



# **ELEMENTARY SCHOOL HANDBOOK 2026-2027**



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



## **Dear GAA Elementary Learning Community,**

Welcome to the 2026–2027 school year at GEMS American Academy – Abu Dhabi!

It is a genuine pleasure to welcome both our returning families and those joining the GAA community for the first time. With students and families representing more than 80 nationalities, GAA is a wonderfully diverse community, united by a shared commitment to learning, kindness, belonging, and excellence.

At GAA Elementary, we believe that children learn best when they feel known, valued, supported, and challenged. Our goal is to provide every student with a high-quality and engaging learning experience that builds strong academic foundations while developing the confidence, curiosity, creativity, and independence they will need for the future.

Our American-based curriculum provides students with rigorous and purposeful learning experiences while encouraging them to ask questions, solve problems, collaborate, communicate, and think critically. Throughout the Elementary School, we continue to strengthen high-quality teaching and learning, use assessment thoughtfully to understand and respond to each child's needs, and create meaningful opportunities for inquiry, project-based learning, STEM, technology, and innovation.

Just as importantly, school is about much more than academics. We want our students to love coming to school. We want them to build friendships, discover new interests, take appropriate risks, learn from mistakes, celebrate their successes, and develop a genuine sense of belonging within our community. Through our Be a GEM values, we encourage students to demonstrate kindness, respect, responsibility, resilience, and care for one another every day.

Our purpose-built campus provides an exceptional environment in which this learning can take place. Modern classrooms, libraries, specialist learning spaces, science and technology facilities, performing arts spaces, sports facilities, swimming pool, auditorium, and outdoor learning areas provide our students with opportunities to learn and grow in many different ways.

None of this happens without strong partnerships. Parents and families are an essential part of the GAA community, and we value the trust you place in us each day. Open communication and a shared commitment to our children allow us to create the strongest possible learning experience for every student.

As we begin this new school year, I am incredibly excited about what lies ahead. There will be challenges to overcome, successes to celebrate, friendships to build, questions to explore, and countless opportunities for our students to surprise us with what they can achieve.

Thank you for choosing GEMS American Academy and for allowing us to be part of your child's educational journey. I look forward to welcoming you back to campus and to another wonderful year of learning, growing, and being a GEM together.

Warm regards,

**John Ashenden**

**Elementary Principal**

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# OVERVIEW OF GEMS AMERICAN ACADEMY, ABU DHABI

## OUR VISION AND MISSION

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

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 offer:**

GEMS American Academy offers an American-based curriculum, incorporating AERO and NGSS standards, for students from PreK to G5 within an international context. This holistic approach ensures a well-rounded education that prepares students for global citizenship.

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

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

## INTRODUCTION

KG and Elementary classes follow a developmentally appropriate program of studies, finishing at 2:45 pm. PreK students have the option to leave at 1 pm or stay till 2:45 pm for play-time. Target class size is 25 students though ADEK regulations allow for class sizes of 30. Each class up to Grade 2 benefits from both a teacher and an Educational Assistant, and Grades 3 – 5 each share multiple Educational Assistants across the grade level.

**The Kindergarten curriculum** is rooted in the American Common Core through a Play Based Learning. PreK and KG 1 use a specific learning continuum that supports children at their own learning pace, helping to foster a sense of ownership and rigor that “best fits” each child. Our shared vision for the early year’s program at GAA is collaborative, incorporating best practices for early childhood development and education.

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

Students attend a variety of specialist classes which include Arabic, STEAM, Library, Physical Education, and Swimming. These lessons are taught by specialist teachers who are integrated and connected to the enrichment of the Elementary school program.

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

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

The Elementary curriculum is rooted in best practice approaches, using the AERO Standards (American Education Reaches Out), Common Core State Standards (CCSS), and the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS). We take advantage of our international student community and the cultural diversity that it offers. We celebrate and learn about different countries’ cultures, traditions, habits and holidays.

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

# SCHOOL DAY

## SCHOOL HOURS

The school day for all grades commences at **7:45am** Monday through Friday. Students are not permitted into the grade level hallways/classrooms before 7:30am. PreK-G5 dismissal time is **2:45pm Monday to Thursday** and **11:20am** on Fridays. Students in Pre-Kindergarten may be collected at **1:00pm**, but may stay until 2:45pm for 'play time'. The school cannot provide supervision for students **before 7:30am** or **after 3:15pm**. Students are to be under parental or guardian supervision while on school premises before and after these times.

Students are to be collected from their classrooms by a parent or guardian. Doors will open at 2:45pm for collection. After you have collected your child, please make your way to the exit. Once students are collected, they must remain in the supervision (in eye sight) of their parent/guardian- students are not permitted to move around the school unaccompanied at any time.

Students not collected within 20 minutes after dismissal will be escorted to a holding area to wait while the parents are called. At 3:10pm (Monday through Thursday) and 12:00pm (Fridays), students are moved to the main reception to stay with the reception staff and security until collection.

After repeated occurrences of pick-ups post 3:05pm or 12:00 (Fridays), the parent will be contacted by the Assistant Principal, and if this situation persists, the parent may be contacted by the Principal to enroll the student in the GAA STS School Bus program.

Students may not re-enter the rear gate **after 3:05 pm** (Mon-Thurs) or **12:00pm** (Fridays) unless **accompanied** by a parent. In the event an unaccompanied student wishes to return to the school premises after school hours, entrance is **only** permitted via **the Main Entrance** of the school. Students are not permitted to stay by themselves inside the school and must be accompanied by an adult. If not, they must remain with their VP or the reception staff to await pick-up.

## ATTENDANCE

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

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

## ABSENCE

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

If absenteeism goes above 10%, students are reported to the safeguarding team for review and a meeting with parents is set up. If students are absent for more than 10% of the academic school year, they are in jeopardy of lower grades for this academic year (which will be noted in reports) and a possible removal from the school for the next school year.

Students reaching multiple absences (excused or unexcused) will be contacted by our dean of students at intervals. If students reach 15 absences (excused or unexcused), families will be contacted by the Assistant Principal to set up an attendance contract. Students exceeding 18 absences will be reported to ADEK, in accordance with ADEK/MOE policy, and will incur a child welfare check from the Ministry of Education.

## LATE ARRIVAL / EARLY PICK-UP

All students arriving into class past 7:45am are considered tardy and must receive a late pass before entering the classroom. Parents must accompany their child/children to the Main Reception or KG Reception to sign in. Please note that late pass will be given to students, and they must walk to class unaccompanied. No parents/guardians are allowed in the building after 7:45am.

