



GEMS

أكاديمية جيمس دبي الأمريكية

Dubai American
Academy



INCLUSION HANDBOOK



GEMS
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Dubai American
Academy



Founded in 1885



COUNCIL OF
INTERNATIONAL
SCHOOLS



TABLE OF CONTENTS

1.0 DAA’s MISSION AND IDENTITY STATEMENT	3
1.1 MISSION	
1.2 IDENTITY STATEMENT	
2.0 INCLUSION AT GEMS DUBAI AMERICAN ACADEMY	4
2.1 VISION	
2.3 SEND DELIVERY MODEL: INCLUSION	
2.4 SPECIAL EDUCATION CATEGORIES	
2.5 GRADUATED SYSTEMS OF SUPPORT FOR STUDENTS WITH SEND AT GEMSDUBAI AMERICAN ACADEMY	
2.6 IDENTIFICATION PROCEDURES FOR STUDENTS WITH SEND	
2.6.1 STEP 1—REFERRAL TO STUDENT SUPPORT TEAM	
2.6.2 STEP 2—EVALUATION AND DETERMINATION OF ELIGIBILITY	
2.6.3 STEP 3—DEVELOPMENT OF THE INDIVIDUAL EDUCATION PLAN (IEP) FOR TIER 2 AND TIER 3	
2.6.4 STEP 4—IMPLEMENTATION OF THE INDIVIDUAL EDUCATION PLAN (IEP)	10
2.6.5 STEP 5— INCLUSION TEAM MONITORS STUDENT PROGRESS AND REVIEWS SERVICES	
3.0 KEY ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES FOR SEND PROVISION AT DAA	9
3.1 THE SEN OR LEARNING SUPPORT TEACHER/INCLUSION LEADER	
3.2 THE CLASSROOM OR SUBJECT TEACHER	
3.3 THE LEARNING SUPPORT ASSISTANT (LSA)	
3.4 COUNSELORS	
3.6 PRINCIPALS AND ASSISTANT PRINCIPALS	
3.7 THE SUPERINTENDENT/DIRECTOR OF INCLUSION	
3.8 PARENTS	
3.9 GOVERNOR OF INCLUSION	
3.10 TRANSITIONS BETWEEN GRADE LEVELS AND DIVISIONS	
4.0 Gifted & Talented Education at DAA	13
4.1 PHILOSOPHY AND AIMS OF GIFTED & TALENTED PROGRAM AT DAA	
4.2 GIFTED EDUCATION AND UAE LAW	
4.3 GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR EDUCATING GIFTED CHILDREN	
4.3.1 Belief Statements	
4.3.2 Programs for Gifted and Talented Students:	

4.4 PROCEDURES FOR IDENTIFICATION OF GIFTED AND TALENTED STUDENTS 16

4.4.1 GIFTED AND TALENTED FORMAL IDENTIFICATION PROCEDURES

4.4.1.1 STEP 1—REFERRAL TO STUDENT SUPPORT TEAM (SST)

4.4.1.2 Step 2—Evaluation and Determination of Eligibility

4.4.1.3 Step 3—Development of the IEP

4.4.1.4 Step 4—Implementation of the IEP

4.4.1.5 Step 5—SST monitors student progress and reviews services

4.5 HOW DOES DUBAI AMERICAN ACADEMY EDUCATE GIFTED AND TALENTED CHILDREN?

4.5.1 The Heart is in the Classroom.

4.5.2 Class Selection

4.5.3 Opportunities beyond the Classroom

4.5.4 GEMS Education offers the following enrichment opportunities...

5.0 K-12 SEND COLLABORATION

19

1.0 DAA's MISSION AND IDENTITY STATEMENT

1.1 MISSION

Dubai American Academy is a vibrant international community, deeply rooted in a culture of kindness, that creates and empowers leaders and independent thinkers with integrity, character, and drive.

1.2 IDENTITY STATEMENT

Dubai American Academy offers an enriched American curriculum to students of all nationalities culminating in the International Baccalaureate Diploma Program and/or an American high school diploma. Beyond its rigorous academic program, DAA prepares students to lead successful lives through the exceptional diversity of its community and the extra-curricular experiences that contribute to the development of the whole person.

