

# GAA Inclusion Policy

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## 1. Strategic Goals

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

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

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

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

## 2. Mission and Vision

GEMS American Academy is a diverse and caring international learning community offering a rigorous, relevant and holistic education. We develop global citizens who have the confidence and conviction to pursue their dreams and impact the world.

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

## 3. Legislation and Guidance

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

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

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

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

## 4. Definitions of Inclusive Support

### 4.1 GEMS Definition of Inclusion

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

## 4.2 Inclusion for all Learners

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

**English Language Learners (ELL)**- those who are acquiring the English language.

**Gifted and Talented (GT)**- Those demonstrating exceptional ability and/or attainment which is in line with the criteria set out in the schools procedures. See glossary of terms.

**Students of Determination (SoD)**- These are learners who have additional needs. The UAE School Inspection Framework (p.117) defines a special education need, as 'Educational needs which are different from those of the majority of students, and which arise from the impact of a disability or recognized disorder'. A student requires special education provision if they have a need arising from the impact of a disability or recognized disorder which requires the school to make specific modifications or provide specific supports to prevent, remove or reduce any potential barriers to ensure a student can access education on an equitable basis within the common learning environment with same-aged peers.

## 4.3 Barriers to Learning

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

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

# 5. Inclusion Delivery Model

## 5.1 Admissions

- GAA offers an academic-based educational program. Students who are able to access an academic based program within 2 grade-levels of their peers (based on age/ability), will be considered eligible to enroll.
- During the Admissions process, some students may be placed on a probationary status to ensure placement is appropriate at GAA. GAA reserves the right to deny admission to any student for whom an appropriate educational programme and support services are not available.
- Admission decisions are made by the Head of School upon recommendations by the Principal, Inclusion Director, counselor and any other relevant teachers after a review of previous school records and references, admissions assessments, and any external psychological educational assessments and documentation.
- In cases where a student is not able to access the curriculum adequately, despite the accommodations and modifications provided, it may be necessary to consider a further evaluation. This evaluation will help us gain a comprehensive understanding of the child's specific needs and abilities, enabling us to provide the most appropriate educational

environment. If it is determined through the evaluation process that our school may not be able to meet the child's needs effectively, we will work collaboratively with the parents to explore alternative educational options. Our primary concern is the overall well-being and educational success of each student, and we are committed to ensuring that they receive the best possible education.

## 5.2 Least Restrictive Environment

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

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

Additional considerations and services include:

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

## 5.3 A 3-Tiered Model of Support in Response to Intervention

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

- **Tier 1 - Universal Support.**
  - At GAA, our teachers know their students best, as they interact with them daily. When teachers are concerned about a student's learning, they will make adjustments to the way a student can access learning by differentiating instruction, modifying their environment. They will talk to parents, collaborate with colleagues, consult with the student support team, counselors and/or leadership. The classroom teacher will create a Strengths and Needs Plan (SNP) (depending on division) to monitor strategies that are being implemented in the classroom. The student will be monitored for 4-6 weeks.
- **Tier 2: Targeted Support**

Where a teacher has implemented in-class strategies with little or no success and feel additional support is needed, they submit a referral to the Student Support Team (SST) . The SST will determine next steps regarding the support needed which may include enrolling the student in resource support, targeted small group interventions, ELL support, counseling support, behavior plan. A Student Support Plan (SNP) is developed by an SST member (inclusion specialist, counselor, principal) articulating short term goals (8-10 weeks). Parents are informed of the support plan and give consent to the additional support.

- **Tier 3: Individualized Support**

If a student continues to make little or no progress, the inclusion specialist or counselor will refer the student for a comprehensive external evaluation that may include various assessments depending on the need of the student. Once the completed report is received, the inclusion specialist will draft an Individualized Educational Plan (IEP) in collaboration with the teacher, counselor and parents. The goals are agreed upon at an IEP meeting and the student will receive long term personalized support and accommodations.

## **5.4 Gifted and Talented Learners (GT)**

At GEMS American Academy we believe in providing the best possible education for students of all abilities. We plan our teaching and learning so that each student can aspire to the highest level of personal achievement.

In accordance with GAA's ethos, all students will be given full access to all areas of learning and teachers will endeavor to ensure that all students reach their full potential, irrespective of race, age or ability, both for their self fulfillment and for their development into active, responsible adults. We value the individuality, gifts and talents of all of our students.

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that GAA staff are aware of our gifted and high ability students and support them academically, and in other areas of development and performance by ensuring that adjustments are made to meet their particular needs. Gifted children think at such high levels of complexity that, while they can benefit from some aspects of the school day, they also require access to a curriculum that allows them to move ahead faster and pursue their areas of interest and talent.

