

## Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

***Vision:** Grow - Flourish - Achieve*

***Mission:** Growing Flourishing Achievers through an innovative and sustainable learning environment that fosters academic excellence with holistic development.*

### Introduction

- Early Years education is the foundation upon which young children build the rest of their schooling. It is a holistic education that encompasses all learning and development.
- This policy outlines the purpose, nature and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) at GEMS Founders School Masdar City (GFA).
- The implementation of this policy is the responsibility of staff working in the EYFS setting, including both teaching and non-teaching adults.
- In the policy the term 'staff' refers to the members of staff working with children within the setting.
- EYFS applies to children from birth to the end of FS2. Children in Foundation Stage are typically aged between the ages of 3-5 years old.

### Purpose

At GFA, we are committed to underpinning our provision with the four themes of the Early Years Foundation Stage in our FS1 and FS2 classes.

- Unique Child
- Positive Relationships
- Enabling Environments
- Learning and Development

**Unique child** - At GFA we recognise that children learn and develop in different ways and at different rates, which is reflected in our provision.

The characteristics of effective learning support the child to become a motivated and effective learner.

Children will **play, explore** and '**have a go**' at using all available resources; developing their experiences.

Children will develop resilience and enjoy achievements through **active learning** and will make links, explore their ideas and strategies for problem solving through **creating and thinking critically**. Staff support the children in developing all of these characteristics through playing alongside children and, where necessary, scaffolding and supporting their thoughts.

It is important to us that all children at GFA are '**safe**'. We aim to educate children on boundaries, rules and limits to help them understand why they exist. We provide children with choices to help them to develop these important life skills.



Children should be allowed to take risks, but need to be taught how to recognise and avoid hazards, both within school and in the wider environment.

We encourage a healthy lifestyle including exercise and eating healthy food.

## **Admission and Induction**

### **FS1**

- Parents are offered a meeting with their teacher prior to their child starting FS1, during the induction week. We feel this provides a valuable opportunity for the staff to meet the child, discuss important and where necessary confidential information and begin to collect evidence for baseline assessments.
- From August, children attend school on a full-time basis after a staggered part-time start which lasts no more than one week. We strive to be sensitive to the needs of individuals

### **FS2**

- In the induction week, the new children are identified and begin the staggered start session to become familiar with the classroom environment and meet other children.
- In the induction week, parents are offered a meeting with their teacher prior to their child starting FS2. We feel this provides a valuable opportunity for the staff to meet the child, discuss important and where necessary confidential information and begin to collect evidence for baseline assessments.
- From August, children will attend school on a full-time basis. We strive to be sensitive to the needs of individuals. We work closely with parents and if a child needs a longer period of parttime education, before attending full time, we ensure this occurs.

## **Settling-in**

When a child starts to attend, we explain the process of settling-in with their parents and jointly decide on the best way to help the child to settle into the school.

When a child starts in the FS1 they are welcome to bring a transitional item e.g. toy or blanket with them for as long as they need the comfort gained from this item.

## **Equal Opportunities**

In EYFS, as in all areas of school life, we believe that equal opportunities should exist for all children irrespective of gender, ability, ethnicity, culture, religion, disability or social circumstance. This has caused us to review the ways in which we approach children, our attitude towards them and how we develop their self-esteem.

We respect the experiences children bring to school and would seek to expand them by providing further new experiences and stimuli.



## **Positive Relationships**

We aim to promote positive relationships between staff, parents and children.

Children are taught how to deal with difficult situations and friendships through our Personal, Social and

Emotional Aspects of Learning as well as through their daily interactions with adults and other children.

We recognise that parents and carers are the child's first educators and their importance for the child's welfare and education is paramount.

All children are greeted as they come into the classroom and have a familiar routine.

Staff will work with each child either on a one-to-one basis, in a small group or as part of a larger group.

## **Enabling Environments**

At GFA we recognise the importance of a rich learning environment both inside and outside. There are areas where the children can be active, be quiet and rest.

The environment is set up in learning areas, where children can find and locate equipment and resources independently.

There are several outdoor learning spaces for children to access. These have a positive effect on the children's development. Being outdoors offers opportunities for doing things in different ways and on different scales than when indoors. It offers the children the opportunity to explore, use their senses and be physically active and exuberant.

We offer the same opportunities and areas of learning in all our environments and the children have free flow between different areas.

We observe the children during child-initiated learning and offer additional resources and support to enrich their learning.

To ensure that we meet the individual needs of all our children we make regular observations of the children's interactions, interests, skills, and development of concepts.

These observations are used to inform our planning for groups of children, for individuals and our provision for resources as appropriate.

## **Learning and Development**

There are seven areas of learning and development which address children's physical, cognitive, linguistic, social and emotional development and are interconnected. This ensures the delivery of



a holistic, child-centered curriculum, which allows children to make links between what they are learning. All areas of learning and development are given equal weighting and value.

Three areas of learning known as the 'prime areas' are crucial to develop lifelong learning and to help children form relationships

- **Personal, Social and Emotional Development** - children develop confidence and self-esteem, learn how to manage feelings and respect others
- **Communication and Language** – children have opportunities to speak and listen in a range of situations and experience a rich language environment. They increasingly build their levels of concentration and can give their attention to what others say and respond appropriately
- **Physical Development** – children have opportunities to be active and develop co-ordination (both gross motor and fine motor); they learn about healthy choices

The prime areas are strengthened and applied through four further areas known as the 'specific areas':

- **Literacy** – involves children learning to recognise print in their environment. Later learning how letters link to the sounds and begin to read and write
- **Mathematics** – children have opportunities to develop counting and calculation skills, to use numbers in everyday activities and recognise and describe shapes and measures
- **Understanding the World** – children have opportunities to find out about people and communities, the environment and technology
- **Expressive Arts and Design** – involves exploring feelings and ideas through music, dance, role play and design

### Active Learning Through Play

We recognise that young children learn best when they are active. We understand that active learning involves other people, objects, ideas and events that engage and involve children for sustained periods. Therefore, we believe that early years' education should be as practical as possible, and our setting has an ethos of learning through play.

