



GEMS

أكاديمية جيمس دبي الأمريكية

Dubai American
Academy



INCLUSION POLICY



GEMS
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Dubai American
Academy



Founded in 1885



COUNCIL OF
INTERNATIONAL
SCHOOLS



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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.

1.3 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.

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 SEND have equitable access to quality inclusive education with their peers.

This policy is also based on the following guidance and legislation (see Appendix A for links to guidance):

- Dubai Law No. (2) 2014 'to protect the rights of People of Determination in the Emirate of Dubai'.
- Executive Council Resolution No. (2) 2017 Regulating Private Schools in the Emirate of Dubai. Including particular reference to Article 4 clause 14; Article 13, clauses 16, 17, 19; Article 23, clause 4, specifically:
 - Article 4 Clause 14: To establish the conditions, rules, and standards that are required to facilitate the enrolment and integration of Students with disabilities in Private Schools;
 - Article 13 Clause 16: To 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 Clause 17: To 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 Clause 19: To 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 Clause 4: To provide a special needs friendly environment and academic programs appropriate for Students with disabilities in accordance with the rules and conditions determined by the KHDA and the concerned Government Entities in this respect;

- 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.
- UAE Centennial 2071 Long Term Government Plan.
- Abu Dhabi Economic Vision 2030.
- Dubai Strategic Plan 2021.
- The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and Optional Protocol.
- 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).
- Quality Standards of Services for Persons with Disabilities in Governmental and Private Institutions (2016).
- The National Project for Inclusion for People of Determination.
- Abu Dhabi Educational Council Special Education Policies and Procedures Manual (2012).
- 'My Community: A City for Everyone' initiative (2013) which aims to turn Dubai into a fully inclusive and friendly city for People of Determination.
- Dubai Inclusive Education Policy Framework (2017) which aims to provide standards and procedures to ensure that all students, including those identified as experiencing special educational needs and disabilities, will learn and achieve in a safe, supportive, engaging and appropriately challenging common learning environment where their personal, social, emotional and academic needs are fully met.
- The Dubai Universal Design Code (2017, Accessibility Code).
- The Ministry of Education Strategic Plan 2017-2021.
- The Dubai Plan 2021 which aims to form a tolerant and fully inclusive city by 2020 which is part of a wider strategic plan, which, in addition to education, incorporates health & rehabilitation, employment, universal accessibility and social protection.

2.0 INCLUSION AT GEMS DUBAI AMERICAN ACADEMY

2.1 INCLUSION 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 INCLUSION DELIVERY MODEL: Standard Services for Inclusion

At GEMS Dubai American Academy, students of determination 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 of determination.
- 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 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.
- Ensuring there is a smooth transition for students between grade levels within the school.

Services could include but are not limited to:

	Elementary School	Middle School	High School
Individual Learning Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Small group pull-out support provided by a Learning Support Teacher or Student Support Services Teaching Assistant specified hours according to IEP •In-class support provided by a Learning Support Teacher or Student Support Services Teaching Assistant •Co-teaching with a content area teacher and a Learning Support Teacher •If social/emotional goals have been identified, the Counselor will work with the student and LS teacher to create goals and a plan. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Academic Support Class (ASC) classes two to three times a week in place of MFL for targeted support •In-class support provided by a Learning Support Teacher or Student Support Services Teaching Assistant •Co-teaching with a content area teacher and a Learning Support Teacher •If social/emotional goals have been identified, the Counselor will work with the student and LS teacher to create goals and a plan. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Academic Support Class (ASC) two to three times a week in place of an elective. •In-class support provided by a Learning Support Teacher or Student Support Services Teaching Assistant specified hours according to IEP •If social/emotional goals have been identified, the Counselor will work with the student and LS teacher to create goals and a plan.
Accommodation Plan	All students receive Instructional, environmental and/or examination accommodations.	All students receive Instructional, environmental and/or examination accommodations.	All students receive Instructional, environmental and/or examination accommodations.
Accommodation Plan (Academic) Inclusion Specialist	Students with learning difficulties that are creating barriers to learning, will have a plan that will be implemented by the Inclusion specialist.	Students with learning difficulties that are creating barriers to learning, will have a plan that will be implemented by the Inclusion specialist.	Students with learning difficulties that are creating barriers to learning, will have a plan that will be implemented by the Inclusion specialist.
Accommodation Plan (Social/Emotional) Counselor	Students with social/emotional, medical diagnosis or concerns that create barriers to learning, will have a plan that will be	Students with social/emotional, medical diagnosis or concerns that create barriers to learning, will have a plan that will be	Students with social/emotional, medical diagnosis or concerns that create barriers to learning, will have a plan that will be