Multiple tardies, in accordance with ADEK policy, add up to an absence. They will be counted towards the attendance policy. If your child is repeatedly tardy, you may be called in for a meeting with administration.

If a student is leaving school early, parents should inform the classroom teacher at least an hour in advance and come to the Reception for a 'check out' slip. Students will be collected from classrooms and brought to parents in the main reception for collection. Parents should not pick-up directly from classrooms before 2:45 pm.

Students will not be accepted or collected from their classroom without a late/early pick up slip.

## CHANGE TO REGULAR HOME TRANSPORTATION

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

## GAA STUDENT DISMISSAL PROCEDURE

The GAA school day finishes at 1:00pm for early PreK Dismissal and 2:45pm for PreK- G5. It is vital for the smooth running of the bus service (and the After-School Activities Program) that students arrive on time for the bus service. Parents can pick up students directly from the classroom or will follow the bus collection procedure which is detailed below. Students are not allowed to leave the classroom unaccompanied.

Parents are not to disturb instruction and should wait outside in the hallway for their children.

The class EA (Educational Assistant) from KG-GR 2 will escort those students who use the bus service to the buses located near Gate 4 and will hand students over to the respective conductors. The conductors will make sure the students are safely buckled before the bus moves.

Grades 3-5 bus-users are expected to go to buses directly from their classrooms.

***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 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.

To ensure the safety of all students, it is imperative that parents/guardians inform the school in advance if a student will not be riding the bus. Please notify your child's homeroom teacher, the elementary school secretary, or the school's front desk via email or phone call.

Adherence to ADEK transportation safety standards is mandatory for all students. Failure to comply with these regulations may result in consequences including, but not limited to, loss of privileges, suspensions, or termination of bus services.

## LUNCH/SNACK

At GAA, we encourage students to eat healthy, nutritious foods. Water is provided for all students, and students are required to bring their own refillable water bottles. Children should bring a healthy snack from home to eat during the morning break. **Any food sent to school should not contain any nuts or nut products.** Please ensure you send your students to school with a healthy packed lunch from home or order from the GAA 'Slices' website.

PreKG-Grade 5 students will eat their snacks and lunches in classrooms. **Parents can opt to order classroom delivery through Slices Cafeteria.**

Please note that we will contact families if lunches are determined to not be healthy for an extended period, or not contain enough food.

## RECESS

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

## BIRTHDAYS

GAA celebrates student birthdays through a monthly Community Snack Buffet held at 11:00 a.m. on the last Friday of each month. Students whose birthdays fall within that month may bring one type of small, individually portioned snack, with enough for approximately 25 students, to share with their homeroom.

- **All shared snacks must be nut-free.**
- Suitable options include fruit, crackers, digestive biscuits, popcorn, mini muffins, pretzels, rice cakes, juice boxes, vegetable sticks, dried fruit, raisin packs, and cheese strings.
- To support a simple, inclusive, and manageable celebration, families must not send candy, gift bags, doughnuts, cakes, or cupcakes.
- *Invitations to **out of school birthday parties** can only be sent via school if all students in the class are invited.*

## LEARNING SUPPORT SERVICES

### GAA LIBRARY

**Hours: 7:30am - 3:30pm**

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

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

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

***Lost or damaged items may need to be replaced at your cost. Fines issued include the cost for shipping and processing on top of the book's actual cost.***

## SPECIALIST CLASSES

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

Parents are not allowed entrance in the changing and/or locker rooms. If you wish to change your child, you will be escorted to a special bathroom area where you can assist in private.

## STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

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

### **Learning Support**

As an inclusive school, GAA offers support to students with learning differences in a variety of settings using methodologies based on individual needs. Inclusion coaches work in close collaboration with the subject area teachers to develop academic programs allowing each student to engage in learning activities in a way suitable to their individual learning needs.

## ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS (ELL)

As an English-medium school, GAA facilitates the attainment of English proficiency through immersion. ELL students are provided with in-class support which is designed to enable non-native speakers of English to reach a sufficient degree of proficiency in the English language and to enhance participation in their classes. ELL support is aligned with mainstream programs and utilizes differentiated instruction within the classroom to meet the needs of individual students who are still learning the fundamentals of listening, speaking, reading and writing in English. The Inclusion Coach may provide additional support for ELL students by building vocabulary and reinforcing understanding of concepts within specific subjects, as needed. This will be looked at within our Strengths and Needs Plans with Student Support Services.

## EXTENDED PRACTICE

All students are recommended to complete extended learning activities at home on a regular basis. 'Extended Practice' might be work that was not completed during the school day; reinforcement of skills introduced that day, web-based activities (SeeSaw activities or Edmentum), reading, math games, or project work.

Additionally, parents should also include time after school to read with their child and time to play educational games. Meaningful 'Extended Practice' will be assigned by grade level and is collaboratively identified as a grade level focus which supports in-class learning and is expected to be completed. Please do not expect "busy work" or worksheets.

## AFTERSCHOOL ACTIVITIES (ASAs)

At GEMS American Academy we offer both non-competitive and competitive sporting opportunities for our students from Grade 1 to 5. In addition, we also offer a wide range of academic and creative pursuits to enrich the students' schooling experience. These activities are designed to provide an opportunity for students to socialize with each other in a fun atmosphere.

Some after school activities may incur an added fee and this will be communicated before the activity begins. These paid after school activities will be open to KG - Grade 5.

Students who participate in the non-competitive programs should be picked up promptly at 4:00pm at the end of the activity. All students, including siblings, not participating in an after school program go home by their normal mode of transport at 2:55pm.

## COMPETITIVE ACTIVITIES

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

## FIELD TRIPS

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

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



The GAA uniform supplier is Threads. The uniforms for GAA will only be distributed from Threads' Retail outlet in Dalma Mall. There will be no uniform sale at the school. Uniforms can also be purchased online at [www.threadsme.com](http://www.threadsme.com)

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

- No tight clothes
- No spaghetti strap shirts
- No exposed midriff
- No offensive logos or expressions on clothing

## STUDENT LANYARDS

Students are expected to wear their student lanyards (blue) upon entry and exit from the school. PreK-G2 will hang their lanyards up inside the classroom during the school day, but G3-5 are expected to wear their lanyards all day.

Students not wearing their lanyards will be requested to stop and put them on. Please ensure that you child brings them daily.



## PERSONAL PRESENTATION

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

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

### ***Spare Clothes Requirement:***

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

## ADEK SCHOOL BACKPACK REQUIREMENTS

| Grade / Year<br>(US) (UK) | Max. Backpack<br>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                          |

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

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.