GEMS Core Values



1. Growing By Learning - Strive to develop your potential

- Along with our students, we never stop learning.
- Each and every one of us has a capacity for leadership.

2. Pursuing Excellence - Work to continually exceed expectations

- Just as we set educational standards for our schools, we take care that everything we do is delivered to a high standard.
- We go the extra mile for our students and our colleagues.

3. Leading through Innovation - Find the courage to challenge convention.

- We dare to dream of the possibilities
- No idea is too small or too large if it makes things better for our learners and our people.

4. Global Citizenship - Making an active contribution to your local and global community.

- We respect and celebrate our diversity and recognize that there are many things that unite us all.
- We make a difference in our local communities so that we have a sustainable planet to share
- We build bridges of knowledge, push boundaries and unite young people.
- We aim to produce not just great students, but great people who live with honesty, confidence and integrity.

2.0 INCLUSION AT GEMS DUBAI AMERICAN ACADEMY

2.1 VISION

At GEMS Dubai American Academy, we believe it is our duty to help *each* child find their own purpose and happiness in life, so they may contribute to a peaceful and sustainable future.

2.2 MISSION

GEMS Dubai American Academy believes that each child can achieve their fullest potential through a continuum of educational provision. Faculty and staff, in partnerships with parents, strive to provide an inclusive and responsive program that guides students towards academic success and self-advocacy. This will ensure our students are fully prepared to pursue their individual college and career goals upon graduation.

2.3 SEND DELIVERY MODEL: Standard Services for Inclusion

At GEMS Dubai American Academy, students with special education needs and determinations (SEND) 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 services provided outside the classroom setting include:

- Using “people first” language when speaking about our students with SEND.
- Development, implementation, and annual reviews of Individual Education Plans (IEPs).
- Creating a least restrictive environment that meets the needs of all children.

- Ensuring that all who are involved with students with SEND 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 with SEND as early as possible in their school career so that attainment can be raised.
- Ensuring that parents of students with SEND are kept fully informed of their child's progress and attainment.
- Ensuring that students with SEND are involved, where practicable, in decisions affecting their future educations.
- 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.
- Ensuring there is a smooth transition for students between grade levels within the school.

2.4 SPECIAL EDUCATION CATEGORIES

The following categories of identifications qualify a student to receive special education services at GEMS Dubai American Academy, if it can be documented that the identified need adversely affects the child's academic performance. They are based off the revised categorisation framework (2019) published by KHDA. A detailed description of each of the 12 categories can be found linked on the DAA inclusion website.

Common Barrier to Learning	Categories of Disabilities
Cognition and Learning	1. Intellectual disability (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 Disorders	7. Attention Deficit Hyper-Activity disorder 8. Psycho - emotional disorders.
Physical, Sensory and Medical	9. Sensory impairment 10. Deaf-blinddisability 11. Physical disability 12. Chronic or acute medical conditions

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 DAA. It is necessary, consequently, to assess their proficiency in English using the The WIDA MODEL (Measure of Developing English Language) before planning any additional support that might be required. Teachers and specialists will monitor their progress across the curriculum to ascertain whether any problems that may arise are from a student's developing command of English language or from special educational needs and determinations.

2.5 GRADUATED SYSTEMS OF SUPPORT (GSS) FOR STUDENTS WITH SEND AT GEMS DUBAI AMERICAN ACADEMY

Student's Level of Support	Services Provided	Person(s) Responsible
Tier 1 - lowest level of support <i>(academic and/or behavior)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Periodic progress monitoring of internal and external assessment data • Classroom strategies and interventions tracked by classroom teachers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Classroom teachers • Inclusion Teams
Tier 2 - middle level of support <i>(academic and/or behavior)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular progress monitoring of internal and external data to ensure growth. • Classroom observations • Short-term Individual Education Plan developed to communicate student's individual needs with teachers and parents. • Short-term SMART academic and/or behavior goals created and reviewed periodically. • Access to a Special Education Teacher for interventions and support. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Special Education Teacher • Classroom teachers
Tier 3 - highest level of support <i>(academic and/or behavior)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular progress monitoring of internal and external data to ensure growth. • Inclusion support from a Special Education Teacher, particularly in Math and English. • Long-term Individual Education Plan developed and reviewed annually to communicate student's individual needs with teachers and parents. • Short-term and Long-term SMART academic and/or behavior goals created and reviewed triannually. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Special Education Teacher • Classroom teachers

2.6 IDENTIFICATION PROCEDURES FOR STUDENTS WITH SEND

Students with SEND are often not identified until after they have been admitted to DAA. Consequently, the following five-step process is used at DAA to determine eligibility for learning support services:

1	2	3	4	5
Student referral to Inclusion team	Evaluation and determination of eligibility	Development of Individual Education Plan	Implementation of Individual Education Plan	Annual Review of Individual Education Plan

This process is described *generally* below.