	implemented and monitored by the counselor.	implemented and monitored by the counselor.	implemented and monitored by the counselor.
Accommodation Plan (Academic + Social/Emotional) Inclusion Specialist and Counselor	Students with social/emotional, medical diagnosis and academic concerns that create barriers to learning, will have a plan that will be implemented and monitored by an inclusion specialist along with the counselor.	Students with social/emotional, medical diagnosis and academic concerns that create barriers to learning, will have a plan that will be implemented and monitored by an inclusion specialist along with the counselor.	Students with social/emotional, medical diagnosis and academic concerns that create barriers to learning, will have a plan that will be implemented and monitored by an inclusion specialist along with the counselor.

2.4 CATEGORIES OF DISABILITY AND BARRIERS TO LEARNING

The following categories of identifications qualify a student to receive inclusion 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 on the revised categorization 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	DAA categories
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)	Barriers to learning - cognition and learning
Communication and Interaction	5. Communication disorders 6. Autism spectrum disorders	Barriers to learning-communication and Interaction
Social, Emotional, and Mental Health Disorders	7. Attention Deficit Hyper-Activity disorder 8. Psycho-emotional disorders.	Barriers to learning-social/emotional
Physical, Sensory, and Medical	9. Sensory impairment 10. Deaf-blind disability 11. Physical disability 12. Chronic or acute medical conditions	Barriers to learning-physical,sensory and medical

Students at Dubai American Academy may present with one or more of the following difficulties:

- Falling well below the age-appropriate expected level of attainment
- Significant lack of academic progress over a period of time
- Specific difficulties in spelling, reading and writing (not resulting from limited abilities)
- Specific difficulties in literacy - Dyslexia
- Specific difficulties in mathematics - Dyscalculia/Acalculia
- Dyspraxia/Developmental Coordination Disorder
- Weaknesses in verbal skills which are sometimes associated with earlier delays in language development (speech and language difficulties)
- General cognitive abilities well below the level of their peers ● Attention Deficit Disorder, limited attention span, poor organizational skills, impulsive behavior, sound sensitive (students may receive medication for these difficulties)
- Processing difficulties ● Difficulties arising from disrupted educational experience
- Specific Learning Difficulties Inclusion Policy 2020-21 Page 7
- Sensory Processing Difficulties
- Autism Spectrum Disorders
- Behavioral, Social and Emotional barriers to learning
- Medical reasons that affect learning

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 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.

Program Entry Criteria

Students are referred to the EAL Department by the registrar or classroom teachers. Upon referral, students are assessed in order to ensure the appropriate levels of support and classroom placement. This assessment is done using a combination of data from the following:

- standardized test scores
- number of years in an English medium school
- previous school records and registration forms

Additionally, students will be assessed using the WIDA Model Assessment. The WIDA Model (World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment) is a research-based language proficiency test from the University of Wisconsin. This assessment tool evaluates the student's academic language proficiency in core content areas. The WIDA Model will be administered at Dubai American Academy. The level of English language support a student will receive is determined by the WIDA Model composite score and correlating proficiency level.

Exit Criteria

Students within the EAL program are expected to make steady, positive progress in their English language development as monitored through the WIDA Model, standardized tests, and classroom assessments. Through the use of these assessments, teachers will determine when students may be ready to exit the EAL program. To exit the program, the WIDA will be administered to students by an EAL teacher. Students who test at a WIDA level 4.9 or higher will be exited and monitored for two years.

