma	IB Coordinator
After-school Activities Program	Athletics & Activities Director
Facilities Usage	Manager – School Operations via Reception
Finance/Tuition Fees	Accountant via Reception
Health	Nurse's office
Bus Transport	Transport Manager via Reception or email
Food Services	Leave a message with Reception
Teachers	Leave a message with Secondary Secretary or email teachers directly

COMMUNICATION:

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

GEMS AMERICAN ACADEMY PARENT & STUDENT CONTRACT

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

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

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

- Provide him or her with a quiet, orderly place to study
- Ensure my child is prepared for class
- Bring my child to school on time every day, in full uniform
- Support their adherence to the student code of conduct
- Attend special activities sponsored by GAA to build my understanding of learning outcomes and my capacity to support learning at home.

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

- Academic Honesty Policy
- Personal Property Search of Student Locker and Bags
- Information Technology Appropriate Use Policy
- Behavior consequences

Name of Student: _____ Grade: _____

Signature of Parent: _____ Date: _____

Signature of Student: _____ Date: _____