2.6.1 STEP 1—REFERRAL TO STUDENT SUPPORT TEAM

- Each division has a Student Support Team (SST), which consists of the principal (or AP), SEND teachers, and counselors. Homeroom/classroom teachers are included on the SST on a case-by-case basis.
- The SST will meet regularly to discuss the academic performance of students who are experiencing learning problems and have been referred to the SST.
- When a student experiences learning or behavior difficulties, or has sensory, medical or physical needs, s/he may be referred by parents, counselors, principals, or teachers. This referral should be made to the divisional SEND Head of Department, who will present the case to the SST.
- After receiving a student referral, the SST conducts a review of a student’s academic and performance history, medical history, and (if appropriate) the principal or SEND teacher conducts a classroom observation in the area of concern.
- SST members make recommendations for Tier 1 interventions to immediately improve the student’s academic performance. The SST also begins to monitor the student’s progress and collect data for regular discussion.
- The Case Manager is primarily responsible for communicating with parents and coordinating meetings with other members of the SST.
- If the student’s progress is adequate and the Tier 1 interventions appear successful, the SST can determine that SEND support is not necessary.

2.6.2 STEP 2—EVALUATION AND DETERMINATION OF ELIGIBILITY

- If the student’s progress is *not* adequate (meeting grade level expectations for success), the SST may determine that the student needs to receive Tier 2 interventions. A referral form will be given to teacher to complete and return to the SST.
- Members of the SST will meet with the student’s parents to review progress and develop a short-term Individual Education Plan (IEP). Inclusion and/or small group support will be provided based on individual student need.
- When Tier 1 and Tier 2 interventions have been provided but the student fails to make adequate progress, the student will move to Tier 3 so that they can receive

more intensive support. Members of the SST will meet to review the data, and schedule a meeting with parents to discuss next steps.

- At the parent meeting, a long-term Individual Education Plan (IEP) will be developed to address the student's needs. At this time, members of the Inclusion Team can share information with parents about qualified professionals who can administer a formal psycho-ed assessment, however this is not necessary for students to receive more intensive learning support services. If an Ed-Psych report is shared with the SST, the information will be used to develop IEP goals and prescribe specific skills or intervention for the student.

****Parents will be informed that a formal, timely (less than three years) Educational Psychologist's report, written by a qualified Educational Psychologist that indicates a diagnosed disability must be on file in order to receive read aloud and extra time accommodations on formalized assessments such as ACT, PSATs, SATs, and IB Certificates.****

2.6.3 STEP 3—DEVELOPMENT OF THE INDIVIDUAL EDUCATION PLAN (IEP) FOR TIER 2 AND TIER 3

Students with SEND will have an Individual Education Plan (IEP) written for them that will help students, parents, SEND teachers, classroom teachers, counselors, and administration identify:

- Student and parent information including background information
- Performance background for the student, including strengths and areas of concern
- Classroom and testing accommodations. Accommodations are changes that do not alter what is being taught and include alterations of the environment, curriculum format, or equipment that allows an individual with a disability to gain access to content and/or complete assigned tasks.
- Recommended therapies
- Student goals, strategies, assessment and progress. The IEP will record only that which is different from or additional to the normal curriculum, and will concentrate on several targets that closely match the student's needs. The IEP will be discussed with the parent and the student, if appropriate.
- IEPs will be reviewed annually. The school will hold annual reviews, and parents' views on their child's progress will be actively sought. Wherever possible or appropriate, the school will involve students in this process.

2.6.4 STEP 4—IMPLEMENTATION OF THE INDIVIDUAL EDUCATION PLAN (IEP)

- Special education services are provided to students in accordance with the recommendations of the IEP.
- An IEP should be implemented immediately following written parental approval, but within a one month period.