Students who have an advanced intellectual aptitude, or an exceptional talent in music, art or sport are considered to be highly able or gifted and talented (GT). Students may be identified through an IQ (WISC) assessment, or the CAT4 cognitive ability test; a mean score of 130-plus will indicate if a child's cognitive ability is beyond that of their age-appropriate level. This is used alongside data from teacher assessments, conversations with parents, and discussions with the children themselves. Teachers may also be asked to complete a questionnaire aimed at collecting information about the student's characteristics and learning styles.

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

## **5.5 English Language Learners (ELL)**

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

*In Primary*, support is provided through differentiated instruction, co-taught classes, and small group pull-out targeted support by inclusion specialists. *In Secondary*, support is provided in ELL English Classes (Grades 6-10), ELL Resource classes(Grades 6-10), IB Language B (Grades 11 & 12), as well as co-taught

classes/ push-in support. Assessed students will receive an English Language Plan (ELP) based on the results of the WIDA assessment and assigned a case manager. Students with scores at or below 4.5(Bridging) will have access to ELL classes listed above. Adjustments are made on a case by case basis. Teachers and specialists will monitor their progress across the curriculum.

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

### 5.6 Inclusion Team Monitors Progress and Reviews Services

- On a regular basis throughout the year, in each division, a Student Support Team consisting of Inclusion team members, principals/VPs, counselors and/or teachers convenes to assess the needs of students of concern at GAA (academic, social/emotional/behavioral).
- The Inclusion Specialist schedules an annual review report of all inclusion services and makes recommendations for the next school year. If a student continues to reach their IEP goals and no longer requires academic intervention, they can be moved to Tier 2 and placed on an accommodation plan or can be removed from the program if agreed upon by the case manager and parents.
- If a student no longer requires accommodations within the classroom, they may be removed from the inclusion program with a case manager and parent's permission.
- The student will be monitored for 6-8 weeks to ensure they are successful without support.

## 6. Curriculum Provisions

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

- Ensuring all students with additional learning needs have access to a broad and balanced school curriculum that includes access to the full range of extracurricular activities, which shall be adapted to meet their needs, where appropriate.
- Ensuring that where any agreed modified curriculum pathway may not fulfill equivalency requirements, parents are made aware of this and sign an undertaking of acknowledgment.
- GAA offers the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme (IB DP) and it is available to all qualifying students in Grades 11 and 12 who meet course prerequisites. Students with learning differences wanting to enroll in the IB DP or take certificates must present their educational psychological evaluation report to the IB for eligibility of inclusive assessment arrangements (IAA). Students with Individual Education Plans (IEPs), Accommodation Plans(AP/504) or English Language Acquisition (ELP) plans are guided to choose the appropriate combination and load of IB courses in conjunction with the GAA diploma. This occurs in their 10th grade year. In Grade 11, the Student Support Team and IB Diploma Coordinator meet to review relevant student documentation and accommodation plans to ensure that these supports are in place and applied for 12 months prior to the IB exam, and valid for the duration of the program- 21 months. The IB believes that all candidates should be allowed to demonstrate their ability under assessment conditions that are as fair as possible. Therefore, the DP Coordinator works with the Student Support Team to identify and offer accommodations for students that are in line with the IB Inclusive Assessment Access philosophy and policies.

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

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

- Maintains an Assessment Accommodations Policy outlining the process and eligibility for applying accommodations and modifications for assessments, in line with any external assessment provider requirements (if applicable).

### **6.3 Disenrollment**

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

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

## **7. Roles and Responsibilities**

### **7.1 GEMS Governance Inclusion Board will:**

- Be led by a Head of School who represents the Chief Education Officer (CEO), Head of Schools from each cluster, inclusion leaders from schools, and relevant SSC departmental representation.
- Ensure that all GEMS Schools provide outstanding school leadership and management practices that promote achievement of personalized educational outcomes for all students.
- Support the CEO to monitor the performance of students and staff across all GEMS Schools in accordance with agreed policies, procedures and school development plans through the Principal/Head of School.

### **7.2 The Senior Leaders will:**

- Ensure inclusive provision is a standing agenda item of senior leadership and Board of Trustees meeting
- Develop and review their inclusive provision as part of their School Development Plan including measurable targets, in order to evaluate and improve provision and accessibility for students with additional learning needs.
- Ensure a member of the senior leadership team has direct oversight of inclusive provision in the school
- Appoint a member of staff to be responsible for the coordination and provision for gifted and talented learners and work in conjunction with middle leaders
- Ensure all staff have access to a program of CPD opportunities related to adaptive teaching and ensure staff are trained in student protection and safeguarding awareness measures which include how to identify concerns which may be specific to students with additional learning needs, as per the ADEK policy on Child Protection
- Establish a risk assessment procedure of all structures within the school to be undertaken to identify and mitigate any hazards which may present heightened risks to those with communication, mobility, sensory, and behavioral needs
- Ensure data on the identification of students with additional learning needs is submitted to ADEK as per any request
- Ensure all incidents of maltreatment (particularly bullying or discrimination) against students with additional learning needs are recorded and resolved, as appropriate
- Establish a system for the emergency evacuation of all people of determination (students, staff, and visitors), ensuring that key persons identified are aware of their roles, and that training and awareness sessions have been delivered in a timely and appropriate manner to the school community



