

## ADMISSIONS POLICY

### POLICY ESSENTIAL INFORMATION

**Title:** Admissions Policy

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**Committee:** Leadership

**Leadership Lead:** Registrar

**Review Process:** Annually

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## ADMISSIONS POLICY

GEMS World Academy, Dubai (GWA) is an IB World School, and choosing the right school is one of the most critical decisions facing parents. The Admissions team at GWA is committed to ensuring that all prospective families are well informed about the GWA learning community and how we support each child’s individual pathway at every stage of their educational journey.

GWA is a co-educational international school providing world class programmes and facilities to a culturally diverse student community aged 2 to 18 years old. It is an International Baccalaureate World School offering the continuum of IB programmes: The Primary Years Programme (PYP) in the primary school (including Nursery to KG2) and the Middle Years Programme (MYP), Career-related (CP) and Diploma Programme (DP) in the Secondary school.

GWA is a perfect choice for parents who are seeking an international, co-educational schooling environment for their children. With an incredible diversity of different nationalities, and no single dominant group, the student population is truly diverse. Our staff diversity echoes the student population with more than thirty different nationalities represented. This diversity provides an ideal platform from which to explore the GEMS core values, as well as the IB, CIS and NEASC commitment to international mindedness.

### Grade Level Placement

GWA places students in age-appropriate grade levels in accordance with the Ministry of Education / KHDA regulations. The IB programmes allow for a great degree of academic differentiation and therefore we rarely accelerate children into higher grades, nor retain children in a lower year group.

Families are encouraged to use the country comparison chart below to ensure that they are applying to the correct grade level, taking into account the differences that exist in the naming of ‘grades’ around the world. (As an example, Year 2 in England is equivalent to Grade 1 at GWA, although both programmes are for a 6 year old that turns 7 during that academic year).

For any parents with questions about the correct grade level placement, please contact the Registration team.

Age as of September, 2021 of each school year	GWA ‘Grade’	North America ‘Grade’	England ‘Year’	Australia / NZ ‘Year’	South Africa ‘Year’
2 years old	Nursery	Nursery	Nursery	Nursery	Nursery
3 years old (toilet trained)	Pre-K	Pre-K or Nursery	FS1 (Nursery)	-	-
4 years old (toilet)	Kg1	Pre-K or Nursery	FS2 (Reception)	Kg	-

trained)					
5 years old	Kg2	Kg	1	Prep	Reception
6 years old	1	1	2	1	1
7 years old	2	2	3	2	2
8 years old	3	3	4	3	3
9 years old	4	4	5	4	4
10 years old	5	5	6	5	5
11 years old	6	6	7	6	6
12 years old	7	7	8	7	7
13 years old	8	8	9	8	8
14 years old	9	9	10	9	9
15 years old	10	10	11	10	10
16 years old	11	11	12	11	11
17 years old	12	12	13	12	12

Applications for GWA will be made on the online GWA Application Form.

### Arrangements For The Admission Of Students of Determination

Federal Law (29) 2006 and 2009 guarantees a person of determination access to equal opportunities of education within all educational institutions. GWA is a fully inclusive school. The admission of students with disabilities is considered in the first instance in the same way as non-disabled students. Further considerations are made in the light of need and accessibility, with reference to the Academy's Accessibility Plan. It is the LAB's policy to accommodate students with disabilities should parents wish, and individual needs are planned for carefully by the GWA Inclusion Team, together with parents, carers and external agencies as required, to prevent any students being treated less favourably than other students. In practice we ensure that classroom and extra-curricular activities encourage the participation of all students, including those with Special Educational Needs. Human and physical resources within the Academy are organised with the objective of increasing access to learning and participation by all students.

The goal of the Inclusive Education Action Team is to promote a whole Academy approach to identifying, planning, implementing and monitoring support for learners with a specific learning need, difficulty or disability. This is accomplished by providing appropriate learning strategies and accommodations that enable these learners to reach their potential in a supportive community and

inclusive learning environment. With this support we believe these learners can be successful, learning in an IB World School and become autonomous, lifelong learners.