2.6.5 STEP 5— INCLUSION TEAM MONITORS STUDENT PROGRESS AND REVIEWS SERVICES

- The IEP should be reviewed and the student's progress monitored closely by the SST.
- At any time during the school year, SST members and teachers may be reconvened to review the progress.

- The SST schedules an annual review report of all SEND services and makes recommendations for the next school year.

Assessments Used for Identification	
Internal Assessments	External Assessments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Informal assessments • Formative assessments • Summative assessments • DRI • DRA • Running Records from Columbia University Teachers College Readers and Writers Project • Spelling inventories • Classroom observations by Inclusion Team • Anecdotal notes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MAP • CAT4 • GORT5 • CELF5 • CTOPP2 • WRAML2 • WRAT5 • Educational Psychological Reports • IB results

3.0 KEY ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES FOR SEND PROVISION AT DAA

All members of DAA's faculty contribute to the provision of high quality, individualized programming for the school's SEND students. Key positions in the school follow below with a brief review of important duties and responsibilities:

3.1 THE SEN OR LEARNING SUPPORT TEACHER/INCLUSION LEADER

The most important obligations of SEND teachers at DAA are:

- to support SEND students' individual learning needs;
- to coordinate with the subject teachers;
- to participate in the meetings, professional development courses and workshops, and special activities aimed at improving the quality and delivery of special education programs and services;
- to monitor the implementation of SEND programs and to provide periodic reports on the status of these programs and services;
- to collaborate with parents of SEND students to strengthen the home-school partnership;
- to collaborate with other professionals at DAA, including classroom or subject teachers, counselors, and school administrators;
- to participate in the completion of an annual SEND program review;
- to consistently and frequently monitor student progress, which can be assessed through progress reports, standardized testing and meetings with concerned parties to review goals, and academic achievement.

Additionally, SEND teachers should:

- contribute as a member of the Student Support Team (SST) in his or her division;
- assist in the identification and submit record keeping of students with special needs at DAA;
- co-teach with teachers of regular education classes to develop and deliver instructional materials and programs for students with special needs;
- develop IEPs and monitor their implementation for students with special needs;
- coordinate with school and family to develop programs and services that help students overcome academic and social challenges;
- develop and facilitate programs to increase awareness about the rights and needs of students with special needs;
- encourage and monitor students' use of assistive technologies;
- participate in school-based committees to improve the quality of special education programs and services offered by DAA;
- perform any other tasks assigned by Division Principals or the Superintendent.

3.2 THE CLASSROOM OR SUBJECT TEACHER

The most important obligations of classroom or subject teachers at DAA are:

- to participate in the effective implementation of IEPs;
- to provide additional support or accommodations for SEND students, when required;
- to work with SEND, counselors, administration, and parents to provide the best possible learning environment for students with SEND;
- to participate in the meetings, training courses, workshops and activities related to services for students with special needs;
- to cooperate with the special education team in all matters related to the plans, special education services, course revision, evaluation methods, and examinations and setting goals;
- to closely monitor the progress of SEND students in their classrooms, in collaboration with the SEND teacher;
- to cooperate with the SEND teacher in providing special education services to SEND students;
- to collaborate with parents of students with special needs to strengthen the home-school partnership; and
- to perform any other tasks assigned by Division Principals or the Superintendent.

3.3 THE LEARNING SUPPORT ASSISTANT (LSA)

The most important obligations of Educational Assistants at DAA are:

- to provide direct individual support for the students with special needs in accordance to the requirements of an IEP;
- to monitor and assist students with special needs complete work assignments;
- to assist with the preparation of materials, equipment such as audio and video equipment, and strategies to enhance the learning for students with special needs;
- to participate in teamwork to meet the needs of students;

- to assist in the collection of information of the students with special needs in order to identify student progress; and
- to perform any other tasks assigned by Division Principals or the Superintendent.