We recognise the importance of children's play. It is an essential and rich part of the learning process, supporting children in all areas of development.

In the Foundation Stage, staffs provide both structured and unstructured play opportunities inside and outside.

These activities are designed to engage children in practical, first-hand experiences which will support children to discover, explore, investigate, develop their personal interests and areas of curiosity, and help to make sense of the world around them as they begin to understand specific concepts.



Planned, purposeful, play opportunities are set up to provide children with opportunities to apply newly acquired knowledge, demonstrating their skills and level of understanding.

Child-initiated learning is an important part of our daily routine and whenever possible adult-directed activities are play based, active and related to the children's interests.

We aim to help children with their learning through observing, getting involved in their play, supporting their thinking and asking open-ended questions.

At GFA we believe that the early years' education is important and should not be viewed simply as preparation for the next stage of children's education.

We believe that the EYFS framework allows a natural progression into the National Curriculum for England at the beginning of year one.

## **Planning**

The EYFS framework provides a long term plan to follow by ensuring that all development statements are covered throughout the academic year leading towards the achievement of the Early Learning Goal (ELG) at the end of FS2.

Medium term and continuous provision plans link developmental milestones with predictable interests to create exciting learning opportunities over a 3-6 week period.

Weekly, short term planning considers the individual children's learning and developmental needs.

All areas of learning and development are planned for and available to access within the setting. The learning opportunities provided include a range of adult focused and child initiated activities indoors and outdoors whenever possible.

Leaders are responsible for the planning of educational visits within the local community and further afield are also planned to support children's learning within the classroom.

## **Assessment and Record Keeping**

On-going assessment is an essential aspect of the effectiveness of teaching in the EYFS.

Observations take place daily (both formally and informally). Teachers make time to carry out planned observations of individuals and groups of children regularly. They also make spontaneous observations to capture significant moments of children's learning, known as 'remarkable'. Observations are recorded in different formats (e.g. narrative style, photographs and videos) and saved on the ARC Pathway Platform. These observations are aligned to developmental milestones and inform summative profiling of children's development.



The main method of assessment is through staffs' (teachers and TAs) observations of children in different learning contexts, including both adult focused activities and child-initiated play. Other methods of assessing children in the EYFS include engaging alongside children in their play, annotation of children's written work and talking with children about their task or play. Observations are evaluated, children's learning priorities are identified, and relevant learning opportunities are planned to support children to make the next steps and progress.

Baseline assessment is carried out using a developmental milestones profiling tool on ARC pathway, during the children's first half term in school. Judgements made on children's development are based on staffs' evidence of children's behaviour observed independently and consistently in their self initiated activities across all areas of learning and development. This profiling is continued throughout the year to inform teachers' summative judgements at the end of each term.

At the end of FS2, in line with statutory requirements, using all the assessment information which has been collated teachers assess children against the early learning goals. They make a judgement as to whether a child is meeting the expected levels of development or not yet reaching expected levels (not met). This is the EYFS Profile. Additionally, in line with local expectations, we identify and record children working above expectations. A record of each child's progress in all areas of their learning is kept by retaining their assessment data.

In term 1 and term 2 parents receive an overview of student achievement. At the end of the summer term a full report is sent to parents. This is a summative record of the child's yearly achievement and identifies targets for the child's next steps for learning.

In EYFS there are regular standardisation and moderation sessions. Teachers are involved in standardisation moderation activities to ensure agreement on criteria and consistency of judgements. Examples of moderation activities include:

- Planning and review with colleagues
- Review of ARC Pathway learning journeys
- Case studies and holistic pictures
- Moderation with colleagues from other schools.

## **Parents and Teachers as Partners**

At GFA we recognise the importance of establishing positive relationships with parents. We understand that an effective partnership between school and home will have a positive impact on children's learning and development.

The sharing of information with parents is done in a variety of ways. This supports staff in establishing interesting and stimulating learning experiences, responding to children's needs and interests.

Parents are kept informed of what is happening in the setting through weekly newsletters, our website and face to face conversations.



Parents can support their children’s learning at home; consolidating and building on what has been covered in school.

Parents are invited to attend parents’ consultation evenings during the course of the academic year.

There are opportunities for parents to help with activities such as educational visits and reading, as well as offering their particular skills to support children’s learning. Parents may be invited into school on other occasions and special events e.g. class assemblies, coffee mornings, workshops etc.

GFA has a friendly, open-door ethos and staff are available to talk to parents at the beginning and end of the day. Parents are encouraged to discuss any concerns they might have.

### **Transition to Year One**

When appropriate, teachers endeavour to ensure there are opportunities for child-initiated activities, particularly in the first term. A programme is designed to assist students and parents to transition into Year 1.

### **Monitoring**

The Senior Leadership Team are responsible for monitoring teaching and learning in EYFS.

This involves observing lessons, data analysis, looking at children’s work and checking planning in order to ensure that we are providing the best for and expecting the best from our students.

We use the information gathered to inform future planning and identify strengths and areas for development in our practice.

Signed .....

Date: 12 August 2025

**Principal/CEO**

**Next policy review date:** 10 August 2026