



مدرسة جيمس الدولية – شارع الخيل
GEMS International School
AL KHAIL

Inclusion Policy

2023 - 2024

Students of Determination

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Vision

At GEMS International School (GIS), our mission is to develop lifelong learners who engage in meaningful learning experiences that foster compassion, resilience, and an understanding of their role in the community. Aligned with our vision of providing exceptional quality education to meet the needs of an international community, we take pride in being an inclusive school. We work collaboratively with students and families, aiming to inspire, motivate, and challenge every student to become successful and confident lifelong learners.

At GIS we are in alignment with *Goal 4 of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (2015)*, calling for equitable education that is inclusive and allows everyone the opportunity to learn. We seek to create a culture of inclusion whereby all stakeholders collaborate together to ensure that we are proactive in identifying and supporting students in an environment that enables every student to be successful in developing the skills, knowledge, and values they need to become fully participating members of their community.

We firmly believe in the principles and vision of the KHDA *Inclusive Education Policy Framework (2017)*, and subsequent KHDA inclusion directives and guidelines; *Implementing Inclusive Education: A Guide for Schools, Creating the Capacity for Change (KHDA, 2019)*; *Rights of Students of Determination: A Handbook for Schools (KHDA, 2019)* and the *Directives and Guidelines for Inclusive Education: Ensuring Equitable Access to Education for Students of Determination (KHDA, 2019)*. We recognize that when a school improves the provision for students who experience barriers to learning, they improve provision for all.

At GEMS International School (GIS), we embrace students of all abilities, with neurodiversity being a welcomed and expected aspect of the community. We understand that each student is an individual, aiming to promote their unique strengths and actively support them through their individual challenges. We are committed to creating an inclusive environment that acknowledges and accommodates differences. By doing so, we not only ensure that students with additional needs can grow and thrive within our school, but we also cultivate a richer, more diverse learning community that benefits all students.

Principles

We believe that:

- All students have the right to quality instruction and support that will enable them to become successful learners.
- All students have the right to learn in an environment alongside their peers.
- All students benefit when the principles of inclusive teaching practice are embedded within a school.
- Every teacher is a teacher of every student; including Students of Determination (SD), English Language Learners (ELL) and those who are More and Exceptionally Able (MEA; previously Gifted & Talented).
- Inclusive teaching approaches can reduce the barriers that some students experience to the benefit of all.

We aim to ensure that:

- All students have access to high quality inclusive teaching and the necessary support to enable them to become successful learners.
- There is early and accurate identification of additional needs to ensure that the correct support is in place for students experiencing barriers to learning.
- Students have access to high quality intervention programs when it is identified that they have needs that require provision that is *additional to* or *different from* their peers.
- All students have the opportunity to learn in an environment alongside their peers.
- Systems are in place to enable all stakeholders to work in partnership and collaborate effectively.
- Teachers and paraprofessionals working with the students receive the ongoing professional development and support needed in order to develop the knowledge, skills and confidence required to meet the needs of all of their students.

Provision

Definition

A **Student of Determination (SD)** is identified as a student who is experiencing a long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairment which, in interaction with various barriers, restricts the student's full and effective participation in education on an equal basis with peers of the same age.

Identification of Need

The school uses a range of internal and external assessments to monitor and track progress of all students. These are analyzed in coordination with teacher assessments to identify students who may be experiencing barriers to learning. Once a need has been identified, further investigations are

carried out by the Inclusion Support team in conjunction with teachers, families and external specialists (when required) to accurately categorize need and specific barriers to learning.

Identified students will be included on the school’s **Inclusion Support Register** as **Students of Determination (SDs)** so provision can be monitored and reviewed effectively. Some students without a formal diagnosis may be recorded on the register whilst their response to intervention (RTI) is monitored to see if their needs can be addressed through short term intervention strategies or modifications within the classroom, or whether their need requires longer term support.

Categories of need

The school uses the Categorization Framework for Students of Determination (2019- 2020) to inform planning for provision.

Common barriers to learning	Categories of disability (aligned with the UAE unified categorisation of disability)
Cognition and learning	1. Intellectual disability (¹ including Intellectual disability - unspecified) 2. Specific learning disorders 3. Multiple disabilities 4. Developmental delay (younger than five years of age)
Communication and interaction	5. Communication disorders 6. Autism spectrum disorders
Social, emotional and mental health	7. Attention Deficit Hyper Activity disorder 8. Psycho - emotional disorders.
Physical, sensory and medical	9. Sensory impairment 10. Deaf-blind disability 11. Physical disability 12. ² <i>Chronic or acute medical conditions</i>

* These categories are further differentiated according to the guidance provided by the framework.