Alternative Pathways Program- (Middle and High) The Alternative Pathways Program at DAA will offer a path to create an individualized program for students that are unable to access the general education curriculum with significant modification. Students in this program will participate in academic courses that are aligned with DAA curriculum standards. The general structure of this program is designed to place students in the Least Restrictive Environment. Students in the program will have access to the following:

- Math, Literacy, Social Studies and Science instruction in a self-contained classroom, using a multisensory and hands-on approach to personalized learning based on individual learning profiles.
- Instruction in all other subject areas in a fully inclusive setting, with an Inclusion Specialist providing co-teaching and/or consultant teaching as outlined in the student's Individualized Education Plan (IEP).

Students in the Alternative Pathways program will be reevaluated yearly to evaluate which will be the best program to offer the student in high school.

Some of the benefits of this program for both the student and the school include:

- increased student independence and self-reliance
- increased student self-esteem
- increased academic growth
- decreased dropout rates

Program Entry Criteria

To ensure students are placed in the least restrictive environment, a student must receive all other levels of support on the continuum of special education services before being considered for the program. Criteria for entry into the Alternative Pathways Program are listed below:

- Results from standardized tests are **4-5 grade levels below** a student's current grade level.
- Results from diagnostic assessments, if available, indicate significant cognitive delays combined with high adaptive skills:
 - Cognitive delays may be **significantly below age level.**
 - Adaptive skills should be 1-2 years of the student's age range.
- Students must have an Individual Education Plan (IEP), with documentation of parent input and approval.

Program Exit Criteria

To ensure students are placed in the Least Restrictive Environment, a student's placement in the program will be re-evaluated according to their progress toward their individual indicators of academic growth and development. Criteria for exit from the Alternative Pathways Program are listed below:

- Results from standardized tests have improved to 1-2 grade levels below a student's current grade level.
- Students demonstrate the ability to meet the minimal requirements of the US High School Diploma without modifications.

2.5 GRADUATED SYSTEMS OF SUPPORT (GSS) FOR STUDENTS OF DETERMINATION 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>) <i>Monitoring</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitoring should be a minimum of 2 weeks to a maximum of a 6 week period. • Counselor check-ins. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Classroom teachers • Counseling • Inclusion Specialist
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. (Inclusion Specialist) • An accommodation plan will be in place for students that need minimal support. • Short-term SMART academic and/or behavior goals created on the IEP and reviewed periodically. • Access to an inclusion specialist for interventions and support. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inclusion Specialist • Classroom teachers • Counseling
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 an Inclusion Specialist or Counselor, depending on diagnosis and goals indicated in IEP. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inclusion specialist • Counseling • Classroom teachers

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. 	
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2.6 IDENTIFICATION PROCEDURES FOR STUDENTS OF DETERMINATION

Students of determination are often not identified until after they have been admitted to DAA. Consequently, the following process is used at DAA to determine eligibility for inclusion services:

This process is described *generally* below. Consent forms will be signed upon receiving services.

2.6.1 TIER 1 - LOWEST LEVEL OF SUPPORT

At DAA, our teachers know their students best, as they interact with them daily. If a teacher notices a trend, has implemented in-class strategies with little or no success and feel additional support is needed, they submit a referral to SST/SIT.

Referrals will come either from SIT or SST. Students will be monitored for a minimum of 2 weeks to a maximum of a 6 week period. The main areas for intervention at the Tier 1 level are Academic, Social/Emotional, Executive Functioning skills or both Academic and Social/Emotional.