## KG SCHOOL BACKPACKS AND LUNCH BAGS

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

\*If you would still like a small book bag for your child, we advise bags with measurements no greater than 9.5 inches (width) and 10.5 inches height, to fit inside our cubby space.

Students will need their lunch box and a water bottle for school.

Students may still need to bring bags for swim kits and there will be common areas to store these.

## SWIMMING KIT REQUIREMENT

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

## INFORMATION COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

### TECHNOLOGY

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

### INTERNET USE AT SCHOOL

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

### INTERNET ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY

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

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

Internet access privileges. Violations may also lead to disciplinary actions outlined elsewhere in this Handbook.

## PARENT COMMUNICATION

The school maintains close relations with parents, facilitating communication and cooperation. Keeping abreast of regular school communication is essential and parents are encouraged to actively read the various modes of communicating through email, and the GAA Newsletter.

- **Email:** contacting teachers directly regarding concerns or needs
- **GAAzette:** broadcast whole school communication and upcoming GAA events

Please make sure your email address is up to date so you receive essential GAA communication. If you are not receiving emails regularly from GAA please speak with the Parent Relations Executive to update your contact information.

At the beginning of the academic year, a *Back to School* information session will be held to introduce parents to the faculty and the general curriculum. We will hold parent/teacher conferences 2 times a year around progress reports/term reports. Please see the GAA calendar for exact dates.

## VISIT THE CLASSROOM

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

If an emergency arises and you must contact your child or his/her teacher without a prior arrangement, please contact Reception in the first instance.

Parents/guardians should **not** go directly to the classroom during school hours as this disrupts in-class learning. You must check in with reception upon arrival and wait for the teacher to come to the main entrance.

## PARENTAL ENGAGEMENT

GAA is aligned with the ADEK Parent Engagement Policy.

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

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

Please note that we are a TEAM - students, parents, and teachers/administrators. Our expectations are that to make learning meaningful and most effective, a strong partnership must occur. Our expectations are that if we need to meet with you regarding concerns or struggles, you are there and a willing partner. We want to help your child do their very best learning and make the most growth possible. ***To show a full partnership, we expect attendance at parent conferences, response to emails, attendance at needed additional parent meetings, etc.***

***In return, our school team is here to support in any way we can- and we do ask that you schedule meetings outside of teaching hours (with teachers) and contact for an appointment (with vice principals/principals). Being fully present with students is our first and TOP priority which means we are not able to meet if you come without an appointment.***

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

## GAA PARENTS ASSOCIATION (GAAPA)

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

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. If you are interested in becoming a member, please contact the Parent Relations Executive. While on campus you may identify the members by their **GAA red lanyard**.

In addition to GAAPA, volunteers are always welcome to help in the library and in the classrooms.

## APPOINTMENTS WITH THE COUNSELOR

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

Our dedicated school counselors are here to provide a wide range of support options to help students thrive academically, socially, and emotionally. Whether your child is facing academic challenges, friendship issues, or personal concerns, our counselors are available to offer individual counseling sessions, group counseling activities, and classroom guidance lessons.

Our school counselors are committed to fostering a safe and inclusive environment where every child can reach their full potential. Please don't hesitate to reach out and explore the various support options available to ensure your child's success and well-being.

- Allison Haswell ([a.haswell\\_gaa@gemsedu.com](mailto:a.haswell_gaa@gemsedu.com))

## CHANGE OF CONTACT DETAILS

The School Registrar, the Classroom Teacher, the Reception and the School Nurse should always have current details of your address, email, telephone number and mobile number(s). The accuracy of this information is vital in the case of an emergency to ensure consistent collaboration. We also request a phone number of a friend we can call if we cannot reach the parents.

## WITHDRAWING FROM SCHOOL

All notices of withdrawal must be in writing to the Registrar. The school requires a minimum of two weeks' notification of withdrawal. Parents are responsible for completing and returning a Student Clearance Form. In the event of outstanding books, fees or fines, the school will not release records nor issue a Transfer Certificate.

## TRANSFER CERTIFICATES

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

## ASSESSMENT

### REPORTING TO PARENTS

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

Reporting includes:

- Progress Reports (October & March)
- Formal written reports (February & June)
- Parent Teacher Conferences (September & March)
- End of unit Summative Assessments

## PARENT TEACHER CONFERENCES

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, and celebrate achievement.

Parents are expected to attend and participate in all conferences. There are no classes for students on these days.

## STANDARDIZED TESTS (MAP)

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

## HEALTH AND SAFETY

### SCHOOL CLINIC INFORMATION

A registered and Health Authority of Abu Dhabi (HAAD) licensed nurse is on duty during school hours. The nurse provides health screenings; assesses and manages chronic and acute illness; administers medications; provides first aid for school related injuries; promotes health and safety; maintains student medical records.

The nurse is available to consult with parents as needed, regarding health concerns of students, either in person, by telephone or e-mail.

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

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

### EMERGENCY CONTACTS

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

## HEALTH FORMS ([Link to the online health form](#))

Each year school health forms will be required for all students. They are:

- Health information Form;
- Emergency Contact Form;
- Medication Consent Form;
- School Screening Form.

***New students will be required to fill out an Immunization Record to accompany their child's personal Immunization Record.***

If your child is asthmatic or has a life-threatening allergy, a physician-signed form to use or administer an inhaler or Epipen will be required. If your child has a short-term or chronic illness which requires any medical intervention/procedure during the school day, a Special Procedure Form will be required. (For example: blood glucose monitoring, dressing change, tube/catheter management, etc.). If any allergies or asthma or any other conditions should inform the clinic and fill the concerned forms.

## MEDICATION

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

- Physician, dentist or practitioner-prescribed medications 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.)
- Parent/guardian must deliver medication to the school clinic - not the student. If you are giving it to the bus conductor, please write the details and attach the prescribed note from the physician.
- All medicine must be picked up by a parent at the end of the school year.

If medication is to be hand-carried, a back-up should also be kept in the school clinic. These situations require written health care plans, with specific details for care. When necessary, the nurse will accept verbal consent via phone to administer an over-the-counter medication (not prescription). Medication will not be dispensed without written parental permission.

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

## ILLNESS OR INJURY

If your child visits the clinic and we recommend you follow-up, or be informed of an intervention, you will receive a written note from the clinic. You will also be informed if your child sustains a head or neck injury while at school. If the nurse requests follow-up by your doctor for illness or a school-sustained injury, you will receive a Medical Referral Form. This is a formal way to receive a specific diagnosis and treatment plan while your child is at school. Students with contagious infections need to stay home so they will not expose others. Parents are requested to contact the classroom teacher and elementary secretary providing detailed information regarding their child's contagious disease. When fully recovered and the student returns to school, they need to bring the medical certificate regarding the illness or clearance certificate – one copy to the teacher and one to the nurse. If your child is home with a communicable illness, please contact the school nurse so the parent(s) of other classmates may be alerted of symptoms.

