

A composite image of two children in a play tunnel. On the left, a young girl with blonde pigtails and a blue and white checkered shirt with red trim is smiling. On the right, a young boy with dark hair in a black polo shirt with red trim is also smiling. The background is a wooden play structure with a white circular opening.

A COMPLETE GUIDE

AY 2026-2027

All you need to know

GFA

PARENTS' EYFS HANDBOOK

Dear Parents,

It is with great pleasure and excitement that I extend a warm welcome to you and your child to GEMS Founders School Masdar City.

Starting school is a significant milestone in your child's life, and we understand the importance of providing a nurturing and supportive environment for their early years of education. With a little preparation and encouragement, most children will settle in easily.

Our dedicated team of educators is committed to ensuring that your child feels safe, valued, and inspired to explore, discover, and learn each day.

Do not worry, your child doesn't need to be able to read, write or do sums before they start school. Children start school with a wide range of abilities and their teacher are highly skilled at helping children progress at their own level.

What's most important is that you and your child have fun together in those pre-school months and years sharing stories, singing songs, playing games and talking about anything and everything.

At GFA, we are committed to providing a supportive and nurturing environment where your child can thrive academically, socially, and emotionally. We look forward to welcoming your child and working together with you to ensure their success.

Warm regards,

Kate Wild

Head of Primary

The EYFS Curriculum, Assessment and Supporting Your Child at Home

What to Expect

During our initial settling in period in the first few weeks of school your child may experience separation anxiety. This is perfectly normal behaviour, especially for a child who is starting school for the first time. It can sometimes last for a few days, but in some cases, it can last for longer periods of time depending on the individual child. This is something we can work on together to help your child feel safe and secure in their new environment.

Let your child know you are leaving and encourage them to have a fun day. If you look worried or anxious this will transfer onto your child and make the situation worse. Be positive and reassuring and let them know you will be back.

Playing with other children whether friends or family members, or other children at the park or playgroups is all good practise for forming friendships at school. Teach your child to ask; "Can I join in?" or "Shall we share?"

Try to get into the school routine so your child gets used to getting up, going to bed and having meals and snack times that they will get on school days. Bath times and stories instead of TV and iPad will help children wind down before bedtime. Also, make time in the evening to chat about your day. Nutritious meals and plenty of sleep will help your child concentrate, learn and thrive at school.

If your child has naps, it would be wise to try phasing this out. This should be more manageable when they have a good bedtime routine.

It is quite common for children's behaviour at home to change when they first start school. Don't be surprised if your little one become clingier, argumentative, lethargic, excitable or prone to tantrums for a while.

Let your child get used to school life before introducing after school activities. It is also a good idea to keep the first few weekends quiet too, as they will likely need time to recharge, just as us adults do after beginning a new job or project.

Before starting FS1 your child should be able to...

- Sit and listen for a short time.
- Enjoy being with other children.
- Use the toilet, clean themselves and wash their hands (Accidents can happen from time to time, it is advisable to keep some spare clothes in your child's cubby). - Early Years teachers or teaching assistants do not toilet train your children.
- Recognise their own name when heard.

- Take off their cardigan and put shoes and socks on.
- Hold a book and talk about pictures.
- Share toys with friends.
- Help to tidy up their toys and resources.
- Sit at a table and feed themselves at snack/lunch times.
- Use a tissue to blow/clean their nose.

Tips to Support your Child's Independence and Transition:

Establish a Routine: Start getting your child into a regular routine that aligns with the school schedule. This includes establishing consistent bedtimes, mealtimes, and morning routines to help them adjust to the structure of the school day.

Foster Independence: Encourage your child to become more independent by allowing them to dress themselves, pack their own school bag, and take care of personal tasks such as using the restroom independently. Being toilet trained is an essential skill for school readiness, as it enables your child to manage their own bathroom needs confidently.

Encourage Social Skills: Help your child develop social skills by arranging playdates with other children their age. Encourage sharing, taking turns, and communicating with others. These social interactions will prepare them for making friends and interacting with peers in the FS classroom.