Graduated Approach

During the initial assessment a decision will be made as to the category of need and the level of

provision required. This level is continuously monitored, revisited, refined and revised through the four part cycle. This leads to a growing understanding of a student’s needs and ensures that the type of provision in place is the most appropriate for securing progress and moving towards independence in learning.

Levels of Support at GIS

The school adopts a graduated approach to identification and provision. There are three levels of provision.

Level 3	Students who require individualized and specialized provision, which is different and additional to that provided to most students.	IEP, Student Profile, Access to LSA
Level 2b	Students who are able to access the mainstream curriculum independently once accommodations have been put in place. Students at Level 2 may need additional time-limited interventions or support with accessing some aspects of the curriculum outside of the mainstream classroom.	IEP & Student Profile
Level 2a		Student Profile
Level 1	Students with an identified additional need who are able to access the curriculum independently with accommodations where needed.	Student Profile

Level 3

Students identified as requiring additional support at Level 3 will be included on the School’s Inclusion Register. This support will be provided in addition to the standard school service and there may be an additional charge for this support. Level 3 students may require a Learning Support Assistant (LSA). Additionally Level 3 students will receive a Student Profile, prepared in coordination

with the student and parents, to ensure that teachers are informed about any barriers to learning and strategies to support the student effectively within the classroom, and individualized targets outlined through an Individual Education Plan (IEP).

The full Level 3 LSA support service and associated costs are outlined in an Individualized Service Agreement (ISA) that is agreed upon with parents before admission or as identified.

Level 2

Students identified as requiring additional support at Level 2 will be included on the School's Inclusion Register. This is provided in addition to the standard school service, with no additional charge. Level 2 students may have access to small group sessions, some shared in class support from an Inclusion Teaching Assistant, morning or lunchtime support and/ or interventions, access to an Inclusion Support Teacher and individualized targets monitored through a Group Learning Plan (GLP), Individual Learning Plan (ILP) or Individual Education Plan (IEP), depending on need. Additionally Level 2 students will receive a Student Profile, prepared in coordination with the student and parents, to ensure that teachers are informed about any barriers to learning and strategies to support the student effectively within the classroom.

Level 1

Students identified as requiring additional support at Level 1 will be included on the School's Inclusion Register. This is provided within the standard school service, with no additional charge. Level 1 students will receive a Student Profile, prepared in coordination with the student and parents,

to ensure that teachers are informed about any barriers to learning and strategies to support the student effectively within the classroom.

Student Support Plans

Once a student has been identified as a Student of Determination, they will receive a personalized **Student Support Plan**. A Student Support Plan will incorporate a personalized *Student Profile* outlining the personal strengths and barriers of the student, detailing guidance for teachers on how to reduce potential or identified barriers to learning effectively. Depending on the identified support required a *Group Learning Plan (GLP)*, *Individual Learning Plan (ILP)* or *Individual Education Plan (IEP)* will be designed to support the student. GLPs will include an overview of a time-limited intervention that will be provided by an Inclusion Support Teacher. An ILP will be designed by the class teacher, with the guidance of the Inclusion Support Team, and will outline strategies and time-limited targets that will be implemented within the classroom. An IEP will be provided for students requiring longer term support. IEPs include an overview of each targeted area, a long term aim broken down into short term targets. Specific and measurable strategies will be designed to support that student progress towards their IEP long term target and the next steps in learning and/or moving towards independence. Progress towards the long term aim will be reviewed at least three times a year and more often if needed.

Exiting from the Support Program

As part of the review cycle the current needs of the student will be regularly revisited and reviewed. The level of provision may be increased, decreased or maintained depending on the progress of the individual student. Where a student has made significant progress and is now able to access the

curriculum independently, they may be exited from the support program. They will continue to be monitored at Level 1 for at least one assessment cycle to ensure that progress is maintained. Where a student is still struggling to access the curriculum, despite the highest level of support being put into place, it may be necessary to consider whether the current setting is the most appropriate provision to meet the student's individual needs. In these circumstances, the school will support the student and family to find alternative provision that is better able to support the student's particular need.

Roles and Responsibilities

As an inclusive school all stakeholders, including the governor for inclusive education and leaders at every level, are responsible for supporting the needs of all students. For our students of determination, we have adopted a Team Around the Child (TAC) approach to ensure that there is effective collaboration and coordination between all parties involved in the individual support programs for our students of determination.

Individual roles and Responsibilities

Student of Determination and families

At the heart of all of our work is the student. We seek to fully involve our students of determination and their families in identifying and seeking solutions to address their own barriers to learning. As students get older, they are encouraged to take on more responsibility, formally contribute to their Individual Education Plans (IEPs) and take an active role in target setting wherever possible. We believe that student voice and a personal understanding of one's own strengths and challenges and the confidence to self-advocate are essential independence skills that will be necessary in adult life.