Your child must stay home for any of the following:

- A **fever** > 37.5 C (100 F); must be fever-free for 24 hours without fever medication
- **Vomited** more than once; feeling of nausea
- **Diarrhea** (return to school after 48 hours or 24 hours on medication)
- A frequent **cough**; productive cough
- 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 should be taken care of prior to returning to school, along with a physician's note with instructions and limitations if needed. If your child has an outpatient procedure or surgery, you must provide a physician's certificate stating when they can safely return to school and with any limitations/instructions. In all cases, the school nurse is the final arbiter and, if necessary in discussion with the Assistant Principal, will signal when the child is "safe" to return to school.

## IMMUNIZATIONS

The Health Authority of Abu Dhabi (HAAD) promotes a successful immunization program and is free from vaccine-preventable diseases. Parents are required to submit applicable vaccination documents to the School Nurse (or registrar) for record purposes. Any parent, who wishes to discuss their child's immunizations with the school nurse, is welcome to do so. As per HAAD recommendation the school age vaccination will be in grade one regardless of the age of the students.

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

Students will be eligible to receive the vaccine in grade one only. As per the HAAD recommendations:

- In grade 1 they will receive:

- DPT-5th dose,
- OPV-5th dose,
- MMR- 2nd dose and
- Varicella- 2 doses;
- those who didn't receive MMR vaccine at grade 1 will receive it in school as per the consent as MMR defaulters;

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

## HEALTH SCREENINGS

Per HAAD, the clinic promotes the screenings 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 participation and safety in PE.
- Encourage good hand-washing; before and after meals, after toileting, etc.
- The school has a "No Hat, No Play" policy and heat stress- air quality policy.
- Please inform the school if your child has any allergies. **Any food brought in must be free of nuts/nut products.**

## STUDENT COOPERATION REFUSALS

How to handle situations where students refuse to comply with school medical procedures, such as lice checks. It is essential that we approach these situations with sensitivity, respect, and a clear understanding of our protocols.

### Key Guidelines:

#### 1. Clear Communication:

- Explain the importance of the procedure in a calm and understanding manner.
- Use age-appropriate language and avoid using scare tactics.
- Be patient and allow the student to express their concerns or fears.

#### 2. Respect for Student Autonomy:

- Acknowledge the student's right to have their own opinions and preferences.

- Avoid forcing or coercing students into compliance.
- Respect the student's decision if they choose to refuse the procedure.

### 3. Parental Consent:

- If a student refuses a medical procedure, contact the parent or guardian immediately to discuss the situation.
- Take the student to reception.
- Obtain their consent before proceeding with any medical intervention (completed by the health center).
- Provide the parent with information about the potential risks and consequences of refusing the procedure (completed by the health center).

### 4. Alternative Arrangements:

- If a student refuses a medical procedure, explore alternative arrangements or accommodations, such as scheduling the procedure at a different time or in a different location (completed by the health center).

### 5. Documentation:

- Document all interactions with the student and their parents related to the refusal of medical services.
- Include details about the student's reasons for refusal, any accommodations made, and the outcome of the situation.

By following these guidelines, we can ensure that we are handling student refusals of medical services in a respectful and effective manner, while also prioritizing the health and safety of all students.

## GAA - (GEMS/ADEK) HOT WEATHER POLICY

Based on the GEMS Hot Weather Policy, nurses will send out heat index during the hotter seasons (May - September)

### HEAT AND DISCOMFORT INDEX

HUMIDEX INDEX OF APPARENT TEMPERATURE ( degree C )

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

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

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

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

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

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

- Outdoor Physical Activity: Lower intensity activities are to be included only and for a maximum of ten minutes. 5-minute water breaks should be taken between activities.
- 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.

## **FIRE ALARM / LOCKDOWN DRILLS**

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

1. When the alarm is sounded, students and visitors should leave the building immediately in an orderly fashion using the designated exit. Parents, please exit the building. GAA faculty take the lead role in evacuating your children. No one will be allowed to enter the school building when a fire alarm is sounding.
2. After leaving the building, students and visitors should report to their designated assembly point for an attendance check. The assembly point for all students is the field.
3. Emphasis is placed on remaining quiet and observing rules and directions during the fire drills.

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

## **MISCELLANEOUS**

### **LOST AND FOUND**

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

### **TELEPHONES**

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

### **SECURITY**

Security guards are on duty on the school campus at all times. GAA utilizes CCTV to monitor the campus 24/7. The security guards are there to assist families during school operational hours and to make certain

that academic buildings are properly locked during non-school hours. In case of an emergency, the security guards have access to a telephone.

All visitors must show ID at the school gates and show their school identification lanyard. No parents are allowed to come into the kindergarten reception during the school day (8:30-2:30). Every family will be issued 3 lanyards at the beginning of the year. While on campus parents and guardians are to wear the new GAA yellow lanyard. If lanyard is not worn, we kindly request you to register as a guest before entering the campus. This is to ensure that every adult in school is identified clearly for the safety and security of everyone on campus.



## CHARITABLE CAUSES/ COMMUNITY SERVICE

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

## CLASSROOM ASSIGNMENTS AND REQUEST CONSIDERATIONS

At our elementary school, we understand that parents and students may have preferences or specific requests regarding classroom assignments. We appreciate the importance of creating a supportive learning environment that considers individual needs and fosters positive educational experiences.

However, it is essential to clarify our policy regarding classroom assignments. While we genuinely value parental input, we cannot guarantee specific classroom placements or accommodate individual requests for various reasons. These reasons include, but are not limited to:

1. **Balanced Class Composition:** Our goal is to create balanced and diverse classrooms that promote academic, social, and emotional growth for all students. Factors such as academic abilities, gender balance, behavioral dynamics, and social interactions are taken into account when assigning students to classes. This approach ensures an equitable distribution of resources and opportunities among all students.
2. **Professional Judgment:** Classroom assignments are made by our experienced educators who possess a deep understanding of each student's needs, learning styles, and strengths. These assignments are carefully considered, taking into account the educational and developmental needs of the entire class, as well as the individual student. Our teachers are committed to providing the best possible learning experience for all students based on their professional expertise.

3. **Administrative Constraints:** Assigning students to classrooms involves a complex process that includes enrollment numbers, staffing considerations, and other logistical factors. As a result, it may not always be possible to honor specific requests due to limitations beyond our control.