Read Together: Reading with your child is one of the most important activities you can do to prepare them for FS. Spend time reading books together, discussing the story, and asking questions to help develop their language and comprehension skills.

Practice Basic Skills: Help your child practice basic skills such as counting, recognising letters and numbers, and writing their name. You can incorporate these activities into everyday tasks and playtime to make learning fun and engaging.

Talk About Starting School: Talk to your child about what to expect in FS1/FS2 and address any questions or concerns they may have. Reassure them that school is a place for learning, making friends, and having fun.

Be Positive and Supportive: Maintain a positive attitude about school and reassure your child that you are there to support them every step of the way. Encourage them to approach this milestone with excitement and enthusiasm.

Talk About Starting School: Talk to your child about what to expect in FS1/FS2 and address any questions or concerns they may have. Reassure them that school is a place for learning, making friends, and having fun.

Parent Communication

The EYFS curriculum allows the teachers to spend time interacting with their child and exploring their learning. We will monitor their progress through a digital platform where the teachers will share photos and write about what they are doing at school. This will be through an app, Arc Pathway, that you can access from your phone or device.

<https://www.arcpathway.com/parents>



The Early Years Foundation Stage Framework

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) framework is a curriculum developed for the stages of education for children from birth to the end of the FS2. It sets the standards for the learning, development and care of your child from birth to 5 years old and ensures that your child will learn and develop well and be kept healthy and safe.

It is based on the recognition that children learn best through play and active learning and is in line with the British Curriculum in the UK. This includes establishing consistent bedtimes, mealtimes, and morning routines to help them adjust to the structure of the school day.

These 17 areas are what we use to plan your child's learning and activities. The class Teacher and Teaching Assistant will make sure that the activities are suited to your child's unique needs. We will consider your child's individual needs, interests, and development. We use this information to plan a challenging and enjoyable experience for each child.

Children in the EYFS learn by playing and exploring, being active and through creative and critical thinking which takes place both indoors and outdoors.

Areas of Learning		Explained
Communication and Language	Listening, Attention and Understanding	The development of children's spoken language underpins all seven areas of learning and development. Children's back-and-forth interactions from an early age form the foundations for language and cognitive development. The number and quality of the conversations they have with adults and peers throughout the day in a language-rich environment is crucial. By commenting on what children are interested in or doing, and echoing back what they say with new vocabulary added, practitioners will build children's language effectively. Reading frequently to children, and engaging them actively in stories, non-fiction, rhymes and poems, and then providing them with extensive opportunities to use and embed new words in a range of contexts, will give children the opportunity to thrive. Through conversation, story-telling and role play, where children share their ideas with support and modelling from their teacher, and sensitive questioning that invites them to elaborate, children become comfortable using a rich range of vocabulary and language structures.
	Speaking	
Personal, Social and Emotional Development	Self-Regulation	Children's personal, social and emotional development (PSED) is crucial for children to lead healthy and happy lives and is fundamental to their cognitive development. Underpinning their personal development are the important attachments that shape their social world. Strong, warm and supportive 9 relationships with adults enable children to learn how to understand their own feelings and those of others. Children should be supported to manage emotions, develop a positive sense of self, set themselves simple goals, have confidence in their own abilities, to persist and wait for what they want and direct attention as necessary. Through adult modelling and guidance, they will learn how to look after their bodies, including healthy eating, and manage personal needs independently. Through supported interaction with other children, they learn how to make good friendships, cooperate and resolve conflicts peaceably. These attributes will provide a secure platform from which children can achieve at school and in later life.
	Managing Self	
	Building Relationships	
Physical Development	Gross Motor Skills	Physical activity is vital in children's all-round development, enabling them to pursue happy, healthy and active lives ⁷ . Gross and fine motor experiences develop incrementally throughout early childhood, starting with sensory explorations and the development of a child's strength, co-ordination and positional awareness through tummy time, crawling and play movement with both objects and adults. By creating games and providing opportunities for play both indoors and outdoors, adults can support children to develop their core strength, stability, balance, spatial awareness, co-ordination and agility. Gross motor skills provide the foundation for developing healthy bodies and social and emotional well-being. Fine motor control and precision helps with hand-eye co-ordination, which is later linked to early literacy. Repeated and varied opportunities to explore and play with small world activities, puzzles, arts and crafts and the practice of using small tools, with feedback and support from adults, allow children to develop proficiency, control and confidence.
	Fine Motor Skills	
Literacy	Comprehension	It is crucial for children to develop a life-long love of reading. Reading consists of two dimensions: language comprehension and word reading. Language comprehension (necessary for both reading and writing) starts from birth. It only develops when adults talk with children about the world around them and the books (stories and non-fiction) they read with them, and enjoy rhymes, poems and songs together. Skilled word reading, taught later, involves both the speedy working out of the pronunciation of unfamiliar printed words (decoding) and the speedy recognition of familiar printed words. Writing involves transcription (spelling and handwriting) and composition (articulating ideas and structuring them in speech, before writing).
	Word Reading	
	Writing	

