



GAA Distance Learning Policy

Includes *Appendix A*: [Distance Learning AI Tutoring Policy](#) (Updated April 2026)

Approved by:	Dr. Ethan Hildreth, Superintendent/CEO	Date: Sep/2025
Last reviewed:	April/2026	
Next review due:	April/2027	

1. Purpose

This policy establishes the framework for the delivery of distance learning at GEMS American Academy Abu Dhabi (GAA) in full compliance with Abu Dhabi Department of Education and Knowledge (ADEK) Distance Learning Policies and Guidelines (March 2026). GAA will ensure a seamless transition to distance learning (via Google Classroom and Microsoft Teams Live Classes) during emergencies, such as temporary school closures, health crises, adverse weather conditions, or exceptional individual student circumstances (with approval from school leadership). This procedure ensures teaching, learning, and communication continue effectively without interruption.

Distance learning at GAA shall ensure:

- Continuity of high-quality education
- Full curriculum coverage
- Student wellbeing and safeguarding
- Alignment with ADEK mandatory requirements

Distance learning is not a reduced model of education; it is equivalent in quality, expectations, and outcomes to in-person learning.

2. Scope

This policy applies to:

- All students (KG–Grade 12)
- All academic and administrative staff
- All distance learning scenarios (planned and emergency)



3. Definitions

- **Synchronous Learning:** Live, real-time instruction with the teacher visible on camera
- **Asynchronous Learning:** Teacher-assigned, structured independent tasks
- **Structured Teaching Time:** Planned learning with clear objectives and teacher review
- **At-Risk Student:** A student missing two consecutive sessions or flagged for well-being concerns

4. Governance and Leadership

4.1 Distance Learning Lead

The school shall appoint a Distance Learning Lead (member of leadership) within 24 hours of activation. The Lead is responsible for:

- Coordination of distance learning implementation
- Communication with ADEK
- Oversight of compliance and reporting

4.2 Student Welfare Lead

A Student Welfare Lead (SWL) shall be appointed to:

- Maintain the At-Risk Student Register
- Oversee welfare monitoring
- Submit weekly reports to ADEK

5. Learning Delivery Requirements

5.1 General Requirements

GAA shall:

- Deliver structured distance learning daily to all students
- Provide a combination of synchronous and asynchronous learning
- Ensure all learning is teacher-directed and reviewed
- Attendance shall be recognized as either synchronous (live participation) or asynchronous (completion/submission of assigned work or engagement on the school platform). Both forms count as valid attendance when appropriately evidenced.



- The official daily attendance submitted to ADEK shall be based on the opening check-in session.

5.2 Synchronous Learning Standards

All live sessions shall:

- Be delivered by a teacher visible on camera
- Include interaction at least every 20 minutes
- Not rely on pre-recorded videos during live sessions

5.3 Synchronous Session Standards

- Opening learning objective
- Interaction every 20 min
- Use of interactive tools
- Clear closing
- Recording (if available, 30-day retention)

5.4 Lesson Design by Cycle

- **KG — Session Design:** KG synchronous sessions should continue to follow TLAG format and should be short, highly interactive, and visually rich. Format: Storytelling, songs, movement activities, show-and-tell, simple questions with visual answer choices (never in lecture format).
- **Cycle 1/ Elementary School — Session Design:** Cycle 1 sessions should continue to follow the TLAG structure that students come to expect. Predictability reduces anxiety and supports re-engagement after screen-off breaks.
- **Cycle 2/ Middle School — Session Design:** Cycle 2 sessions should continue to follow the TLAG structure and should be designed around the PBL project structure. The majority of sessions are either direct instruction inputs to support project work, or project coaching sessions where students discuss their progress and receive teacher feedback.
- **Cycle 3/ High School — Session Design:** Cycle 3 sessions should continue to follow the TLAG structure, where students are expected to manage their own learning to a significantly higher degree. Sessions should be fewer and more focused — used for high-value inputs that students cannot generate alone.



6. Timetable and Instructional Time

6.1 Minimum and Maximum Instructional Timings

GAA shall adhere to ADEK requirements in the table below:

Cycle	Max Continuous Screen Time	Minimum break before next session	Synchronous Minimum	Max Total Hours
KG	20 mins	5 min	1.0 hr	1.5 hrs
Cycle 1	25 mins	5 min	1.5 hrs	2.5 hrs
Cycle 2	40 mins	5 min	2.0 hrs	4.0 hrs
Cycle 3	50 mins	5 min	2.5 hrs	5.0 hrs

6.2 Daily Timetable Structure

Each school day shall include:

- Opening check-in (10–15 minutes)
- Scheduled instructional sessions
- Mid-morning screen-off break (minimum 20 minutes)
- Lunch break (minimum 30 minutes)
- End-of-day closure

6.3 Screen Time

- Maximum continuous screen time shall not exceed ADEK limits
- Minimum 5-minute break between sessions (10 minutes recommended)
- No additional screen-based homework beyond school hours



7. Curriculum Delivery

7.1 Curriculum Continuity

- Core subjects shall be delivered with full continuity
- Curriculum shall be adapted for remote learning delivery

7.2 Pedagogical Approach

- KG: Play-based inquiry
- Cycle 1: Hybrid model
- Cycle 2 & 3: Project-Based Learning

7.3 Inclusion

The school shall ensure:

- Ensure all students, including Students of Determination, have access to adaptive tools, alternative formats, and additional support.
- Appropriate accommodations and modifications
- Teachers to differentiate lessons and provide flexible timelines where needed.
- Include inclusive practices in live lessons and asynchronous tasks.