While we acknowledge that some families may have legitimate reasons for requesting specific classroom assignments, it is important to recognize that our decision-making process prioritizes the overall well-being and educational experience of all students. We firmly believe that our teachers are best equipped to determine the most appropriate classroom placement based on their expertise and knowledge of their students.

We encourage parents to trust in our commitment to providing a quality education and fostering a positive learning environment for their children. Rest assured, we are dedicated to ensuring that every student receives the support and attention they need to thrive academically and personally.

## CODE OF CONDUCT – SCHOOL BEHAVIOUR

### GEMS EXPECTATIONS

- Be Present
- Be Ready to Learn
- Be the Best You Can Be
- Be Kind
- Be Focused
- Be Brave
- Be An Ambassador

### GAA BEHAVIOR FOR LEARNING PHILOSOPHY

The caring and supportive ethos of GEMS American Academy is embodied in our culture of kindness. We believe that each member of our school community should consistently practice care, consideration, and kindness towards one another. Our approach to behavior learning is firm and fair with a focus on student wellbeing, growth, and development. We emphasize education, holistic support of students, due process in review of misconduct, and natural consequences. Appropriate student behavior begins at home. We ask parents to contact their child's teacher or division administration immediately with any questions or concerns. This fulfills the Parent-School Contract and enables us to address needs as a team. GAA and families working together bring successful support for students.

### CULTURE OF EXCELLENCE AT GAA / HABITS OF THE H.E.A.R.T.

- **H**abit of Kindness
- **E**mpathy every day
- **A**wareness of Others' Needs
- **R**espect in all
- **T**rust Built through Care

We develop socio-emotional skills in our students through or social-emotional learning curricular. In Elementary we use the 'Zones of Regulation' and in Secondary, 'Character Strong'.

'Character Strong' is the curriculum and platform that we use to teach social, emotional skills. The goal of using Character Strong is to reduce behavioral issues, foster self-management and responsible decision making.

## OUR GAA COMMITMENTS

### **GAA Commitments to Behavior for Learning**

- Guiding student educational excellence in a nurturing environment
- Caring for students in safe, encouraging, and supportive ways
- Practicing the culture of excellence.

### **Student Commitments to Behavior for Learning**

- Treating community and self with respect and kindness
- Prioritizing learning while maintaining a healthy and balanced life
- Developing a vision with short and long-term goals

### **Parent Commitments to Behavior for Learning**

Parents/guardians are expected to:

- Communicate with staff members in a timely and courteous manner.
- Use social media responsibly and respectfully, in accordance with UAE regulations.
- Support school procedures outlined in each division's handbook.
- Model respectful speech and behavior, demonstrating a willingness to resolve concerns professionally—both verbally and in writing (e.g., avoiding raised voices, offensive language, or the use of social status to belittle or threaten others).
- Refrain from posting culturally inconsiderate or defamatory content about parents, students, or staff on social media, in line with the ADEK School Cultural Consideration Policy.
- Seek to clarify their child's account of events with the school's perspective to work towards a peaceful resolution of any disputes.
- Address and correct their child's behavior (or that of children in their care) when it may cause conflict, unsafe conduct, or hinder the learning of others.
- Respect and comply with the school's general policies, and while on school premises, behave and dress in a manner that upholds UAE national identity, cultural values, and current legislation.
- Strive for excellent attendance and punctuality for their child, avoiding holidays outside official school breaks, monitoring academic performance, and respecting arrival and pick-up times.
- Uphold the school's policy on academic honesty and integrity by ensuring their child's work reflects their own ability (e.g., avoiding plagiarism, refraining from excessive assistance, not submitting fraudulent documents, or making false excuses for absences).
- Attend parent-teacher meetings when requested and maintain regular, constructive communication to support their child's growth and progress.
- Cooperate with the school's recommendations for additional learning support when deemed necessary for their child's educational development.

## **Non-compliance**

Failure to meet the above minimum expectations may result, at the school's discretion, in restricted access to the premises or denial of entry.

## **A CO-ORDINATED STRATEGY**

The GAA Behavior for Learning Plan supports our GAA Strategic Plan, complies with GEMS & ADEK guidelines, and is, in turn, supported by our various policies, including those for bullying and the Parent Engagement and Code of Conduct policy.

The GAA Behavior for Learning Plan is the result of collaboration across our school community. Entities that assisted with the review and discussion of the GAA Commitments or the full document include the GAA Student Government, the GAA Senior Leadership Team (SLT), and the GAA Local Advisory Board (LAB), as well as the GAA Behavior Committee.

## **THE GAA CODE OF CONDUCT**

GEMS American Academy approaches behavior learning with an emphasis on proactive education, followed by remediation and natural consequences when misconduct occurs. Examples of behavior education for students include, but are not limited to, moral education, guidance counseling lessons, assemblies, reminders on social media, and relevant information in divisional handbooks, the Parent Engagement and Code of Conduct policy, and the website.

GAA supports the Teach Like a GEM expectations from GEMS. These expectations are codified to mirror our goals for students educated at GEMS and ADEKs policy for supporting the learning and socio emotional journey of scholars who attend GAA. As part of their education journey, we educate students about appropriate conduct as well as the appropriate consequences for misconduct are the next important step, as students learn through experience that their personal decisions result in concrete outcomes. These outcomes might include a variety of consequences, such as counseling, mediation, detention, restorative actions, suspension, blocked re-enrollment, or expulsion in extreme situations. Consequences occur on a continuum of increasing severity. If students repeat offenses after receiving consequences for prior violations, the consequences increase accordingly. The progression of consequences is outlined in the Code of Conduct.

The Code of Conduct applies to students on campus before, during, and after the school day. It applies equally on school buses, during school trips, and in the GAA athletics and activities programs. Students must remember that they represent GAA, their families, and themselves at all times when at school, during school activities, and when wearing GAA uniforms. If they commit conduct violations when in GAA uniform, whether during school events or not, students are subject to Code of Conduct consequences as they are representing the school through uniform.

Any behavior or activity undertaken outside GAA that is illegal or otherwise brings disrepute to GAA may result in disciplinary consequences up to and including suspension or expulsion from school.

If misconduct occurs off campus (online, offline) and outside school events, this is sometimes beyond direct school purview. The school will nonetheless undertake mitigating measures such as counseling and parental contact to promote student growth and behavior for learning. If off-campus misconduct negatively impacts



school operations, the Code of Conduct applies. For off-campus misconduct outside school purview, parents might choose to contact external authorities such as the police or cybercrime unit at their discretion.