3.4 COUNSELORS

The most important obligations of the school counselors are:

- to contribute as a member of the Student Support Team (SST) in his or her division;
- to work with teachers when identifying SEND students while creating clear channels for communication between parents, teachers, learning support staff, outside agencies, and administration;
- to work with SEND staff to help teachers identify and provide accommodations to students with SEND in their classroom;
- to monitor student progress;
- to collaborate with SEND teachers on IEPs for students with SEND whose needs are primarily social and emotional; and
- to perform any other tasks assigned by Division Principals or the Superintendent.

3.6 PRINCIPALS AND ASSISTANT PRINCIPALS

The most important obligations of division leadership teams are:

- to accept students with special needs who have a reasonable expectation of success with DAA's curriculum, and to provide them with opportunities to learn;
- to make sure that requirements of every student with special needs are met;
- to thoroughly apply the principles and general rules for special education programs;
- to promote a culture of inclusion and concern for the rights of all students;
- to create an appropriate school environment that ensures high quality SEND programming;
- to monitor DAA's program and the work of the school's SEND teachers by visiting them in their classrooms to check their work, activities, and involvement;
- to strengthen relationships with parents and to create awareness about SEND program; and
- to organize mechanisms to provide resources and services for students with SEND at DAA.

3.7 THE SUPERINTENDENT/DIRECTOR OF INCLUSION

The most important obligations of the Superintendent are:

- to accept students with special needs who have a reasonable expectation of success with DAA's curriculum, and to provide them with opportunities to learn;
- to make sure that requirements of every student with special needs are met;
- to thoroughly apply the principles and general rules for special education programs;
- to promote a culture of inclusion and concern for the rights of all students;
- to create an appropriate school environment that ensures high quality SEND programming;

- to facilitate the process of acceptance and integration of students with special needs;
- to monitor DAA's program and the work of the school's SEND teachers by visiting them in their classrooms to check their work, activities, and involvement;
- to cooperate with the Department of Special Education in the Ministry and Directorate of Special Education and to participate in meetings, courses, and activities (as required);
- to strengthen relationship with parents and to create awareness about SEND services;
- to coordinate with the concerned parties within and outside the school with respect to the transition of students with special needs to the different academic levels; and
- to organize mechanisms to provide resources and services for students with SEND at DAA.

3.8 PARENTS

The most important obligations of the parents of SEND students are:

- to attend meetings or assessments related to the education of their children;
- to collaborate with school leaders and teachers to strengthen the home-school partnership;
- to communicate effectively with DAA personnel with respect to their child;
- to accept their role in the implementation of educational plans;
- to be forthcoming, with regard to DAA's FULL DISCLOSURE clause regarding any information relating to the student;
- to meet deadlines as specified with regard to registration and evaluation; and
- to set appropriate expectations for their child which are commensurate with his or her capabilities.

3.9 GOVERNOR OF INCLUSION

The most important obligations of the Governor of Inclusion are:

- to attend meetings or assessments related to the education of their children;
- to collaborate with school leaders and teachers to strengthen the home-school partnership;
- to communicate effectively with DAA personnel with respect to their child;
- to accept their role in the implementation of educational plans;
- to be forthcoming, with regard to DAA's FULL DISCLOSURE clause regarding any information relating to the student;
- to meet deadlines as specified with regard to registration and evaluation; and
- to set appropriate expectations for their child which are commensurate with his or her capabilities.

3.9 TRANSITIONS BETWEEN GRADE LEVELS AND DIVISIONS

How are transitions managed *within* division

As students with SEND change case managers at the end of a school year, the specific learning needs of each child are discussed during the bi-weekly Student Support Team meetings. Ownership of all documentation and parent communication is transferred to the new case manager through these Student Support Team meetings.

How are transitions managed *between* divisions?

As students with SEND move from one division to the next (e.g. from grade 5 in ES to grade 6 in MS), the child's current case manager will attend the Student Support Team meeting of the future case manager. In this meeting, ownership of all documentation and parent communication is transferred to the new case manager

4.0 Gifted & Talented Education at DAA

"The aim is clear. Each child—each of the young—should be able to advance to full capacity in accordance with general and special ability and aptitude."