- Undertake overall responsibility for the safe evacuation of all people of determination during emergency situations

### **7.3 The Director of Inclusion will:**

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

### **7.4 Inclusion Specialists will:**

- Provide support for identification of the specific needs of individual students
- Lead the development, implementation and annual review of individual education plans (IEP), Accommodation plans (AP) and Student Support Plans (SSP) including the development of instructional and educational strategies and the modification and adaptation of curriculum structures
- Regularly review student IEP/SSP goals and communicate termly progress/updates to parents
- Ensure that IEP/SSP goals are reviewed with teachers and other staff and accommodations are implemented across all areas of learning
- Model appropriate teaching strategies as co-teaching or team teaching with the classroom teacher and other staff
- Collaborate with classroom/subject area teachers on student specific intervention strategies
- Provide individual or small group work inside or outside of the classroom environment
- Maintain effective communication with parents/service providers/counselor
- Support the Learning Support Assistant (LSA) assigned to their caseload students with instructional strategies, feedback, including year end appraisal

### **7.5 Teachers will:**

- Implement the guidelines of the Inclusion policy on a daily basis, by taking responsibility for the progress and development of every student in their class, including those experiencing additional needs
- Create a learning environment where all students are able to access the curriculum. Ensuring the appropriate accommodations or modifications are in place to ensure students can successfully engage with learning
- Participate in the development of IEP learning goals with the Inclusion Specialist

- Participate in annual review meetings where possible with the parents and Inclusion Specialist
- Communicate regularly with parents
- Implement student specific strategies and adjustments as mandated by the IEP/ recommended by the inclusion specialist
- Co-teach/ team teach/co-plan with the Inclusion specialist
- Support the LSA with specific learning/lesson adjustments

#### **7.6 Learning Support Assistants will:**

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

#### **7.7 Parents and Guardians will:**

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

#### **7.8 Students will be supported to:**

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

## 8.0 Inclusive Education Priorities

### 8.1 Admissions, Participation and Equity

- In order to maintain a balanced provision of support for all students, GAA will limit enrollment of students with additional needs to 15% of the total student body.
- GAA will prioritize the enrollment of students with additional learning needs and their siblings in the same school.
- GAA will request the original clinical assessment reports from parents completed by any relevant specialists such as a therapist, psychologist, or pediatrician. Failure to produce such documentation may result in disenrollment
- From Grades 1-12, GAA will admit students whose academic abilities and performance are no more than 2 grade-levels below their age. Should an LSA be needed to provide this level or learning support, parents will sign a contractual agreement with the school and LSA, and assume responsibility for the LSA salary
- GAA may be able to enroll and provide support for students with high needs in the early years where a play-based curriculum is the predominant mode of learning, with the understanding that enrollment at GAA may not be for the long term
- Students who require a modified curriculum due to the high level of learning needs may graduate with an Individualised Diploma (or certificate of completion from GAA) given the acknowledgement and consent of a parent or guardian
- In the event that GAA is unable to meet the needs of any students with additional learning needs, the school will submit an inability to accommodate notification to ADEK and the parents within 7 days of the admission decision being issued
- GAA will support the transition process for all students with additional learning needs
- Admissions will ensure that the school Admissions Policy reflects GEMS guidelines on Inclusion

### 8.2 Leadership and Accountability

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

### 8.3 Systems of Support for Inclusive Education

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

### 8.4 Cooperation, Coordination and Partnerships

- GAA staff will:
  - Collaborate with parents and caregivers of children with additional needs to ensure high quality

and appropriate provision, accommodations & services so children are well prepared with the skills and abilities to take on further education, training, employment and community engagement

- Centrally involve parents and caregivers in the use of assessment procedures, education provision planning and review, as well as review of overall inclusive provision in the school
- Work collaboratively with special education centers, medical facilities and other supportive agencies in the provision of assessments, therapies and accommodation guidelines

### 8.5 Fostering a Culture of Inclusion

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

### 8.6 Resourcing for Inclusive Education

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

## 9.0 Glossary of Terms

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Annual Review**- annual meetings during which Individual Learning Plans will be revised or closed at this

time. Students are assessed, externally, every 3 years to determine the current level of support needed.

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

**Individualized Education Plan (IEP)**- This is a plan or program developed to ensure that a child with an identified disability who is attending an elementary or secondary school receives specialized instruction and support services.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## 10.0 Appendix: Links with other policies and documents

**This policy links to our policies and guidance on:**

Admissions Policy

[IB DP Inclusion Policy](#)

Assessment Policy

Behaviour Support Policy

Supporting Students with Medical Conditions

GEMS Intimate Care Policy

[GEMS Safeguarding Policy](#)

[ADEK Inclusion Policy](#)