GAA has a zero-tolerance policy for bullying in all its forms. Bullying is the intentional intimidation of another person through emotional, physical, psychological, and/or cyber means. Instances of proven and intentional and repeated bullying may result in immediate suspension of the aggressor from the school. In accordance with ADEK direction, the school may suspend a student for up to three days in case of a serious behavioral issue. In addition, GAA has the right to issue warning letters to a student for any behavioral issue, including bullying. In accordance with GEMS and GAA philosophy, consequences are progressive based upon the frequency and severity of violations.

In cases of severity or repeated violations, the school may block the re-enrollment of students for the following academic year. This will be documented through the issuance of dated warning letters and supporting evidence.

Disciplinary consequences and progression through the behavior levels are outlined below. Consequences will be administered as are developmentally appropriate per the child's grade, age and cognitive development.

**Administrators retain discretion to address unique circumstances of misconduct, including the possible increase of consequences across the four levels based on circumstances.** The Code of Conduct is supported by the Behavior for Learning Plan as well as division handbooks and information referenced in the Appendix.

## ADEK 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.

| <b>Behaviors</b><br><i>Examples merely serve as possible behaviors and are not limited to the list below</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | <b>Consequences</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Unprepared for class - no stationery, computer charged, etc.</li> <li>● Inappropriate use of language</li> <li>● Poor sportsmanship</li> <li>● Disrespect</li> <li>● Littering</li> <li>● Pushing or tripping</li> <li>● Leaving class for an extended period of time</li> <li>● Low-level teasing</li> <li>● Sleeping or eating during class time without permission</li> <li>● Tardiness to class</li> <li>● Being repeatedly late in the morning</li> <li>● Not complying with the completion of homework</li> <li>● Dress code violation (including sports uniforms).</li> <li>● Disrupting hallway, class, bus and/or school functions</li> <li>● Defying orders from School management and staff.</li> <li>● Off-task behaviors including:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Viewing websites or social media that are not part of the assigned class work.</li> <li>○ Gaming during class</li> <li>○ Talking to peers or moving around the classroom without permission</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Neglecting requested parent signatures</li> <li>● Misbehavior as determined by teachers and/or school administration</li> <li>● Misuse of school facilities – including pool, gym, elevator, etc.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The student will be reminded of the behavior agreement and encouraged to modify his/ her behavior accordingly.</li> <li>● Continued disruptive behavior in class, playground, or extracurricular activities will result in parent conferences, lunch reflections, and other forms of restorative actions.</li> <li>● Restorative conversation with the classroom teacher or the head of grade will take place</li> <li>● A formal log within PowerSchool</li> <li>● Parental contact will occur by the teacher/advisor who logs.</li> </ul> |

**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.

| <b>Behaviors</b><br><i>These examples merely serve as possible behaviors and are not limited to the list below</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | <b>Consequences</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Repeated level one behaviors</li> <li>• Skipping Class</li> <li>• Failing to attend school without an acceptable excuse</li> <li>• Sneaking into School after school hours without the presence of supervisors.</li> <li>• Dishonesty</li> <li>• Inappropriate display of affection</li> <li>• Having food delivered to school</li> <li>• Leaving or entering the classroom during class time without permission.</li> <li>• Repeated pushing/tripping</li> <li>• Inciting quarrels, threatening, or intimidating peers in the school</li> <li>• Discrimination/Mocking others</li> <li>• Verbal abuse or insulting a member of the school community</li> <li>• Causing minor damage to school or bus furniture</li> <li>• Viewing offensive material</li> <li>• Providing false documents (e.g. forging Parents'/Guardians' signatures).</li> <li>• Violation of Information Technology Acceptable Use Policy (Eg. Unauthorized online gaming, web browsing, etc)</li> <li>• Downloading programs and games that interfere with student learning or Acceptable Use Policy (This includes sharing games via USB sticks)</li> <li>• Sending unwanted and/or offensive (e)mail or messages (e.g. via chat)</li> <li>• Aggressive or constant teasing</li> <li>• Possession of items that are unacceptable in school</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A formal log within PowerSchool</li> <li>• Restriction of privileges and activities</li> <li>• Athletics Director will be informed regarding extracurricular activities</li> <li>• Detention or making up for missed work at lunchtimes, after school or at home</li> <li>• Mediation sessions</li> <li>• Parent contact will occur</li> <li>• 3-way conference between a member of the pastoral team, student and parent.</li> <li>• Individual behavior plan/contract</li> <li>• Confiscation of unacceptable items</li> <li>• Individual counseling, with ongoing instruction in personal and social development.</li> <li>• School-based community service.</li> <li>• Replacement/repair of damaged property.</li> <li>• Internal or external suspension.</li> <li>• All actions taken with regards to the Behavioral Protocols and expectations are decided by the High School Leadership Team.</li> </ul> |

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |  |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Taking out and/or using mobile phones at school without permission</li> <li>• Using, promoting, possessing, and/or distributing tobacco and other tobacco-derived products</li> <li>• Reoccurring unexcused tardies</li> <li>• Indirect bullying</li> <li>• Blatant or repetitive defiance of a staff member</li> <li>• Selling items in school- candy, caffeinated drinks, food etc.</li> <li>• Encouraging/Provoking Unlawful Behavior</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mobile phones, smart watches and earbuds distract from the learning environment and are not to be used during the school day. Students are required to turn off 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 at school.</li> <li>• 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</li> </ul> |  |

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

| Examples of level three behaviors                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | Consequences                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Repeated Level 2 behaviors</li> <li>● Academic dishonesty</li> <li>● Compromising safety for self and/or others</li> <li>● Racist comments or actions towards a community member</li> <li>● Physical intimidation towards a staff member</li> <li>● Wilful damage to, or destruction of, School and personal property.</li> <li>● Assaulting others in the school, on the bus, or during school activities off-site, without causing injury to the victim.</li> <li>● Exchanging any inappropriate materials, such as letters or photos.</li> <li>● Bullying - Physical/Verbal</li> <li>● Intimidation, harassment, and/or defaming them on social media.</li> <li>● 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.</li> <li>● Cyberbullying</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● 3-way conference between administrator, student, and parent</li> <li>● Individual behavior plan/contract</li> <li>● Consultation with Counselor</li> <li>● School-based community service</li> <li>● Replacement/ repair of damaged property</li> <li>● Denial of privileges, activities, or participation within sports teams</li> <li>● Internal or external suspension</li> <li>● Referral to Principal for possible dismissal or nonrenewal</li> <li>● All actions taken with regards to the Behavioral Management Procedures are decided by the Pastoral School Leadership Team.</li> </ul> |