~Paul Brandwein~

4.1 PHILOSOPHY AND AIMS OF GIFTED & TALENTED PROGRAM AT DAA

The education of gifted children in the Dubai American Academy is a recent educational initiative that works to provide a quality education for all our identified gifted students. The school recognizes the importance of differentiated learning experiences for gifted learners and acknowledges the value of integration within the regular program. The heart of Gifted Education is seen in challenging classroom-based instruction characterized by differentiated instruction, flexible skill-based groupings, complex integrated problem solving challenges focused on the future fluencies, and individually designed inquiry-based research projects designed to fit the academic rate and level of each student. The classroom program for gifted children is enhanced with additional activities and enrichment opportunities.

4.2 GIFTED EDUCATION AND UAE LAW

Since 1979, the provision of special education programs and services in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) has evolved and expanded to recognize a wider variety of categories of special education, to promote inclusive education, and to ensure equal access to educational opportunities. Categories of special education now include Gifted and Talented individuals whose abilities, talents and potential for accomplishment are so exceptional or advanced that special education and support services are needed for the student to meet educational objectives and goals in the general education classroom.

DAA, in alignment with the UAE Ministry of Education defines Gifted and Talented as follows:

"Gifted and Talented refers to having outstanding ability, or a great deal of willingness in one or more areas of intelligence, or creativity, or academic achievement or special talents and abilities such as oratory, poetry, drawing, handicrafts, sports, drama, or leadership capacity.

More often the performance of the talented or gifted student is so exceptional or advanced that they require special provisions to meet their educational needs in the general education classrooms with support from special education teachers and resource room teachers.”

4.3 GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR EDUCATING GIFTED CHILDREN

Dubai American Academy works to identify gifted learners and meet the academic needs of each learner. In addition, education for gifted children is designed to encourage self-direction, to promote social-emotional growth, to facilitate development of leadership behaviors, and to mobilize effective effort to support the development of the individual child’s potential.

4.3.1 Belief Statements

- We believe that a gifted learner’s needs are best met through experiences that are differentiated in pace and depth. We will design instruction with a challenging level and pace for each gifted learner.
- We believe that collaboration is essential to the success of a learner. We will work as a team to facilitate the learning of each gifted learner.
- We acknowledge the importance of participation and inclusion in the regular classroom program to assure regular scholarly interaction with others. We will educate individual children in a community of mutually respectful learners.
- We believe that students, parents and teachers are integral partners in designing educational programs for gifted learners. We will invite a productive partnership for planning and learning.

4.3.2 Programs for Gifted and Talented Students:

The students identified as Gifted and Talented have an exceptionally high level of capability in one or more subjects, or in areas of personal interests such as electronics or play writing. Gifted and Talented students require advanced educational programs to supplement the general education curriculum and provide them with a high level of enrichment activities. Enriched activities may include independent studies and vocational guidance which are detailed in a written document referred to as an Individual Learning Plan (ILP) which is developed by a specialized team to meet the needs, interests and creativity of Gifted and Talented students.

4.4 PROCEDURES FOR IDENTIFICATION OF GIFTED AND TALENTED STUDENTS

All children have talents and gifts in various areas. For formal identification as a gifted learner, Dubai American Academy recognizes the following areas of giftedness:

1. Intellectually Gifted
2. Academic Talented in Reading and/or Math
3. Psychomotor and Visual/Performing Arts

A teacher, parent or specialist may refer a child for identification at any time. With the referral, a case study begins. Students are identified after consideration of data reflecting a variety of factors. Such data may include but is not limited to test scores, teacher referrals, parent referrals, teacher checklists, and examples of student work. *No single test, measure or score shall be the sole criteria for an identification.* The identification process may take

as few as six weeks or up to several years to complete.

Though gifted identification may occur at any time and the process may be tailored to meet the needs and situation of a specific child; Dubai American Academy has a system in place that allows for a periodic evaluation of students for identification.

4.4.1 GIFTED AND TALENTED FORMAL IDENTIFICATION PROCEDURES

1	2	3	4	5
Referral to Student Support Team (SST)	Evaluation and determination of eligibility	Development of the IEP	Implementing the IEP	SST monitors student progress and reviews IEP

This process is described *generally* below.