Mathematics	Number	Developing a strong grounding in number is essential so that all children develop the necessary building blocks to excel mathematically. Children should be able to count confidently, develop a deep understanding of the numbers to 10, the relationships between them and the patterns within those numbers. By providing frequent and varied opportunities to build and apply this understanding - such as using manipulatives, including small pebbles and tens frames for organising counting children will develop a secure base of knowledge and vocabulary from which mastery of mathematics is built. In addition, it is important that the curriculum includes rich opportunities for children to develop their spatial reasoning skills across all areas of mathematics including shape, space and measures. It is important that children develop positive attitudes and interests in mathematics, look for patterns and relationships, spot connections, 'have a go', talk to adults and peers about what they notice and not be afraid to make mistakes.
	Numerical Patterns	
Understanding the World	Past and Present	Understanding the world involves guiding children to make sense of their physical world and their community. The frequency and range of children's personal experiences increases their knowledge and sense of the world around them – from visiting parks, libraries and museums to meeting important members of society such as police officers, nurses and firefighters. In addition, listening to a broad selection of stories, non-fiction, rhymes and poems will foster their understanding of our culturally, socially, technologically and ecologically diverse world. As well as building important knowledge, this extends their familiarity with words that support understanding across domains.
	People, Culture and Communities	
	The Natural World	Enriching and widening children's vocabulary will support later reading comprehension.
Creative Development	Creating with Materials	The development of children's artistic and cultural awareness supports their imagination and creativity. It is important that children have regular opportunities to engage with the arts, enabling them to explore and play with a wide range of media and materials. The quality and variety of what children see, hear and participate in is crucial for developing their understanding, self-expression, vocabulary and ability to communicate through the arts. The frequency, repetition and depth of their experiences are fundamental to their progress in interpreting and appreciating what they hear, respond to and observe.
	Being Imaginative and Expressive	

EYFS Assessment

Your child will be assessed against 17 Early Learning Goals (ELG'S) and three characteristics of effective learning.

Children should most develop the 3 prime areas first. These include;

1. Communication and Language (C&L)	2. Personal, Social and Emotional Development (PSED)	3. Physical Development (PD)
Listening, Attention and Understanding	Self-Regulation	Gross Motor Skills
Speaking	Managing Self	Fine Motor Skills
	Building Relationships	

These prime areas are the most essential for your child's healthy development and future learning. As children grow, the prime areas will help them develop skills in the specific areas. These include;

4. Literacy	5. Mathematics	6. Understanding the World	7. Expressive Arts and Design
Comprehension	Number	Past and Present	Creating with Materials
Word Reading	Numerical Patterns	People, Culture and Communities	Being Imaginative and Expressive
Writing		The Natural World	

Home Learning

Learning takes place at home as well as in school. All the fun activities that you do with your child at home are important in supporting their learning and development and have a really long-lasting effect on your child's learning as they progress through school. Even when your child is very young and is not yet able to talk, talking to them helps them to learn and understand new words and ideas.