**Level Four** - Level 4 behaviors are the most serious breaches of the GAA behavior expectations and/or repeated Level 3 behaviors. Level 4 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 Four behaviors                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | Consequences                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Repeated Level 3 behaviors</li> <li>• Distributing (or participating in the distribution of) pornographic material.</li> <li>• Possessing, using, or distributing weapons or explosives.</li> <li>• Assaulting others in the school, on the bus, or during school activities off-site, and causing injury to the victim.</li> <li>• Possession of Drugs / Alcohol on campus*</li> <li>• Sexual harassment/ assault*</li> <li>• Theft of property</li> <li>• Hacking</li> <li>• Gross or flagrant violation of school guidelines that endangers the reputation of the school or other students</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 3-way conference between administrator, student, and parent</li> <li>• Individual behavior plan/contract</li> <li>• Consultation with Counselor</li> <li>• School-based community service</li> <li>• Replacement/ repair of damaged property</li> <li>• Denial of privileges, activities, or participation within sports teams</li> <li>• Internal or external suspension</li> <li>• Referral to Principal for possible dismissal or nonrenewal</li> <li>• All actions taken with regards to the Behavioral Management Procedures are decided by the Pastoral School Leadership Team.</li> </ul> |

## DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURES AT GAA

### Elementary:

|                | First Time                                                                                                                                                                                         | Second Time                                                                                                                                                                                        | Third Time                                                                                                                                                                                                          | More than three times                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|----------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Level 1</b> | <b>Verbal Warning</b>                                                                                                                                                                              | <b>Verbal Warning #2</b>                                                                                                                                                                           | <b>Written Warning</b>                                                                                                                                                                                              | <b>Behavior Plan / Parent Meeting</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|                | <p>The teacher reminds the student of the expected behavior.</p> <p>The student and teacher have a brief conversation to talk about what went wrong and how to make a better choice next time.</p> | <p>The teacher reminds the student of the expected behavior.</p> <p>The student and teacher have a brief conversation to talk about what went wrong and how to make a better choice next time.</p> | <p>The student completes a simple reflection form about their behavior.</p> <p>Parents are informed through a note, message, or email.</p> <p>The teacher and student talk again to set a goal for improvement.</p> | <p>A behavior support plan is created with the teacher, student, and a school leader.</p> <p>Parents are invited to a meeting to discuss how we can work together to help the student.</p> <p>Everyone signs a plan to show their commitment to helping the student succeed.</p> |

|                |                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|----------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Level 2</b> | <b>Verbal Warning</b>                                                                                                                                                                              | <b>Written Warning</b>                                                                                                                                                                                              | <b>Behavior Plan / Parent Meeting</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|                | <p>The teacher reminds the student of the expected behavior.</p> <p>The student and teacher have a brief conversation to talk about what went wrong and how to make a better choice next time.</p> | <p>The student completes a simple reflection form about their behavior.</p> <p>Parents are informed through a note, message, or email.</p> <p>The teacher and student talk again to set a goal for improvement.</p> | <p>A behavior support plan is created with the teacher, student, and a school leader.</p> <p>Parents are invited to a meeting to discuss how we can work together to help the student.</p> <p>Everyone signs a plan to show their commitment to helping the student succeed.</p> |

| Level 3 | Written Warning                                                                                                                                                                                                     | Behavior Plan / Parent Meeting                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | Major Concerns                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|---------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|         | <p>The student completes a simple reflection form about their behavior.</p> <p>Parents are informed through a note, message, or email.</p> <p>The teacher and student talk again to set a goal for improvement.</p> | <p>A behavior support plan is created with the teacher, student, and a school leader.</p> <p>Parents are invited to a meeting to discuss how we can work together to help the student.</p> <p>Everyone signs a plan to show their commitment to helping the student succeed.</p> | <p>The school leadership team and behavior team meet to review the situation and decide on next steps.</p> <p>Parents are invited to a meeting to revise the plan and ensure all supports are in place.</p> <p>A final written warning is issued if behavior does not improve.</p> <p>If a child's behavior poses a serious safety concern to themselves or others, the student may be asked to stay at home for a short time while we work with the family on a safe return plan. This is only considered after all other supports have been tried.</p> |

| Level 4 | Extreme or Ongoing Unsafe Behavior                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | Extreme or Ongoing Unsafe Behavior (repeated)                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|---------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|         | <p>In extreme cases, or if the same unsafe behavior continues despite all support, the school may involve the Behavior Committee to determine additional actions.</p> <p>Parents will be part of this process and receive all communication and documentation.</p> | <p>Expulsion is only considered as a last resort, and only with approval from ADEK, after every possible support and intervention has been provided. This will be highlighted in response to the Health and Safety aspect with the other student(s).</p> |

## Behavior Response Levels – Elementary School

Our goal is to support students in learning positive behavior choices through guidance, clear expectations, and consistent consequences. When a student makes an inappropriate choice, we respond in a fair and supportive way to help them reflect and improve.

**Our goal is always to help students grow and make better choices. We believe every child can learn and improve with the right support from home and school working together.**

### Restorative Practices

At GAA, we believe in restoration and use approaches to resolve conflict and address wrongdoing that focuses on repairing harm and rebuilding relationships, rather than solely on punishment.

- Facilitating restorative conversations and peer mediations between affected parties, when willing.
- Encouraging reflection and accountability.
- Creating action plans to rebuild relationships and prevent recurrence.
- Community service tied to the behavior(s) exhibited.

### Roles and Responsibilities

#### Students:

- Follow the GAA code of conduct and own their behavior.
- Demonstrate positive behavior, follow expectations, and engage in reflection and improvement.
- Take ownership of their academic outcomes and adhere to classroom expectations and deadlines
- Communicate their socio-emotional needs with stakeholders to create successful outcomes for their school year

#### Parents:

Respect the vision, mission, and value statements of the school and its learning environment.

Treat members of the entire school community including students, staff (including security guards, cleaners, etc.), parents, in a professional and respectful manner and maintain relationships in the best interest of students.

Acknowledge that the education and wellbeing of each child whilst in school is a joint responsibility based on a positive school-to-home relationship between the school and the parent and that they will commit to their responsibilities (e.g., ensure their children engage in home learning, get adequate sleep, consume healthy foods in moderate amounts, engage in physical activity).

- Reinforce school expectations and collaborate with school staff.
- Encourage your child to take responsibility for their actions and behaviour.
- Support your child in reflecting on their choices and learning from their experiences.
- Reinforce the importance of honesty, integrity, and respect for others.
- Collaborate with the school to address behavioural concerns constructively.