4.4.1.1 STEP 1—REFERRAL TO STUDENT SUPPORT TEAM (SST)

- Each division has a SST, which consists of the principal (or AP), SEND teachers, and counselors. Homeroom/classroom teachers are included on the SST on a case-by-case basis.
- The SST will meet regularly to discuss the academic performance of students whose performance varies widely from the norm and who have been referred to the SST.
- When students demonstrate performance or potential that is so exceptional or advanced that they may require special provisions to meet their educational needs s/he may be referred by parents, counselors, principals, or teachers to the SST. This referral should be made to a counselor, who will represent the case on the SST.
- Students in grades 3-9 who perform at or above determined percentile on standardized tests will be referred to the SST for review.
- Review of CAT4 tests for students scoring at or above determined SAS mean.
- One member of the SST will be designated the Case Manager. He or she will be the person primarily responsible for communicating with parents and coordinating conversation with other members of the SST.
- When it receives a student referral, the SST conducts a review of a student's academic and performance history, and (if appropriate) the principal or learning support teacher conducts a classroom observation.
- SST members make recommendations for pre-referral interventions to enhance the student's academic experience. The SST also begins to monitor the student's progress and collect data for regular discussion.

4.4.1.2 Step 2—Evaluation and Determination of Eligibility Grades 3-9

- Once students reach third grade, standardized testing becomes a part of their general academic evaluation. The *MAP Test* will be used as a screening tool for the identification of academic giftedness.
- The MAP assessment scores from two out of three testing cycles in reading and/or math will be reviewed to determine if any student meets the criteria to necessitate further consideration from the SST.

- Review of CAT4 assessment data, if available will also be considered as the SST gathers the necessary data together for review.
- A checklist will be given to the classroom teacher to complete and return to the SST.
- Members of the SST review and collect data from standardized assessments, teacher checklists, academic performance, teacher interviews, and classroom observations if appropriate.
- The SST meets to evaluate the student's eligibility and determine his or her level of special education program and related services.
- Members of the SST meet with the student's parents to share results of the data review and to explain the services they are recommending.

Grades 10-12

- Students in grades 9-12 can be screened using the MAP assessment in reading and/or math (two out of three testing cycles), PSAT (grades 10 & 11) and SAT (grade 12), for the identification of the potential for academic giftedness.
- A checklist will be given to a classroom teacher to complete and return to the SST.
- Members of the SST review and collect data from standardized assessments, teacher checklists, academic performance, teacher interviews, and classroom observations if appropriate.
- The SST meets to evaluate the student's eligibility and determine his or her level of special education program and related services.
- Members of the SST meet with the student's parents to share results of the data review and to explain the services they are recommending.

4.4.1.3 Step 3—Development of the IEP Individual Education Plan (IEP)

An IEP is a written record of gifted and talented programming, utilized with each identified gifted and talented child, documenting educational planning and decision making. The IEP describes the classroom and school-wide enrichment strategies, curricular and extracurricular activities that may be selected based on the student's performance on tests, observations and classroom performance.

This IEP will help students, parents, SEND teachers, counselors, and administration identify:

- Student and parent information including background information
- Performance background for the student, including strengths and areas of concern
- Classroom accommodations and enrichments.
- Student goals, strategies, assessment and progress. The IEP will record only that which is different from or additional to the normal curriculum, and will concentrate on several targets that closely match the student's needs. The IEPs will be discussed with the parent and the student, if appropriate.
- IEPs will be reviewed during the academic year as needed. The school will endeavor to hold the reviews in an informal manner, and parents' views on their child's progress will be actively sought. Wherever possible or appropriate, the school will involve students in this process.

4.4.1.4 Step 4—Implementation of the IEP

- Special education services are provided to students in accordance with the recommendations of the IEP

- An IEP should be implemented immediately following written parental approval, but within a two-week period.

4.4.1.5 Step 5—SST monitors student progress and reviews services

- The IEP should be reviewed and the student’s progress monitored by the SST.
- During the first three months, SST members and teachers may be reconvened to review the plan.
- The SST schedules an annual review report of all ILP services and makes recommendations for the next school year.

4.5 HOW DOES DUBAI AMERICAN ACADEMY EDUCATE GIFTED AND TALENTED CHILDREN?

4.5.1 The Heart is in the Classroom.

Dubai American Academy educates gifted and talented children as individual learners in a classroom - inclusive program. This model constitutes best educational practices. Gifted children are gifted all the time - not just once a week for gifted class. Students who are identified as gifted or talented need instruction designed for depth and complexity. An appropriate instructional program is best designed and accomplished by classroom teachers in partnership with the child, the family, and with the support of colleagues. For those identified as gifted, appropriate classroom assessment helps teachers adjust the program to the student’s level and rates of learning. Continuous classroom assessment is an integral part of an appropriate educational program.