If you make the time every day to do some of the following things with your child, it will make a real difference to your child's confidence as a younger learner. It is also good to speak with your child and share books in your Home Language as well as in English.

Communication & Language	Personal, Social and Emotional Development
• Play Simon says. • Ask questions about their day, interests, experiences. Talk about what they have done, what are going to do and talk about things happening in the future e.g. Holidays. • Join in with role play activities. • Act out their favourite fairytale. • Help them to make up their own stories. • Spend quality time talking e.g. over dinner, away from noise and distractions. • Talk about your day. Did anything funny happen? • What was the best thing about your day? Talk about tomorrow or the rest of the week. Is anything exciting or interesting going to happen?	• Encourage friendships with other children. • Have friends round to play. • Help your child to learn how to share and take turns. • Play board games. • Help develop your child's interests and skills. • Provide opportunities for them to do things on their own. • Encourage independence. • Encourage your child to get dressed independently. • Talk about your feelings and how your child feels. • Be consistent in your approach to rules at home. • Make time for one-to-one interaction with your child. • Talk to them about their day. • Try new activities.
Physical Development	
• Encouraging your child to get themselves dressed and undressed independently- using buttons, zipping up their own coat. • Writing their name and making marks in large gross motor movements e.g. with chalk, large paint brushes and rollers. • Practise cutting skills with scissors- allow them to make snips in paper and then try to follow straight lines, then zig-zag line.	

Mathematics	Expressive Arts & Design
• Baking-weighing ingredients. • Finding numbers of everyday life. • Sharing sweets. • Play shop at home. • Use a calendar-what day is it today? • What date? • Bing-you can cover all areas of Maths through this game. Card games- snap, pairs and matching games. • Identify shapes in everyday life. • Computers- brain training/ big brain.	• Encourage your child to paint/draw by providing them with different materials indoors and outdoors e.g. paper, pencils, chalk, paints, old sheets, wallpaper, different sized brushes. • Play lots of different types of music to your child. • Dance to different styles of music. • Sing with your child. • Make dens outside and inside. • Encourage all ideas of creative thinking. • Provide materials for weaving- ribbon, wool, string. • Let child mix their own paints. • Make and play with playdough. • Let them help you with painting. • Baking. • Use puppets to act out fairy tales such as 'Goldilocks and the Three Bears.' • Experiment with different ways of making things such as using card, paper, cardboard-which works best? • Let your child design what they are going to make. • Sing nursery rhymes.
Understanding the World	
• Collect natural objects e.g. acorns, shells at the beach. • Bring in photographs from holidays or trips to share with the class. • Go on nature walks. • Bake and talk about the changes in ingredients. • Use the computer/iPad/electronic toys. • Use the telephone. • Use the television remote control to change channels. • Talk about different environments. • Talk about the weather and the changes in the seasons. • Discuss and find out about different animals, insects, dinosaurs, birds, people etc. • Involve your child when out shopping-encourage them to find items. • Encourage your child to ask questions about the world around them. • Ask them questions about the world around them. • Ask them questions about their experiences. • Talk about different cultures. • Talk about similarities and differences between themselves and others. • Talk about your experiences both past and present	

Literacy

- Practise mark making- ask them what it is they have drawn or written and then model writing it for them.
- Visit our local library.
- Read/share picture books. Ask your child questions about the story, the pictures, what they think might happen.
- Play "I spy" looking for things beginning with sounds.
- Sing songs and nursery rhymes.
- Discuss words that rhyme. Play rhyming soup.
- Encourage your child to practise writing their name.
- Encourage your child to write the sound they learnt in school today.

Reading and Phonics

Of course, a super important area we want parents to focus on at home is **READING!** Read, read, and read again to your child and listen to your children read as much as you can. Model good reading to your child and make it a pleasurable and fun experience. Encourage a love of reading and reading for pleasure, rather than making reading 'a chore'. Purchasing a new book for your child as a reward or treat is also advisable rather than rewarding them with sweet treats.