8. Attendance and Engagement

8.1 Attendance Recording

- Attendance shall be recorded for every session
- Recorded within 30 minutes of session completion
- Asynchronous attendance is based on submission of required work
- Daily consolidated attendance submitted to ADEK eSIS by 3:00 PM the following school day based on opening check-in attendance.

8.2 Non-Attendance Protocol

- The school initiates contact with the student within 30 minutes of a missed session using official platforms.
- The school shall initiate contact with the student first through official school communication channels.



- Parents shall only be contacted after documented attempts to reach the student.
- Non-attendance shall be defined as failure to attend a live session or submit/engage with assigned work without prior notice.
- The school sends a message to **both the student and parent within 30 minutes** of each missed session.
- If a student misses **3 sessions or a full day**, the Deans email **the parent** by the end of the day.
- Any student who misses **5 sessions in a rolling 10-day period** is added to the **At-Risk Log** and receives a welfare follow-up.
- If a student is absent for **5 full consecutive school days**, the school must **escalate the case to ADEK**.
- The school remains responsible as the **first line of follow-up**, and parent communication is conducted in line with ADEK expectations.

9. Student Welfare and Safeguarding

9.1 Welfare Monitoring

- Weekly welfare check-in for all students
 - Structured **1:1 check-ins**
 - Logged within **1 hour**. Include: student name, date, welfare status (green/amber/red), learning gaps, progress status, and follow-up actions

All 1:1 check-ins shall follow a structured format including:

- Welfare check (student wellbeing and home context)
- Learning check (understanding and gaps)
- Progress check (project or task completion)
- At-risk students: minimum two check-ins per week

9.2 Safeguarding

- All sessions comply with GEMS safeguarding requirements
- Digital conduct expectations enforced
- All virtual sessions must comply with GEMS safeguarding policies.
- Teachers must not share personal data or unauthorized content online.



- Teams meetings should be hosted with school-approved accounts only.
- Recordings (if made) should be stored securely within the school domain.
- Teachers should never be in a video call alone with a student.

9.3 Reporting

- Weekly welfare summary submitted to ADEK

9.4 Distance Learning Code of Conduct

- Cycle 2 & 3 students sign
- KG & Cycle 1 → parent attestation

10. Roles and Responsibilities

10.1 School Leadership

- Activate distance learning
- Ensure compliance with ADEK
- Monitor the quality of delivery

10.2 Teachers

- Deliver structured lessons daily
- Share instructions for students who are not able to attend live lessons
- Support all students, whether in the UAE or overseas
- Maintain active engagement
- Record attendance and provide feedback

10.3 Students

- Attend all sessions or submit work as assigned when not able to attend live.
- Engage actively and follow expectations
- Cameras are encouraged but not required



10.4 Parents

- Support students in maintaining attendance when possible and participation.
- Provide an appropriate learning environment
- Ensure home access to the internet and necessary devices.
- Communicate with teachers regarding student needs or technical challenges.
- Parents must NOT teach
- Parents must NOT supervise sessions (except KG)
- Parents must NOT be overloaded with communication

11. Assessment

Assessment shall:

- Continue in alignment with the school Assessment Policy
- Include formative and summative methods
- Align with curriculum standards and learning outcomes

12. Physical Activity and Wellbeing

The school shall:

- Provide a minimum of 45 minutes of PE per week
- Encourage daily physical activity
- Embed movement in lessons

13. Communication with Parents

13.1 Communication Protocol

- Communication is allowed **only between 3:30 PM and 8:00 PM**, unless due to attendance issues, and only after communication with the student has been attempted.
- A single official communication channel shall be used



13.2 Weekly Updates

Each class shall provide weekly updates, including:

- Learning summary
- Expectations
- Support guidance

14. Technology Platforms

The school shall use:

- Google Classroom / Seesaw / ManageBac (LMS)/ AP Classroom
- Microsoft Teams (live instruction)
- Communication Channels: Email, Seesaw, or Google Classroom announcements, grade level emails and other communication channels as needed
- Backup Tools: GEMS Connect Portal and GEMS Engage App for parent updates

15. Reporting to ADEK

The school shall submit:

- Daily attendance reports by 3pm each day
- Weekly Welfare summaries by 5 pm on Sunday of each week. Report to include the number on At-Risk Log, welfare check-ins conducted, family contacts made, escalations to SWL, and external referrals made
- Digital Readiness Plan (within 5 days of directive)
- Curriculum Continuity Log: Subjects and specific objectives: fully covered, partially covered, deferred. Weekly from Week 2 onwards (submission to ADEK upon request)
- Curriculum Catch-Up Plan: Deferred objectives during distance learning and how and when they will be addressed upon in-person resumption. To be submitted within the first two weeks of returning to in-person learning
- All required compliance reports



16. Monitoring and Review

16.1 Monitoring Protocol

The school shall:

- Monitor implementation weekly
- Conduct post-distance learning reviews
- Provide ongoing training to staff, students, and parents

16.2 Teaching Quality Assurance

Leaders must:

- Review **≥5% of live sessions weekly**
- Ensure **lesson plans are uploaded before sessions**

This policy is fully aligned with ADEK Distance Learning Policies and Guidelines (March 2026) and related ADEK Curriculum and Assessment Policies.

GAA shall meet all mandatory (“shall”) requirements and maintain documentation to demonstrate compliance.



Appendix A

1. AI Tutoring During Distance Learning

1.1 Purpose

GAA shall implement Artificial Intelligence (AI) tutoring platforms, where applicable, to support structured, curriculum-aligned asynchronous and synchronous learning during distance learning, in compliance with ADEK requirements.

2. Principles for AI Use

GAA shall ensure that AI tutoring aligns with the following ADEK principles:

- **Teacher-led instruction remains central**; AI enhances but does not replace teaching
- **Human-centric approach** prioritizing wellbeing and relationships
- **Personalized learning pathways** for all students, including Students of Determination
- **Use of real-time data** to identify learning gaps and inform interventions
- **Reduction of teacher workload** through automation of routine tasks
- **Support for parents** through structured, curriculum-aligned platforms

3. Scope of AI Tutoring Use

3.1 Authorized Cycles

- AI tutoring is **permitted only in Cycle 2 and Cycle 3**
- **Not permitted in KG and Cycle 1**, unless ADEK approval is obtained

3.2 Authorized Subjects

- Mathematics
- Science
- English Language



4. Platform Requirements

GAA shall:

- Use **ADEK-approved AI tutoring platforms only**
- Seek ADEK approval for any non-listed platform prior to use
- Suspend any platform that does not meet ADEK criteria

5. Integration into Distance Learning Model

5.1 Learning Delivery Alignment

AI tutoring may be used:

- During **asynchronous learning** (independent student work)
- During **synchronous sessions** with teacher monitoring

All use must:

- Remain within ADEK screen-time limits already defined in Section 6 of the GAA plan
- Be **teacher-assigned, structured, and reviewed**

6. Teaching and Learning Requirements

Teachers using AI tutoring shall:

6.1 Curriculum Alignment

- Ensure all AI tasks align with **curriculum standards and learning outcomes**
- Review all AI-generated content before use
- Adapt tasks for **different ability levels and inclusion needs**

6.2 Use of AI-Generated Content

- AI-generated materials (lessons, tasks, assessments) must:
 - Be **reviewed, adapted, and approved by the teacher**
 - Be verified for **accuracy and age appropriateness**



7. Monitoring and Intervention

GAA shall integrate AI into existing monitoring systems (Section 9 of current plan):

- Teachers shall:
 - Monitor **student and class-level performance data daily**
 - Review **student engagement weekly**
 - Use AI data to:
 - Identify learning gaps
 - Plan whole-class (Tier 1) and targeted interventions (Tier 2/3)
- AI data must **inform but not replace teacher professional judgement**

8. Safeguarding and Student Welfare Integration

- Teachers must:
 - Monitor AI interactions for:
 - Self-harm indicators
 - Safeguarding concerns
 - Inappropriate content
 - Immediately report concerns to:
 - Student Welfare Lead (distance learning)
 - Child Protection Coordinator (if applicable)

9. Academic Integrity/ Assessment

- Students **must not submit AI-generated work as their own**
- AI platforms **must not be used for summative assessments or exams**
- AI may only support:
 - Practice
 - Feedback generation
- Teachers must design tasks requiring **student reasoning and original thinking**



10. Staff Training Requirements/ Monitoring and Review

GAA shall ensure all staff are trained in:

- Platform navigation
- Task creation and assignment
- Setting AI guardrails
- Monitoring student progress
- Ethical use and academic integrity

11. Data Protection and Privacy

Add new subsection under Technology or Safeguarding:

GAA shall:

- Obtain **written parental consent** before AI platform use
- Provide **alternative learning options** if consent is not given
- Ensure:
 - No commercial use of student data
 - No third-party sharing or AI model training
- Ensure student data is:
 - Deleted or anonymized within **90 days of leaving school**
- Notify parents of data breaches within **72 hours** and suspend platform use

12. Mandatory AI Guardrails

GAA shall ensure:

- All AI platforms are configured with ADEK-required guardrails, including:
 - Cultural appropriateness
 - Prohibition of sensitive topics
 - Redirection of safeguarding concerns to trusted adults

Teachers must apply ADEK's **standard guardrail prompt** when configuring AI systems.