

ACCESSIBILITY PLAN

POLICY ESSENTIAL INFORMATION

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Committee:	Leadership
Leadership Lead:	CEO/Principal
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Reviewed and approved:	June 2023

ACCESSIBILITY PLAN

1. Aims

Schools are required under the law cited as the Law No. (3) of 2022 Concerning the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in the Emirate of Dubai” to have an accessibility plan. The purpose of the plan is to:

- Increase the extent to which disabled students can participate in the curriculum
- Improve the physical environment of the school to enable disabled students to take better advantage of education, benefits, facilities and services provided
- Improve the availability of accessible information to disabled students

GEMS World Academy (GWA) aims to treat all its students fairly and with respect. This involves providing access and opportunities for all students without discrimination of any kind.

The plan will be made available online on the Academy website, and paper copies are available upon request.

Our Academy is also committed to ensuring staff are trained in equality issues with reference to the Law No. (3), including understanding disability issues.

The Academy supports any available partnerships to develop and implement the plan.

Our Academy complaints procedure covers the accessibility plan. If you have any concerns relating to accessibility in the Academy, this procedure sets out the process for raising these concerns.

We have included a range of stakeholders in the development of this accessibility plan, including staff and governors of the Academy.

2. Legislation and guidance

This document meets the requirements of [UAE Disability Act 2006](#), and the Federal Law cited as [Law No. \(3\) of 2022](#) and the [Dubai Universal Design Code \(2017, Accessibility Code\)](#).

The [UAE Disability Act 2006](#) defines an individual as with a disability if they are suffering from a permanent or temporary physical, sensory, mental, communicative, learning, or psychological deficiency or impairment which, as a result of interaction with other physical and behavioural barriers, may hinder his full and effective participation in the society on an equal footing with others.

Schools are required to make ‘reasonable adjustments’ for students of determination under the [UAE Disability Act 2006](#), to alleviate any substantial disadvantage that a disabled student faces in comparison with non-disabled students. This can include, for example, the provision of an auxiliary aid or adjustments to premises.

This Accessibility Policy is divided into four sections:

1. Section 1: Access to the Curriculum - for students
2. Section 2: Access to Pastoral Support
3. Section 3: Site Accessibility - for staff, parents, students and the community
4. Section 4: Access to Information - for staff, parents, students and the community

This Accessibility Policy details policies and initiatives, how these are monitored, reviewed / evaluated, and how these evaluations are developed and embedded into school systems and practice. This policy is an 'umbrella' document: it encompasses existing policies and development plans, implemented and monitored by a range of teachers, the Senior Leadership Team and the school community.

The Policy is reviewed each year by the Senior Leadership Team, with individual responsibilities for specific sections of the Policy as noted;

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Section 1: Access to the curriculum

This section of the Access Plan is monitored by the Divisional Principals, who monitors the Director of Learning development plans. Aspects of the curriculum are also managed by the Assistant Principals.

Students across the grades have an appropriate (differentiated and personalised) curriculum to fit their needs. The following documents/policies support this aim:

- Academy Development Plan
- Individual curriculum Department Development Plans
- Curriculum, Assessment and Progress Policy
- Inclusion Policy

The principal features of GWA are:

Within their teaching teams, Directors of Learning / Department monitor students' progress, linked to a member of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) for weekly meetings; and usually on an individual basis there are links with Grade Level Leads to determine appropriate curriculum of specific students.

Progress Review Days are reviewed by the Grade Level Leads, tutors and curriculum subject leaders; a range of staff contribute to tracking and documenting students' progress, to allow for appropriate interventions, evaluation and modification, as required. At each assessment point for each year group, Secondary Assistant Principal – Curriculum, Progress and Assessment sends to Directors of Learning the record sheet where every student's target, and on track for grade is shown and ranked. Directors of Learning and Grade Level Leads then plan interventions as appropriate in conjunction with tutors. Whole Academy tracking tables are also updated at assessment points and sent to SLT to identify emerging trends and take appropriate action.

Learning Support interventions at all grades are informed by reading and spelling tests and this is outlined further in the Inclusion Policy. GWA is committed to individual and very small group teaching for literacy; and reading and spelling booster interventions for specifically identified and monitored students.

Students with medical needs, unable to access the Academy full-time, are supported by the appropriate Grade Level Leads and Form tutors.

In Grades 10-12 through whole school data and standardised testing, the Learning Support Services (LS) identifies students for Access Arrangements (exam accommodations).

The LS team working in collaboration with Directors of Learning and the Inclusion team manage sections of the curriculum for identified students (usually short-term interventions, but for a very few there can be longer-term interventions) including school-refusers, students returning from school after exclusion or from medical absence, or who are on part-time timetables due to documented medical reasons or long-term absence.