Teachers

Classroom teachers are responsible for the learning, progress and outcomes for all of the students in their classroom. In addition, in the primary section, homeroom teachers take a lead role in the Team around the Child meeting. In secondary, we adopt a collaborative approach to the development and review of Student Support Plans.

Learning Support Assistants

The Learning Support Assistants (LSAs) at GIS play an important role in enabling students to move towards independence whilst being supported to access the learning in the mainstream classroom. Their role is to work in collaboration with classroom teachers so that students of determination can be successfully included in the mainstream classroom while at the same time developing the skills needed to be able to access the learning independently.

Whilst the majority of LSAs will be employed through the school recruitment process, in exceptional circumstances, where the needs of the children require more specialist provision, the school will consider the appointment of an external LSA who is employed and supervised by a licensed center or clinic. The school does not accept LSAs who have a dual role within the home. The employment of the LSA will be governed by a Individualised Service Agreement (ISA) between the parents and the school. Parents must ensure that all the documentation requested is provided to the school.

Higher Level Teaching Assistants

Higher Level Teaching Assistants (HLTAs) plan and deliver group interventions to help students reach their agreed upon academic targets. They work in collaboration with their assigned subject departments to promote inclusive practices and develop quality first teaching.

Inclusion Teaching Assistants

Inclusion Teaching Assistants (ITAs) work predominantly with Level 2 students to enable them to make progress across the curriculum. They are skilled in inclusive teaching strategies and share these with subject teachers.

Inclusion Support Teachers

Inclusion Support Teachers (ISTs) are teachers with a specialist knowledge of working with students of determination. They have been identified as demonstrating high levels of skill and ability in applying inclusive approaches within their own teaching practice and having the ability to support the development of inclusive practice in others. The core function of the IST is to support the development of inclusive teaching practices within the mainstream classroom and to serve as a coach, mentor and professional resource for classroom teachers. In addition, ISTs may work with individual, or groups of, students of determination to implement interventions to accelerate progress. This may take place within the classroom or a separate setting.

Special Educational Needs Coordinators (SENCOs)

The SENCOs coordinate the inclusive teaching and learning provisions throughout the school. They are responsible for deploying the inclusion support staff to meet the needs of the students, coordinating services and external agencies, quality assurance of provisions and promoting an inclusive ethos throughout the school community.

The Primary SENCO works closely with curriculum coordinators, section leads and homeroom teachers to ensure that the needs of all students are met appropriately within the classroom. The

Secondary SENCo works closely with Heads of Department, Grade Leaders and subject teachers to ensure that the needs of all students are met appropriately within the classroom.

Head of Inclusion (Inclusion Champion)

As Inclusion Champion, the Head of Inclusion is the lead on promoting and establishing an inclusive ethos throughout the school. This involves effectively communicating a clear vision of inclusion and working with all stakeholders to turn this vision into practice. Key to this role is supporting teaching staff to develop their own professional expertise in order to ensure that inclusive approaches to education are embedded in classroom practice.

Responsibilities include:

- coordinating a school-wide review to identify areas of best practice and to identify areas which require targeted improvement.
- coordinating with the Executive Leadership Team to develop and implement a comprehensive and strategic Inclusive Education Improvement Plan (IEIP)
- promoting ideas that support the development of inclusive attitudes and approaches - providing guidance to different stakeholders
- supporting other members of the inclusion team and teaching staff with the embedding of inclusive classrooms
- developing positive relationships with the wider school community including the parent body and building inclusive networks
- working with the Executive Leadership team to coordinate a programme of continued professional development for all staff at all levels across the school
- ensuring that the Executive Leadership Team and Governor for Inclusive Education are

informed and updated on changes to accepted current good practice and developments within the UAE.

Head of School

The Principal is responsible for ensuring that the school achieves its vision for inclusion. This includes ensuring that an inclusive approach is embedded in all practices across the school. The Principal is responsible for and developing and monitoring the implementation of the Inclusive Education Improvement Plan in coordination with the Inclusion Support Team.

Governor for Inclusive Education

The governor for inclusive education should be committed to developing the knowledge, understanding and skills required to provide effective support and challenge to the school as it progresses towards realizing a vision of inclusion in practice.

Responsibilities include supporting the governing board to:

- set strategic direction through a clearly-stated inclusive vision and ethos.
- hold the designated school-based inclusion support team accountable for the development and implementation of an appropriate inclusive education improvement plan.
- monitor the overall educational performance of the school through clear inclusive education outcomes and impact measures.

Inclusive Partnerships

Parents as Partners

The school recognizes the importance of involving parents in all aspects of their children's educational journey. For students of determination the role of the parent is seen as especially important and the school will endeavor to ensure that they are fully involved in decision-making and provision. This will include establishing a shared vision and a clear focus on desired outcomes at each review point with increasing participation of the student as they become more able to self-advocate.

