



أكاديمية جيمس العالمية
GEMS World Academy
ABU DHABI

Language Policy

2023/2024

Policy Reviewed by:

Heads of English, Arabic and French Teams, Middle Leaders,
Teachers, SLT-November 2023

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Introduction

At GEMs World Academy, Abu Dhabi, we celebrate the rich linguistic diversity of our student body. We believe that every teacher is a teacher of language. and recognize the importance of effective communication in fostering a vibrant and inclusive learning environment. This language policy outlines the principles and guidelines for language usage within our international school community.

GEMs World Academy is proud to align its language policy with the principles of the International Baccalaureate (IB) curriculum. The IB framework emphasizes a holistic approach to language development, recognizing the interconnectedness of language with global understanding and intercultural awareness. At GEMs World Academy, we integrate the IB philosophy by fostering an environment where language is not only a tool for communication but a key component in developing students as inquirers, thinkers, and communicators. The IB's commitment to multilingualism resonates with our values, and we strive to implement practices that encourage students to become proficient in English, while also valuing and maintaining their home languages. Language instruction at GEMs World Academy under the IB curriculum goes beyond linguistic skills, aiming to cultivate a deep appreciation for language as an essential aspect of international-mindedness and global citizenship.

Language of Instruction

The primary language of instruction at GEMS World Academy, is English. All core subjects, including Mathematics, Science, Social Studies (non-native), and English Language, will be taught in English.

Promotion of Arabic Language

At GEMS World Academy, we recognize the significance of the Arabic language as a vital component of our school community's cultural heritage and identity. In alignment with the United Arab Emirates' rich linguistic landscape, the promotion and preservation of Arabic language and culture hold a central place in our

educational philosophy. We are committed to ensuring that students develop proficiency in Arabic, fostering a deep appreciation for their linguistic roots and the broader Arab heritage. To achieve this, our language policy incorporates dedicated Arabic language instruction, engaging curriculum materials, and immersive cultural experiences. Furthermore, we actively encourage the integration of Arabic into various aspects of school life, including signage, events, and celebrations, to create a supportive environment that values and celebrates the Arabic language. By promoting the use of Arabic both inside and outside the classroom, we aim to empower our students to become bilingual, globally minded individuals who can navigate diverse linguistic and cultural contexts with confidence.

Language of Instruction Support (EAL)

Recognizing the diverse linguistic backgrounds of our students, GEMS World Academy provides additional language support services for those students who may benefit from assistance in acquiring proficiency in English. These services may include English as an additional Language (EAL) classes and additional language resources. .

Students are tested in Year One, or on admission where requested by the admissions team, parents or class teachers using the WIDA screener on the recommendation of teachers. The screening process is conducted solely by the EAL team. Learners exit the program when the Overall Score is at least 4.5 and the Reading Score is at least 4.0. This places the learner around the mean on the NGRT (100) with the ability to perform at an average level within the classroom. Unless there is prior knowledge of English, it is rare for a student beginning year 4 to exit the program in less than 3 years. It often takes 5 years, and students beginning in year 7 can take up to 7 years. The only students who will exit in 18 months are those who studied English prior to their arrival or are below year 4. Students below Y1 are still undergoing the language development process; are learning basic academic terminology along with their peers; and are lacking the social awareness that inhibits language acquisition in older students; thus, without any intervention, those that enter in FS1 or FS2 seldom qualify for services by Y1.

We offer an intervention programme that facilitates engagement by addressing the skills necessary to succeed in an English based curriculum. The programme focuses on the development of key areas which can overlap. Throughout all areas students are being encouraged and supported in reflection on what they have learned and how their language learning has developed over time.

- Basic communication (e.g Language around communicating basic needs) with the goal of social engagement with peers and teachers)
- Basic academic skills (Equipping students with the tools to ask questions and find information for the purpose of research-Informational Literacy)
- Advanced academic skills (Being able organise text e.g summarising, paraphrasing and learning how to communicate your findings through presentations, essays etc)

Multilingual Environment

Promotion/support of Multilingualism

GEMS World Academy, values and promotes multilingualism. Students are encouraged to maintain and develop proficiency in their home languages alongside English. The school recognizes the cognitive and cultural benefits of being multilingual. We recognise and consider the important of multi linguism when communiting with and to the wider school community.

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Language Learning Opportunities

GEMs World Academy offers language learning opportunities beyond the core curriculum. Students may have the option to study additional languages as part of the school's extracurricular activities or elective courses.

Communication and Collaboration

Parent-Teacher Communication

Parent-teacher communication will primarily be conducted in English. However, GEMS World Academy acknowledges the importance of understanding and respecting the linguistic preferences of parents and will make reasonable efforts to accommodate alternative languages when possible.

Official School Documentation

Official school documentation, including newsletters, announcements, and policies, will be available in English. Efforts will be made to provide translations or summaries in other languages as needed.

Assessment and Evaluation

Assessment Language

Assessments and examinations will be conducted in English. GEMS World Academy will provide appropriate support and accommodations for students with limited English proficiency to ensure fair and accurate assessments.

Recognition of Multilingual Skills

GEMS World Academy recognizes and values students' multilingual skills. Efforts will be made to acknowledge and celebrate linguistic diversity through events and activities that showcase the richness of our community's languages.

Professional development

At GEMS World Academy, we recognize the critical role of continuous professional development in ensuring the highest standards of language education. Our commitment to excellence extends to our dedicated staff, who engage in ongoing training and professional development opportunities. Teachers participate in workshops, seminars, and collaborative sessions that are specifically designed to

enhance their proficiency in language instruction, curriculum development, and language acquisition strategies. We encourage educators to stay abreast of the latest research, pedagogical methodologies, and technological advancements in language education. By fostering a culture of lifelong learning among our staff, we ensure that they remain well-equipped to address the diverse linguistic needs of our student body and adapt to evolving best practices in language education.

Review and Revision:

This language policy will be periodically reviewed and revised to reflect the evolving needs of our diverse student population and changes in educational best practices.

Appendix:

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