Teachers use many strategies to assess and meet the needs of gifted learners in the classroom. Some gifted children already have a bank of knowledge from which to build new understandings and some gifted children need less practice to master skills. Many gifted students approach learning with the confidence that grows from success. For these children, it is important that the learning draws them into complex, integrated problem-solving challenges and challenging inquiry-based research projects.

Classroom teachers choose teaching strategies that help differentiate instruction, responding to the needs of all learners. Differentiation for gifted students is achieved with open-ended lessons, flexible skill-based grouping, curriculum compacting, critical thinking challenges and many other instructional strategies. Differentiated instruction describes a range of strategies teachers use to respond to the needs of all learners.

4.5.2 Class Selection

In middle school and high school, identified gifted students again have the benefit of differentiated instruction to address their individual rate and level of learning. In addition, at the high school level, academically advanced students may be placed in accelerated or higher level classes in mathematics and foreign languages. In other disciplines the high school offers IB classes where the HL classes are an international standard for a program of rigor.

Students in grades 9-12 select a program of studies that meets their individual level, interests and abilities. Advanced sections are provided in some subjects to accommodate different ability levels. Dubai American Academy provides multiple options for high school

students. Options include the following:

- 1) Higher level classes
- 2) IB High Level (HL) classes and examinations
- 3) Planned independent study opportunities
- 4) Internship opportunities
- 5) A robust activities and athletics program

4.5.3 Opportunities beyond the Classroom

- Internships
- School-sponsored international opportunities

4.5.4 GEMS Education offers the following enrichment opportunities...

- GEMS Music Academy
- GEMS Language Academy
- Camps International
- ESports
- GEMS Sports Academy

Considerations for Gifted and Talented Students

- Design activities and use a variety of assessment methods and techniques to determine the cognitive, and emotional levels of functioning, learning styles and interests of students with gifts and talents.
- Develop educational goals and objectives to enhance the development of students' critical thinking skills.
- Design and implement in-class and extracurricular enrichment activities to enhance the development of students strengths.
- Develop educational activities and implement teaching strategies that maximize learning opportunities for students that promote the development of independent learners.
- Integrate the use of technology in the process of teaching and learning, which contributes to the acquisition of knowledge and synthesis of information with prior learning experiences.
- Encourage students to preview information to determine critical concepts covered in a variety of subjects and question assumptions, and key conclusions.
- Provide students with opportunities to consider problems and solutions from multiple perspectives.
- Motivate students to reflect on and identify their unique educational and personal experiences, that have influenced their present understanding of information, and to consider ideas and solutions that extend beyond their present levels of understanding.
- Encourage students to express their opinions and feelings to others with diverse perspectives and to anticipate and respond to their questions in a culturally sensitive and respective manner.
- Use a variety of teaching and learning strategies such as problem solving, exploration, survey, brainstorming, individual learning, competitive learning, and cooperative learning to meet the needs of students with different ways of learning.

5.0 K-12 SEND COLLABORATION

Permanent K-12 subject committees were formed at DAA in 2011-12 in an effort to improve collaboration and coordination within subjects across the four divisions. These committees are designed to be a critical element of DAA's School Improvement Plan and are a deliberate effort to empower teachers by involving them in the planning of strategic actions and initiatives, especially around the horizontal and vertical alignment of the curriculum, and the development of high quality assessments in all subjects and grade levels.

K-12 Inclusion meetings differ in some regards as these meetings are not primarily for the purposes of curriculum and assessment alignment, but are geared toward overall program development and alignment. This targeted time provides an important opportunity for SEND teachers to meet and discuss concerns and issues and to participate in ongoing conversations with the end result of improving Learning Support services and resources at DAA for each student with SEND and their family.

Since the inception of DAA's formal SEND program and services in 2011, the program has grown considerably. As with all areas of teaching and learning at DAA, the Inclusion program is committed to continuous improvement to fulfill DAA's mission and school improvement efforts and to provide a differentiated, inclusive learning environment for all students.