



مدرسة جيمس الدولية – شارع الخيل  
GEMS International School  
AL KHAIL

**GEMS International School**  
**English Language Learners (ELL)**  
**ELL Policy**  
**2019-2020**



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## 1. Mission statement

An ever evolving experience for ever evolving learners.

At GEMS International School (GIS) we recognize the uniqueness of each child through a program of learning that promotes challenge and personalized education at all levels. Through this, we encourage creative and critical thinking alongside stimulating and meaningful experiences.

We continually aim to provide an inclusive, enabling environment which empowers all children to achieve. The ELL team aims to empower students to learn the English skills necessary to function academically, thrive socially, and grow as multilingual global citizens. We guide students in strengthening language skills that will guide them in their journey towards accessing the mainstream curriculum. We are committed to providing English support to our vibrant community and love sharing in our diverse traditions and cultures to develop tolerance and understanding of our differences.

## Purpose of policy

The purpose of the ELL policy is to define and communicate the management of English Language Learning at GEMS International School to optimize the recognition of and provision for English Language Learners so that ELL children learn, succeed and are happy in school.

## 2. Principles

- To welcome all parents, as they have a positive role to play in the life of the school;
- To give parents a voice so that they can always make their feelings and opinions known to staff, and that these will be dealt with respectfully and seriously;



- To demonstrate that parents' and guardians' linguistic, cultural and religious backgrounds are valued and respected;
- To show that the school is part of the community it serves.
- To place students who are learning English as an additional language alongside proficient users of English who can provide good language and learning role models.
- To understand and accommodate the fact that the student may already have acquired the relevant skills and concepts of a subject, but initially may lack the language to express these in English.
- To place the child in a class or group which includes a child who speaks the same language if possible.
- To maintain an age-appropriate curriculum and high cognitive challenge as these are critical to progress for learners of ELL.
- To understand that learning English as an additional language should not be considered as a 'special need' and bilingual and multilingual learners should not be automatically identified for Special Needs support, as this is likely to be inappropriate to their specific needs.
- To ensure that the student is included in small groups that can provide specific and targeted language interventions to ensure proper language acquisition.
- To understand that test scores will not accurately reflect the potential of a child who is in the early stages of learning English as an additional language and should not therefore be used as the main criterion for placing the child in a teaching group.
- For ELL team to collaborate and share good practice with information, guidance and classroom strategies with other teachers.

### 3. Provisions

#### a. Definition

An **English Language Learner** (ELL) is identified as a student who is unable to communicate proficiently or learn effectively in English. Student often comes from non-English speaking homes and backgrounds, and require specialized modifications in order to access the curriculum successfully. Although some ELLs may have basic interpersonal

communication skills (BICS), they may struggle to access the academic language (CALPS- cognitive academic language skills).

Note that at GIS, our ELL students are those enrolled in our program and are in need of support. A majority of our student body are learning **English as an Additional Language** (EAL). Only those assessed and identified by our team will be enrolled in the program.

**Dually identified** students are those who are those with a language need as well as some other type of learning difficulty. Students will have an individualized learning plan designed by the Inclusion Support Team (IST), which is to be followed in all areas of instruction and socialization. The method that these students receive support will be different for each student.

### **b. Identification of ELL students**

Through the *admissions process*, the ELL team collaborates with the admissions team in order to ensure that those students with a language need are quickly identified and assessed. A recommendation is made, and is shared with the GIS team as well as the family seeking acceptance.

*Teachers* may refer students to the ELL team. The ELL team will ensure a quick assessment and recommendation.

All students referred to the ELL program, whether through the admissions team, or homeroom/ content teachers, will be administered the WIDA (World-class Instructional Design and Assessment). A score of 4.5 or below as an overall score, or in any of the 4 domains (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) indicates an ELL need.

### **c. Levels of provision**

**Level 1:** high quality teaching where teachers accommodate language abilities through inclusion strategies. Students are monitored by the ELL teachers. Classroom teachers and ELL teachers collaborate to ensure that students are receiving what they need.

**Level 2:** student is enrolled in the ELL program and meets regularly with the ELL teacher in small groups for specific, targeted language instruction. In class support could include co-teaching, working with a small group within the classroom, or providing scaffolds for the student and teacher to use in class.

*Dually identified students* with language needs as well as learning difficulties are entitled to receive language support. The *Individualized Education Plan* (IEP) will clearly state what the student needs and how the need will be supported by the GIS team.

As part of the inclusion team, the ELL team also uses a *graduated approach* to learning. Students who have higher needs will receive more support. The level is continuously monitored, revisited, refined and revised in order to best support the student.

### **d. Exiting the program**



It is important to triangulate all data before a student is no longer in need of intense ELL support. Using one data point does not allow us to look at the whole child. Therefore, the following must be considered:

- WIDA scores of 4.5 or above- all domains and areas are to be considered
- MAP scores- student needs to demonstrate expected growth
- Reading levels
  - In primary, this will be measured using the Fountas and Pinnell benchmark assessments
  - In secondary, read theory assessments will be used
  - Students who exit cannot be more than one grade level below expectations
- Writing levels as measured by grade level rubric and expectations
- Teacher feedback that takes into account student's ability to understand and follow directions, communicate with teachers and peers, complete tasks and assignments, access the curriculum successfully

## **Roles and responsibilities**

- **ELL Families**
  - To support students in their language journey
  - To understand school policy, identification of need, and exit criteria
  - To seek support or clarification when necessary
  - To communicate through MyGIS, seesaw, and email when a question or concern arises
  - To ensure that fees are paid in a timely manner
  
- **Grade level leaders and teachers**
  - To advocate for ELL students who were not identified during the admissions process
  - To review progress of ELL children at mid-term and end of term and to update continuums where measurable progress has been made and discuss strategies and resources
  - To monitor progress and refer any child not making expected progress to the ELL team for further investigation.



- To collaborate in building a bank of information resources and strategies and share these with the team and specialists to support ELLs in the classroom.
  - To embed speaking and listening in active learning
  - To be familiar with WIDA can-do descriptors and apply them in scaffolding and differentiating for students
  - To utilize TAs and LSAs in providing in class support for ELLs..
  - To differentiate appropriately for students' needs
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- **ELL team**
    - To meet student's needs through small group instruction and in class support
    - To document and constantly review students' needs in order to provide appropriate support
    - To administer WIDA assessments when necessary
    - To collaborate with homeroom or content teachers
    - To collaborate with families