- ❖ **Academic** - Intervention team along with the Administrator, will advise the teacher how to differentiate and put strategies in place
 - Meet with the teacher to identify areas for improvement
 - Coordinate peer tutor through the counselor (if needed)
- ❖ **Social/ Emotional, Organizational, Time Management**
 - The student will meet with their designated counselor
 - The counselor will decide what intervention strategy should be put into place and will monitor accordingly. Examples: Behavior plan, individual or group therapy, etc.
- ❖ **Academic/Social Emotional and Executive Functioning**
 - The inclusion specialist, counselor and administrator will work in collaboration to decide what intervention strategies should be put into place and will monitor accordingly.

The classroom teacher will create an Action Plan (depending on division) to monitor strategies that are being implemented in the classroom.

2.6.2 TRANSITION FROM TIER 1

- If the student shows improvement and no longer requires support they will be removed from Tier 1.
- If the student does NOT show improvement, a meeting will take place. AN Individualized program will be developed. The student will be moved to:
 - a. Tier 2 (accommodation plan or IEP) or
 - b. Tier 3 (IEP)
- If educational support is needed, the student's case will be handed over to the Educational Inclusion team (case managers) and supported by the Inclusion Directors
- If social/emotional support is needed, the student's case will be handed over to the counselor and supported by the Inclusion Directors.

If both supports are needed, the counselor and case manager will work together to support the student.

2.6.3 TIER 2 DEVELOPMENT OF THE LEARNING PLAN (MIDDLE-LEVEL SUPPORT)

The student will be identified as a student receiving support under the Inclusion Department.

- Permission to enter a support program signed by parents. If needed, a consent form for internal educational assessments will be signed.
- An Accommodation Plan or IEP is created and completed within 6 weeks of receiving the student
 - Social-Emotional accommodation plan will be co-written by the counselor and director of mental health
 - The IEP or educational accommodation plan will be written by the Inclusion case manager (student's counselor will be responsible for creating social-emotional goals if needed)
- Collaboration and coordination will be made between the case manager and counselor to ensure both academic and social-emotional needs are being met if needed
- Meetings will be coordinated and conducted with parents of the student after completion of IEP for discussion and approval
 - Teachers (if requested), case manager, counselor (if requested), Director of Inclusion, administration team member responsible for Inclusion), parents and student (4th grade onwards) should be present during meeting
- IEP Progress reports will be sent home with report cards, identifying progress towards IEP goals. (Goals should be revised if mastered)

2.6.4 TIER 3 DEVELOPMENT OF AN INDIVIDUAL EDUCATION PLAN (HIGH LEVEL OF SUPPORT)

The student will be identified as a student receiving support under the Inclusion Department.

- Permission to enter a support program signed by parents. If needed, a consent form for internal educational assessments will be signed.
- IEP is created and completed within 6 weeks of receiving the student
 - The IEP or educational accommodation plan will be written by the Inclusion

case manager (students counselor will be responsible for creating social-emotional goals if needed)

- Collaboration and coordination will be made between the case manager and counselor to ensure both academic and social-emotional needs are being met if needed
- Meetings will be coordinated and conducted with parents of the student after completion of IEP for discussion and approval
 - Teachers (if requested), case manager, counselor (if requested), Director of Inclusion, Administration team member responsible for Inclusion), parents, and student (4th grade onwards) should be present during the meeting
- IEP Progress reports will be sent home with report cards, identifying progress towards IEP goals. (Goals should be revised if mastered)

2.6.5 INCLUSION TEAM MONITORS STUDENT PROGRESS AND REVIEWS SERVICES

- At any time during the school year, SST/SIT members and teachers may be reconvened to review the progress.
- The SST/SIT 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.