The Learning Support Team will complete a Learning Support Document (LSD) or an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) outlining the relevant learning information for the student. This document also provides suggested strategies for differentiation and assessment accommodations. If students are to receive intensive lessons from the learning support team, the student will have an IEP that outlines the academic and/or social goals and if they are not receiving intensive lessons but receiving push in support or test accommodations they will have a LSD.

Additional information may be requested as necessary, including medical records, records of previous interventions, contact with previous schools and or a parent meeting. Each application is reviewed individually to establish the additional support needs required to support student learning. There may be some students whose academic and / or social needs are beyond the provision of the school. In such cases students will not be admitted, or only allowed to continue under clearly defined conditions in a Conditional Acceptance. This includes the financial responsibility for a Learning Support Assistant (LSA) if required. When an LSA is required parents must also sign an LSA contract. Learning support provisions are subject to annual review. The final decision regarding placement rests with the Principal / CEO.

### **Class Size and Adult to Student Ratio**

The current class sizes and adult to student ratio are as follows, however they are subject to review depending on the requirements of the Academy and may vary slightly depending on enrollment and subject choice:

- Nursery 16 students, one teacher, one TA (+one part time TA)
- Pre-K 16 students, one teacher, one TA
- Kg1 18 students, one teacher, one TA
- Kg 2 20 students, one teacher, one TA
- Grade 1-5 24 students, one teacher, one TA
- Grade 6-10 25 students, one teacher
- Grades 11-12 20 students, one teacher

### **Procedures for waiting list**

In any year where GWA receives more applications for places than there are places available, a waiting list will operate. This will be maintained by GWA and it will be open to any parent to ask for his or her child's name to be placed on the waiting list, following an unsuccessful application for admission to GWA.

Where places become vacant they will be allocated to children on the waiting list in accordance with the oversubscription criteria.

### **Arrangements for admission to the senior school**

GWA provides educational opportunities to 16-18 year olds through a co-educational senior school for a maximum of 250 students. The senior school offers IB DP, IB CP and IB Courses, each of

which have a minimum entrance requirement which is represented in terms of MYP or equivalent prior achievement. Any student wishing to join the senior school who has not completed one of these programmes of study will be able to sit our entrance tests as an alternative. Due to the varying difficulty of IB courses, many of the Higher Level courses carry additional entrance requirements in terms of prior achievement. This information is also available through the entrance requirements information which is found on the Academy website.

Every student in GWA with a good behavioral record is entitled to a place in the Senior School. Depending on students' academic performance they are able to qualify for one of the pathways on offer.

To qualify for the Diploma Programme students must:

- Ensure that all MYP grades are a 3 or above by Semester 2
- Ensure that subjects the student selects as a SL are a 4 or above
- Ensure that subjects the student selects as a HL are a 5 or above

Please note:

- HL Maths Analysis: students must be in the Extended Maths class with a score of 6 or above
- HL Physics and Chemistry: students must be in the G10 Chemistry/Physics class with a score of 6 or above
- HL Art and Design: students must be enrolled in the MYP Art and Design course

### **Arrangements for mid-phase admissions, including to replace any students who have left GWA**

If an application is made for a student to be admitted to GWA, and the required grade level is below the level of the agreed number of students for that grade (applicable to the age group), the student will be accepted. Where a grade level in GWA is at the level of the agreed number of students applicable to that age group, GWA will operate a waiting list for those students who have applied for a place and been refused as outlined above.

### **Arabic Language Requirements**

All students from Grades 1-9 are required to learn Arabic as per the UAE Ministry of Education by-laws. Classes are differentiated for native and non-native speakers and the programmes incorporate the Ministry for Education syllabus within the curriculum. GWA believes that an early start in Arabic is beneficial and therefore begins its Arabic instruction in KG1.

As an additional requirement, students who are registered with a **passport from one of the Arab countries listed below** are required by law to attend Arabic A for native speakers until the end of Grade 12. Students who are not fluent in Arabic and are from an identified Arabic country may take Arabic B after KHDA approval.

UAE, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Qatar, Syria, Bahrain, Iraq, Yemen, Oman, Mauritania, Libya, Lebanon, Palestine, Jordan, Tunisia, Algeria, Morocco, Sudan, Somalia, Djibouti and Union of Comoros.