FS1 will focus on stories, nursery rhymes, poems and songs before moving onto our school's Phonics programme.

In FS2 your child's Class Teacher will send you home a reading book each week at their reading level. They will also read 1:1 with your child each week. This will include fiction, non-fiction and poetry books.



Physical Development and Handwriting

There are many stages of writing in EYFS. To be able to write children need to have a good pencil grip and good control. We need to follow the physical guidelines to get children ready for writing. Children begin to form letters when they are ready.

The Stages of Emergent Writing

Drawing :
children draw/scribble pictures



Random scribbling :
children scribble and can say what their marks mean.



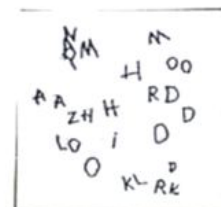
Controlled scribbling:
Children scribble in rows across the page left to right and top to bottom and give meaning to lines of their writing.



Letter like forms :
Children use unconventional letter forms and familiar symbols such as circles but still give meaning to their writing.



Random letters :
Children begin to use random letter shapes to convey meaning.

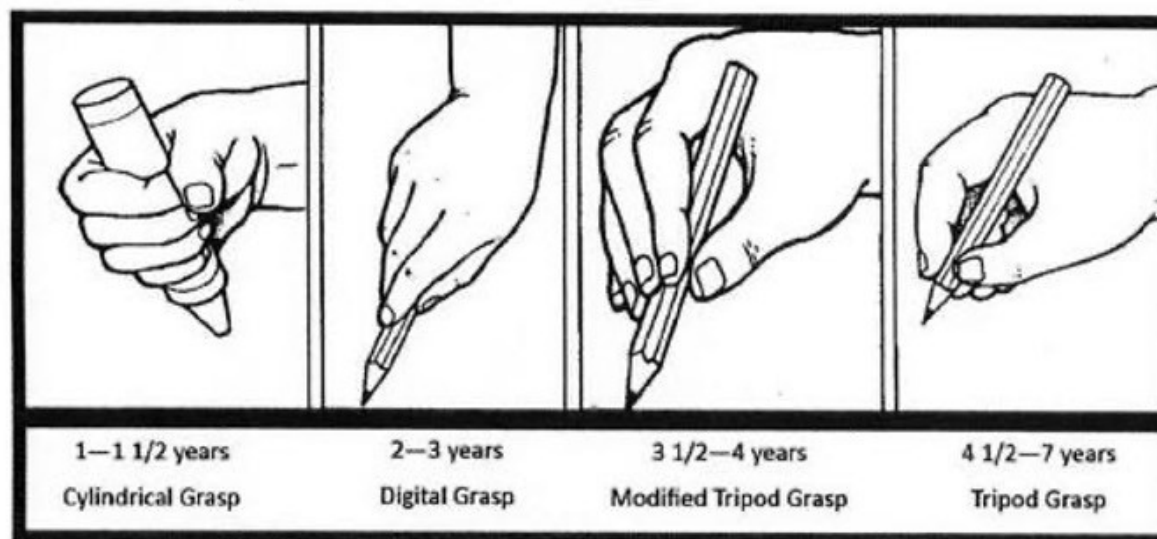


Patterned letters :
Children begin to use strings of unrelated letters, sometimes the letters from their name appear.



Pencil Grip

Your child will also go through various stages of pencil. If it is not corrected, it can affect speed and fluency and grip. See below for the various stages and where your impact on academic achievement, as well as put undue child should get to. It is very important to address stress on developing joints causing pain when writing a poor pencil grip early, especially if the child is left-handed. The pencil is held between the thumb and index finger, with the pencil resting on the middle finger.



Useful Links

Please see a range of various useful websites to further support your child with their learning beyond the classroom.