Section 2: Access to pastoral support

The Assistant Principals will monitor this section of the Access Plan. They will work with the Pastoral team, tutors, Academy Counsellor and Academy Health Nurse. Outside professionals, such as the Educational Psychologist (EP), Speech & Language Therapist or Occupational Therapists who support the Academy, contribute additionally to this work.

Pastoral support enshrines the principles of Every Child Matters and aspects of the Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL) agenda. Students across the grades have access to appropriate pastoral and counsellor's support depending on their age and specific needs.

The Academy's various separate policies contribute to supporting these aims:

- Attendance Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Safeguarding Policy
- Inclusion Policy

Principal features of GWA are:

- Designated Safeguarding Lead on site supported by members of the Senior Leadership Team, with developed links to external agencies
- Children who act as 'Young Carers' are identified and monitored (linked to county professionals). These students are offered support from the Academy Counsellor where appropriate
- Educational Psychologists closely support the work of the Academy, and of individual students, as required by their needs
- Students have access to the Academy Nurse – a lunchtime drop-in health care provision for students of all ages if offered (This service is confidential for students and school staff are not normally informed of who has attended.) Students can also request an individual

appointment with the Academy Counsellor or Academy Health Nurse. These are scheduled outside of lesson time as much as possible, so as not to impact learning.

- Links to GPs and local mental health services closely informs support for specific students / work generally in supporting students
- Pastoral staff and Academy Counsellors are able to give information and advice to parents on how to support their child as needed. Counsellors cannot, however, give details of specific conversations without students' permission.
- Enrichment days and guest speakers allow for bespoke Wellbeing sessions tailored for specific year groups
- SEAL activities and vertical tutoring enables support among the pupils, across year groups, to develop without specific staff interventions
- Attendance is monitored daily and parents are contacted on the first day of absence. Grade Leaders liaise with students with lower attendance and support with the provision of work and reintegration packages
- Restorative Justice style meetings take place to resolve issues between students
- Exclusions are kept to a minimum – when returning from exclusion students are met and expectations re-established before returning to lessons

Section 3: Site Accessibility

Responsibility for this section of the Access Plan lies with the CEO/Principal with contributions from a range of professionals supporting the Academy and from individuals within the Academy.

Students, staff, parents and visitors to the Academy have an equal opportunity to access the curriculum and we aim to make all areas of the site accessible where possible. Where the building cannot be adapted, changes will be made to the curriculum, typically this will mean re- rooming to accessible accommodation.

The following documents support these aims:

- Department Development Plan, within the School Development Plan
- Fire Evacuation Plan
- Health and Safety Policy
- [Article 4 of UAE Labour Law](#)

Principle features of GWA are:

- the annual audit of the site, using the appropriate framework / guidelines, referring to **The Access Needs Report and in consultation with occupational therapists**
- health and safety issues identified and addressed on a continuous basis by a range of people within the Academy - including The Health and Safety Committee, teachers (activities, classrooms) and Directors of Learning (departmental areas), 'common areas' (Manager School Operations) and SLT in reviewing these procedures and activities
- risk assessments are written principally for two purposes: for activities and for groups of students; and for specific students (as generic for their time in the Academy, and/or for specific activities, or to take into account their specific disability)
- risk assessments identify evacuation procedures for individual students whose movements

- are compromised by their disability
- the medical condition of students affecting health and safety and site accessibility, compiled as a separate document called Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEP) by the Learning Support team, is circulated to staff in the Academy on a need to know basis
 - the medical conditions of staff affecting health and safety and site accessibility are known on a need to know basis by the CEO/Principal and related staff
 - the Learning Support team has the responsibility for ensuring that identified SEND students access all areas of the site within the health and safety guidelines
 - outside professionals (for example, Occupational Therapists, the Physical Disability Team, the Visual Impairment Team, Hearing Impairment, physiotherapists, Autism Outreach Service, Downs Syndrome Service, Speech and Language Service) support the work of the Academy, and the integration of specific students within mainstream classes
 - the Learning Support Assistants monitor individual students' accessibility on a day to day basis

Section 4: Access to Information

This section of the Access Plan is monitored byand MSO, with support from the Academy's administration team. The Academy liaises with the appropriate agencies to ensure compliance with Government statutes. Our aim is to ensure that students, parents, staff and visitors have access to the information that they need, with due regard to confidentiality.

This policy supports the legislative framework for responding to requests for information under the statutory access regimes established by:

- the Data Protection Act (2020)
- the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)
- the Equality Act (2010)
- and other legislation that provides a right of access

In addition the Academy has its own policies on Data Protection and Complaints. Responses to requests for information are as follows:

- Relevant documents are emailed in response to the request, and may be downloaded from, the Academy's website or hard copies may be requested
- Parents/students may request copies of student record files, including paper and electronic files
- Parents/students may not be given access to records which contain information on other staff/students which would breach our Data Protection Policy and/or the Data Protection Act

All requests for information should be made in writing, to the Principal / CEO.