- Promote positive conflict resolution and encourage your child to make amends when appropriate.
- Maintain open communication with school staff to support consistent behaviour expectations at home and at school.
- Model accountability and responsible behaviour in your own actions.

\*Parents will work in line with the Parent Engagement Policy, following parental expectations.

## COMMITMENT

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

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

## WHAT IS BULLYING?

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

Bullying can be:

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

### For Students

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

Telling about bullying type behaviors is not telling tales. Bullying type behaviors are wrong and should be reported. You have the right to be safe from attacks and harassment and nobody should expect you to be silent when you or others are being tormented or hurt. You should tell your parents about what is happening. Also tell your teacher, your counselor, the school nurse, Vice Principal, Principal or any other trusted adult. Explain who is involved and what is happening. You may want to take some friends with you for support, especially if they have witnessed the incident.

### For Parents

*If your child is a victim of bullying:*

Encourage your child to talk to you about their school and social life. Watch your child for signs of distress. Listen to your child and take any reports of bullying seriously. Do not keep the bullying a secret. Contact

the classroom teacher and then the counselor immediately. We recommend working with the school to develop strategies to support your child. Using the term “bullying” is taken very seriously at GAA and parents are advised to speak with their children regarding the full situation before identifying bullying.

*If your child is responsible for bullying:*

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

## ACADEMIC HONESTY GUIDELINES

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

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

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

- Another person’s idea, opinion, or theory
- A presentation that is not your creation
- Quotations
- A paraphrased version of an original.
- The use of AI to complete assignments without proper citations.

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

## QUESTIONS? WHO TO CALL FIRST:

|                       |                                                                |
|-----------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------|
| GAA Telephone Number  | (+971) 02 2019 555                                             |
| GAA Fax Number        | (+971) 02 557 4990                                             |
| Main Reception Email: | <a href="mailto:info_gaa@gemsedu.com">info_gaa@gemsedu.com</a> |

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

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

### **EMAIL CONTACT DETAILS:**

| DEPARTMENT                                                             | NAME                 | EMAIL ADDRESS                                                                      |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Superintendent/CEO                                                     | Keith Chicquen       | <a href="mailto:Hos_gaa@gemsedu.com">Hos_gaa@gemsedu.com</a>                       |
| Deputy Superintendent                                                  | Joshua Doubleday     | <a href="mailto:j.doubleday1_gaa@gemsedu.com">j.doubleday1_gaa@gemsedu.com</a>     |
| Executive Vice Principal (Head of National Identity and Pastoral Care) | Samah Awad           | <a href="mailto:s.awad_gaa@gemsedu.com">s.awad_gaa@gemsedu.com</a>                 |
| Admin Manager                                                          | Mirna El Haj Ibrahim | <a href="mailto:m.elhajibrahim_gaa@gemsedu.com">m.elhajibrahim_gaa@gemsedu.com</a> |
| Elementary Principal (PreK-Grade 5)                                    | John Ashenden        | <a href="mailto:j.ashenden_gaa@gemsedu.com">j.ashenden_gaa@gemsedu.com</a>         |
| Elementary Assistant Principal                                         | Lauren Sargent       | <a href="mailto:l.sargent_gaa@gemsedu.com">l.sargent_gaa@gemsedu.com</a>           |
| Elementary Dean of Students                                            | Cody Preston         | <a href="mailto:c.preston_gaa@gemsedu.com">c.preston_gaa@gemsedu.com</a>           |
| Counselor                                                              | Alison Haswell       | <a href="mailto:a.haswell_gaa@gemsedu.com">a.haswell_gaa@gemsedu.com</a>           |
| Elementary Secretary                                                   | Hazel Barriga        | <a href="mailto:Elemsecretary_gaa@gemsedu.com">Elemsecretary_gaa@gemsedu.com</a>   |
| Curriculum Coordinator                                                 | Kim Melloy           | <a href="mailto:k.melloy_gaa@gemsedu.com">k.melloy_gaa@gemsedu.com</a>             |
| Athletics & Activities Director                                        | Rodrigo De Marco     | <a href="mailto:r.demarco_gaa@gemsedu.com">r.demarco_gaa@gemsedu.com</a>           |
| Admissions Manager                                                     | Asma El Derby        | <a href="mailto:registrar_gaa@gemsedu.com">registrar_gaa@gemsedu.com</a>           |
| Accounts                                                               |                      | <a href="mailto:finance_gaa@gemsedu.com">finance_gaa@gemsedu.com</a>               |
| Nurse                                                                  |                      | <a href="mailto:Nurse_gaa@gemsedu.com">Nurse_gaa@gemsedu.com</a>                   |
| Parent Relations Executive                                             | Fatma Chabanova      | <a href="mailto:pre_gaa@gemsedu.com">pre_gaa@gemsedu.com</a>                       |

|                               |                              |                                                                                                                                |
|-------------------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Transport Operation Executive | Rameez Rasheed<br>02-2019511 | <a href="mailto:rameez.rasheed@sts-group.com">rameez.rasheed@sts-group.com</a><br><a href="mailto:info@bbt.ae">info@bbt.ae</a> |
| Compliance Officer            | Zainah Khreis                | <a href="mailto:z.khreis_gaa@gemsedu.com">z.khreis_gaa@gemsedu.com</a>                                                         |
| GAA Security                  |                              | <a href="mailto:security_gaa@gemsedu.com">security_gaa@gemsedu.com</a>                                                         |

### SCHOOL RELATED ISSUES:

| ISSUE RELATED TO                | CONTACT PERSON                                            |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|
| Curriculum                      | Curriculum 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 Secretary or email teachers directly |

### COMMUNICATION:

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

# GEMS AMERICAN ACADEMY PARENT CONTRACT

At GAA, strong partnerships between parents and the school are essential for our students' success. This Parent Engagement Policy aligns with ADEK's guidelines and outlines our expectations for parent involvement and communication, and our commitment to providing a supportive and collaborative learning environment.

## **Purpose**

To set out our school's expectations regarding parent engagement by ADEK requirements.

To outline the requirements for parent-school agreements and parent handbooks.

Stipulate the requirements for parent engagement, including their role in supporting their child's learning, development, and well-being, and further opportunities for parent involvement in school life.

To encourage effective communication between parents and the school and provide opportunities for parents to actively engage in their children's education.

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

Parents, please digitally sign that you have read and understood the elementary handbook policies and procedures.

## **GEMS American Academy Parent Engagement Policy.pdf**

Please use the [\*\*LINK\*\*](#) to acknowledge that you have read, understood, and agree to abide by the Parent Code of Conduct at GEMS American Academy.