Subject	Topic/ Focus	Website
English	Phonics and Spelling	Phonics Games for the Classroom and Home - Phonics Bloom ictgames html5 English Games Page https://www.gonoodle.com/ https://www.phonicsplay.co.uk/
English	Reading	https://www.activelearnprimary.co.uk (your child's class teacher will provide you with the login details) https://www.oxfordowl.co.uk/
Maths	All UK curriculum topics	Early Years Maths - Topmarks Search
Arabic		Learn With Safaa - YouTube The world's best way to learn Arabic - Duolingo Arabic Lessons for Free: Start Your Journey to Fluency Today - Mondly غير العرب (non-arabs.com) (Paid platform)
Educational shows	Maths and English	Alphablocks - YouTube Numberblocks - YouTube

GEMS Founders School Masdar City **Toileting Policy for FS1 and FS2**

Last Amendment: July 2026

Policy Review Date: July 2027

1. Introduction

At GEMS Founders School Masdar City (GFA) we are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children within our FS1 and FS2. We are committed to ensuring that all staff responsible for the intimate care of children will undertake their duties in a professional manner. The Toileting Guidelines regarding children have been developed to safeguard children and staff. Intimate care is any care which involves washing or carrying out an invasive procedure (such as supporting a child with cleaning themselves up if they have soiled themselves).

2. Aims and Objectives

These guidelines aim:

- To provide guidance and reassurance to staff and parent/s
- To safeguard the dignity, rights and wellbeing of children.
- To ensure that there is a consistent approach from all teaching staff in EYFS.

3. Toileting and the Early Years Foundation Stage

In the Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum, the role of the adult at home and in school involves supporting the child's whole development.

Early Learning Goal - Managing self:

- Manage their own basic hygiene and personal needs, including dressing, going to the toilet and understanding the importance of healthy food choices.

Definition of toilet trained

The child should be able to carry out the following independently before starting school:

1. Tell an adult when they require the toilet.
2. Pull down/ pull up clothing to go to the toilet.
3. Wipe/ clean themselves after toileting.

4. Where applicable, make use of the hand-held toilet hose.
5. Wash and dry hands thoroughly.
6. Pull up his/her pants - **nappies/diapers are not allowed.**

Responsibilities

4. What the school expects from parents

- Parents/carers ensure that their child is toilet-trained before admission to school.
- **Under no circumstances** should a child attend school wearing diapers or nappies.
- Parents/carers will discuss any specific concerns with staff about their child's toileting needs.

- Parents/carers to ensure that there is always an extra set of clean uniform in the child's school bag or kept at school in case this is needed during the school day.
- Parents/carers must inform the school if a child is not fully toilet trained before starting school, after which a meeting will then be arranged to discuss the child's needs.
- Should the child be receiving medication for any toileting issues (constipation, diarrhea) they will not attend school until the situation is resolved.
- Parents/carers agree that after **2 wetting occasions per day** their child will need to be collected from school immediately for the health and hygiene of the child and other children in the class.
- Parents/carers agree that **after ANY soiling occasion** their child will need to be collected from school immediately for the health and hygiene of the child and other children in the class.
- Parents/carers agree that if their child continues to wet or soil, they will be required to remain at home to continue toilet training. This leave will be authorised.
- While each class has a Teaching assistant, their role is to verbally support children and remind them to wash their hands.

5. What the school expects from staff

- Staff will not spray or wipe children but will encourage correct use of tissue and hoses in the washroom.
- Staff will use props (such as a doll) to demonstrate to the child the best way for the child to clean themselves.
- Staff will encourage children to go to the toilet independently during the school day.

- There will be set times throughout the day when students will be asked to use the washroom.
- Staff will assist where necessary if a child should be changed into fresh clothing.
- Staff should wear gloves and aprons if assistance with changing and toileting is needed.
- If a student requests to use the toilet, they will be allowed.

It is essential that parents/carers recognise they are responsible for any training/changing routines for their child. As GFA is a school setting the teaching/support staff are not responsible for toilet training a child. Our intention is that the child will never be left in soiled clothing and as soon as the member of staff responsible for him/her is aware of the situation, she will assist the child in cleaning themselves or advise the appropriate staff member who will telephone the parent/carer.

I / we confirm that I / we have read and accept the above policy.