Any complaints should be addressed through the Academy's Complaints Procedure, available to view via the Academy website.

Information provided by the Academy, students have access to information by:

- the regular reporting of students' progress by reports from teachers

- feedback from their subject teachers (verbal and written) relating to their work completed in class, including at Progress Review Days and Parents' Evenings
- reviews from enhanced monitoring through Individual Behaviour Plans, Pastoral Support Plans, and IEPs
- the SEND review process
- representation on/by the Student Council

Parents have access to information by:

- the regular reporting of their child's progress by reports from teachers
- teachers' written comments in students' books /letters and emails to parents
- access to VLE (Managebac/Seesaw)
- telephone conversations
- talking to teachers and support staff at Progress Review Days and Parents' Evenings
- tutors and Grade Level Leads contact with parents
- the Academy's website
- open mornings for parents of prospective new students
- by prior appointment to visit the Academy
- specific requests for information (see above)
- through appointments with teachers (SEN reviews, reviewing Individual Behaviour Plans, Pastoral Support Plans)
- the Academy Prospectus

SEND information to parents:

- at reviews, and with printed documentation
- professionals outside the Academy supporting the work of the Academy
- visitors / external agencies / individuals have access to information (on a need-to-know basis only) by:
 - the Academy's website
 - contact with professionals within the Academy
 - by written request to the Principal / CEO

Accessibility of information

The Academy aims to provide information in an accessible format and will respond to individual needs and requests as they arise.

For example:

The Academy will seek support from outside agencies to provide information in simple language, symbols, large print, audiotape or Braille for students, prospective students or parents who have difficulty with standard forms of printed information.

The Academy will also make information for parents available in a range of different formats, should the need arise, and be aware of font size and legibility when producing written information. During parents' evenings and progress review meetings of children's performance in school, details are confirmed to parents how they can access information.

The Academy will, if the need arises, aim to provide translation or interpreter services to ensure all parents/students can access information.

Additional Guidance

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
Dubai Law No. (2) 2014	https://www.cda.gov.ae/ar/aboutus/Documents/Concerning%20Protection%20of%20the%20Rights%20of%20Persons%20with%20Disabilities%20in%20the%20Emirate%20of%20Dubai%20-%20Law%20-%202014%20-%20EN.pdf Concerning Protection of the rights of Person of determination in the Emirate of Dubai
Executive Council Resolution No. (2) 2017 Regulating Private Schools in the Emirate of Dubai.	https://www.khda.gov.ae/CMS/WebParts/TextEditor/Documents/ExecutiveCouncilResolutionNo.(2)of2017RegulatingPrivateSchoolsintheEmirateOfDubai.pdf
	Regulation for Private Schools in Dubai;
	Article 4 (14) established the conditions, rules, and standards that are required to facilitate the enrolment and integration of Students with disabilities in Private School;
	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 (2016)	https://government.ae/information-and-services/education/education-for-people-with-special-needs
The National Policy for Empowering People of Determination (2017)	https://government.ae/en/about-the-uae/strategies-initiatives-and-awards/federal-governments-strategies-and-plans/the-national-policy-for-empowering-people-with-special-needs Aims to provide quality inclusive education in the UAE
Dubai Inclusive Education Policy Framework (2017)	https://www.khda.gov.ae/cms/webparts/texteditor/documents/Education_Policy_En.pdf Dubai Inclusive Education Policy Framework has been developed to support the UAE's commitment to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities as well as federal and local legislation that calls for the inclusion of all learners, regardless of ability, in the education sector.

Implementing Inclusive Education: A Guide for Schools (2019)	https://web.khda.gov.ae/en/Resources/Publications/School-Inspection/Implementing-Inclusive-Education-A-Guide-for-School
The Dubai Universal Design Code (2017, Accessibility Code)	https://www.dha.gov.ae/Documents/HRD/RegulationsandStandards/Polocies/Dubai%20Universal%20Design%20Code%20Final%20Feb%202017.pdf
The Ministry of Education Strategic Plan 2017-2021	https://government.ae/en/about-the-uae/strategies-initiatives-and-awards/federal-governments-strategies-and-plans/ministry-of-education-strategic-plan-2017-2021
The Dubai Plan 2021	https://www.dubaiplan2021.ae/dubai-plan-2021
UAE Centennial 2071 project	https://uaecabinet.ae/en/details/news/mohammed-bin-rashid-launches-five-decade-governent-plan-uae-centennial-2071