## Islamic Education Requirements

In accordance with the UAE Ministry of Education by-laws, students who are Muslim (as identified on their passport or during the admissions process via the 'religion' option) must take Islamic Education from Grade 1 to the end of Grade 12. The Islamic A and B courses incorporate the Ministry of Education syllabus for Islamic Education within the curriculum.

## Disclosure of Student Information

Parents are expected to:

- Provide the Academy with copies of all medical, psychological or educational assessments or reports before entry to GWA. Such materials are a prerequisite in enabling us to provide the best education for your child. Failure to disclose any such information, including the deliberate withholding of information, may result in your child not making the expected progress in the Academy
- Notify the Principal/ CEO in writing if they are aware or suspect that their child (or anyone in his or her immediate family) has a learning difficulty, and the parents must provide the Academy with copies of all written reports and other relevant information
- Follow the advice of the Academy in the case that after enrolment, issues with student progress and learning may indicate that outside specialist assessments are requested in order to further investigate any barriers to progress

Parents will be asked to withdraw their child if, in the professional judgment of the Principal / CEO the Academy suspects that such vital information about special needs has been deliberately withheld and/or if no attempt is made by the family to seek further specialized assessments from outside agencies in order to help the student to be successful in the Academy

## Placement Assessments

GWA admits students according to the Ministry of Education and KHDA's regulations as well as the GEMS admissions policies (noted above). In conjunction with previous school reports, placement assessments are designed to determine a student's readiness for the GWA programme including any language and/or special needs support for which additional fees are charged. Our assessments are conducted in English. Accommodations are provided in the event that a student applicant has limited English. If there are concerns or questions regarding a student's English language proficiency, additional assessments may be administered to determine admission eligibility.

The assessment process differs by grade level as indicated below:

- Pre-K to Kg2
  - Students are invited for an observational/practical assessment to determine Academy readiness. The sessions are generally conducted in small groups whenever possible, one-on-one as required, and last approximately 30 minutes
  - Students in the early childhood program must be potty trained
- Grades 1 – 5 For students entering Grades 3 – 5, there is an additional online CAT4 to assist with class placement. A possible assessment may be conducted on a one-to-one basis, encompass literacy and numeracy skills and last approximately one hour.
- Grade 6 – 11
  - Assessments are conducted in an exam-type environment in which students work on their own through an online CAT4 test that encompasses assessment on Verbal, Quantitative, Spatial and Non Verbal thinking. The assessment can last up to 3 hours
- Grade 12
  - Students not currently in a Diploma or Career-related Programme will not be admitted as it is the second year of a two-year programme. Students transferring from a Diploma or Career-related Programme may be eligible for enrolment based on their performance and current courses of study

### Decisions on Placement and Appeals Process

Due to the rigor of our assessment and screening processes, as well as the high volume of applications for a limited number of seats, the Academy does not provide individual feedback on student placement assessments on the application decision letter (offer or decline of enrollment). A carefully considered decision on Academy placement rests with the Principal/ CEO after having gone through the following process:

- Assessments are administered and reviewed by the Admissions Team (this may include Counsellors, Principals, Assistant Principals, Director of Teaching and Learning, Director of Inclusion and Principal / CEO, as necessary)
- Previous school reports are reviewed by the Admissions Team
- The completed application file including; application, references, reports and assessment is sent to the Principal / CEO for review and final decision for acceptance
- The Principal / CEO will sign off the admission file and the decision will be given to the Admissions Team
- The Admissions Team communicates the decision to the parents of the student applicant
- If the application is declined provisionally (before an entrance assessment takes place), the admission file can be reviewed after the student has sat the assessment test
- If the application is declined after the assessment test, retesting is allowed 6 months after the date of first assessment or at the discretion of the Principal / CEO
- While the Admissions Team delivers the information relating to application decisions to parents, they are not in a position to discuss the reasons why a file was rejected for acceptance. Parents wishing to obtain information about the Principal / CEO's decision may do so in writing by sending an email to the Registrar who will forward the request to the Admissions Team in the relevant division. Email: [registrar\\_gwa@gemsedu.com](mailto:registrar_gwa@gemsedu.com)
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