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 INCLUSION PROVISION AT DAA

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

3.1 THE INCLUSION TEACHER/INCLUSION LEADER

The most important obligations of Inclusion specialists at DAA are:

- to support 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 inclusion programs and services;
- to monitor the implementation of inclusion programs and to provide periodic reports on the status of these programs and services;
- to collaborate with parents of students of determination 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 inclusion 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, Inclusion specialists 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
 - within 6 weeks of receiving the student in the support program.
 - Progress reports will be sent out alongside each report card to reevaluate goals.
 - Goals will be created in coordination with students to help promote their self advocacy.
 - Meetings will be held with parents, inclusion team and students above the 4th grade level to help promote self advocacy and ownership.
- 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 inclusion 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 students of determination, when required;
- to work with inclusion specialists, counselors, administration, and parents to provide the best possible learning environment for students of determination;
- to participate in the meetings, training courses, workshops, and activities related to services for students with special needs;
- to cooperate with the inclusion team in all matters related to the plans, inclusion services, course revision, evaluation methods, and examinations and setting goals;
- to closely monitor the progress of students of determination in their classrooms, in collaboration with the inclusion specialist;
- to cooperate with the inclusion specialist in providing inclusion services to students of determination;
- 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 with 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 when supporting students of determination are:

- to contribute as a member of the Student Support Team (SST) in his or her division;
- to work with teachers when identifying students of determination while creating clear channels for communication between parents, teachers, learning support staff, outside agencies, and administration;
- to work with inclusion staff to help teachers identify and provide accommodations to students of determination in their classroom;

- to monitor student progress;
- to collaborate with inclusion specialists on IEPs for students of determination 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 the requirements of every student with special needs are met;
- to thoroughly apply the principles and general rules for inclusion 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 inclusion programming;
- to monitor DAA's program and the work of the school's inclusion specialists by visiting them in their classrooms to check their work, activities, and involvement;
- to strengthen relationships with parents and to create awareness about inclusion programs; and
- to organize mechanisms to provide resources and services for students of determination 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 the requirements of every student with special needs are met;
- to thoroughly apply the principles and general rules for inclusion 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 inclusion 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 inclusion specialists 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 relationships with parents and to create awareness about inclusion 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 of determination at DAA.

3.8 PARENTS

The most important obligations of the parents of students of determination 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* divisions?

As students of determination 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 of determination 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 inclusion 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 the 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, promote social-emotional growth, facilitate the development of leadership behaviors, and mobilize effective efforts 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 playwriting. 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 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 GIEP	Implementing the GIEP	SST monitors student progress and reviews GIEP

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), inclusion specialists, 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 the 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 conversations 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 the inclusion program and related services.
- Members of the SST meet with the student's parents to share the 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 the inclusion program and related services.
- Members of the SST meet with the student's parents to share the 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, inclusion 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

- Inclusion 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 respectful 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 INCLUSION 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 inclusion specialists 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 of determination and their family.

Since the inception of DAA's formal inclusion 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.

Appendix A: Links to legislation frameworks

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities	https://www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/convention-on-the-rights-of-persons-with-disabilities.html
Federal Law (29) 2006 and 2009	https://www.abudhabi.ae/portal/public/en/citizens/religion-and-community/people-of-determination-le/federal-law-no-29-of-2006-concerning-the-rights-of-people-of-determination Guarantees a person of determination access to equal opportunities of education within all educational institutions

Dubai Law 2014 (no. 2)	https://www.cda.gov.ae/ar/aboutus/Documents/Concerning%20Protection%20of%20the%20Rights%20of%20Persons%20with%20Disabilities%20in%20the%20Emirate%20of%20Dubai%20-%20Law%202%20-%202014%20-%20EN.pdf 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	https://www.khda.gov.ae/CMS/WebParts/TextEditor/Documents/ExecutiveCouncilResolutionNo.(2)of2017RegulatingPrivateSchoolsInTheEmirateOfDubai.pdf
	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)	https://www.abudhabi.ae/portal/public/en/homepage/religion-and-community/people-of-determination-le/the-national-project-for-inclusion-of-people-of-determination
UAE School for All: General rules for the provision of special education programmes and services guidance (2010)	https://www.moe.gov.ae/English/SiteDocuments/Rules/SNrulesEn.pdf
My Community: A City for Everyone Initiative (2013)	https://www.cda.gov.ae/en/MediaCenter/News/Pages/2013/myCommunity.aspx 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	https://government.ae/information-and-services/education/education-for-people-with-special-needs