External Agencies

We view effective partnerships with specialist service providers as essential to ensuring that our students of determination receive the support that they require. Hence, we try to ensure that our students have access to the specialist services that they need through building close collaborative partnerships with trusted providers. These partnerships are governed by a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that clearly sets out this working relationship for the provider, the school and parents.

Governor For Inclusive Education

The governor for inclusive education is a nominated member of the governing board who is fully committed to, and proactive in, setting and prioritizing a clear vision of inclusion. He or she will, on behalf of the governing body, play a key role in providing support and challenge to the school as it works to achieve an inclusive system of education for students of determination.

Appendices

Appendix A: Definitions

Inclusive Education Improvement Plan

The inclusive education improvement plan is a strategic plan for improvement that is ratified and

monitored by the governing board. It is developed and implemented by the inclusion support team and should set out, in a clear and comprehensive way, the school's priority improvement plans to enable the achievement of an inclusive system of education. It should explain the main measures it will take to raise the quality of education for students of determination, the resources dedicated, and the key outcomes and targets it intends to achieve.

Inclusion Team

Led by the principal, the inclusion team is a school-based team of educators, charged with the responsibility of implementing and monitoring the changes required to achieve inclusive education. The core members of the team should be: the inclusion champion, the leader of provision for students of determination and representation from both inclusion support teachers and learning support assistants.

Student of Determination

A student of determination is a student with a long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairment which, in interaction with various barriers, restricts the student's full and effective participation in education on an equal basis with peers of the same age.

Appendix B: Legislation and guidance

This policy is based on the UAE Disability Act, Federal Law (29) 2006 and 2009 which guarantees a Student of Determination access to equal opportunities of education. This policy is also based on the following guidance and legislation.

[The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities](#)

[Federal Law \(29\) 2006 and 2009](#)

Guarantees a person of determination access to equal opportunities of education within all educational institutions

[Dubai Law 2014 \(no. 2\)](#)

Concerning Protection of the rights of persons of determination in the Emirate of Dubai

[Executive Council Resolution No. \(2\) of 2017 - Regulating Private Schools in the Emirate of Dubai](#)

Regulations for Private Schools in Dubai

Article 4 (14) establish the conditions, rules, and standards that are required to facilitate the enrolment and integration of Students with disabilities in Private Schools;

Article 13 (16) treat its Students equitably and not discriminate against them on grounds of nationality, race, gender, religion, social class, or special educational needs of Students with disabilities;

Article 13 (17) admit Students with disabilities in accordance with the terms of its Educational Permit, the rules adopted by the KHDA, and the relevant legislation in force;

Article 13 (19) provide all supplies required for conducting the Educational activity, including devices, equipment, furniture, and other supplies which the KHDA deems necessary, such as the supplies required by Students with disabilities;

Article 23 (4) provide a special needs friendly environment and academic programmes appropriate for Students with disabilities in accordance with the rules and conditions determined by the KHDA and the concerned Government Entities in this respect;

The National Project for Inclusion for People of Determination (2008)
UAE School for All: General rules for the provision of special education programmes and services guidance (2010)
My Community: A City for Everyone Initiative (2013) Aims to turn Dubai into a fully inclusive and friendly city for People of Determination
Quality Standards of Services for Persons with Disabilities in Governmental and Private Institutions (2016)
The National Policy for Empowering People of Determination (2017) Aims to provide quality inclusive education in the UAE
Dubai Inclusive Education Policy Framework (2017) Dubai Inclusive Education Policy Framework has been developed to support the UAE's commitment to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities as well as federal and local legislation that calls for the inclusion of all learners, regardless of ability, in the education sector.
Directive & Guidelines for Inclusive Practice
Implementing Inclusive Education - A Guide for Schools
Advocating for Inclusive Education - A Guide for Parents This guide supports parents in understanding their rights and responsibilities when advocating for an inclusive education for their child.
The Dubai Universal Design Code (2017, Accessibility Code) Aims for universal accessibility
Abu Dhabi Education Council Special Education Policies and Procedures Handbook (2012)

The Ministry of Education Strategic Plan 2017-2021
<p>The Dubai Plan 2021</p> <p>Aims for a tolerant and fully inclusive city by 2020 which is part of a wider strategic plan, incorporating education, health & rehabilitation, employment, universal accessibility and social protection</p>
UAE Centennial 2071 project
<p>United Nations (2015) The Sustainable Development Agenda. Available at: https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/development-agenda/</p>

Review Log

Reviewed by	Review date	Amendments made (Y/N) and details
Hannah Kelly <i>Head of Inclusion</i>	September 2022	Yes - Updated information in line with KHDA directives and school development.
Academic Leadership, Head of Inclusion & SENCos	September 2023	Yes - Updated information regarding Student Support Plans. Amended the vision statement to include further KHDA directives and UN SGP.

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