

## Multilingual Policy

**Vision:** Grow - Flourish - Achieve

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

### Introduction

This policy outlines the approach taken by GEMS Founders Masdar City (GFA) to support students for whom English is an Additional Language (EAL). It aligns with the Abu Dhabi Department of Education and Knowledge (ADEK) guidelines to ensure equitable access to education for all students, regardless of their language background.

In the UAE, there is an increasing proportion of students whose home language is not English. These students have a range of English language proficiency, and not all EAL students require English Language Learning (ELL) provision.

GFA acknowledges the vibrant cultural and linguistic diversity of its student body as a fundamental characteristic of its educational network in the UAE. This policy stands on the foundational principles of Quality First Teaching and Inclusive Education, aiming to address the distinct needs of each learner to foster a truly inclusive academic setting and reflects GEMS's ethos for **Multilingualism** (MLL):

*"To ensure all students feel comfortable and supported, providing them with equal opportunities to learn through language and reach their full potential."*

At GFA, we embrace Multilingualism, as it emphasises the strengths and assets of students who speak multiple languages. It highlights their ability to build proficiency in more than one language, which is seen as a strength rather than a deficit. Multilingualism acknowledges and celebrates the cultural and linguistic diversity of students. It recognises that students bring valuable linguistic and cultural resources to the classroom, which can enhance their learning and the learning environment for all students.

Teaching and learning are planned so that each child can aspire to the highest level of personal achievement and we believe all students, no matter their starting point and initial barriers to learning, can go on to achieve high performance.

We believe that fostering an inclusive environment is not just the responsibility of the Inclusion department but a shared commitment of the entire school community. Our teachers, staff, and parents actively contribute to creating an inclusive atmosphere that values and respects the language and cultural diversity of our students.

Through all stages of English language provision, together, we strive to create an inclusive educational environment that celebrates diversity and empowers all learners to become confident, knowledgeable, and globally minded individuals.

### Aims and Objectives

- To enable students to have full access to the curriculum (and other educational opportunities), ensuring that they fulfil their academic potential



- To ensure that all our students attain curriculum levels and public examination grades appropriate to their abilities
- To create awareness among staff, students and parents about students receiving learning support, the nature of learning differences and how they can best be supported within an inclusive community, including providing students with the opportunities to study in their home language.
- To provide clarity to teachers, parents and students on the benefits and importance of Multilingualism.
- To provide information to staff on the process of assessing language proficiency of English language and the referral procedure.
- To increase the level of communication and consistency between the Multilingual department, classroom teachers, form tutors and Key Stage Leaders.
- To help new teachers/students/parents adjust to supporting multilingual students in class.
- To ensure that we recognise and meet the needs of pupils who require English language support

## Legislation and Guidance

### Definitions

#### Multilingualism and Linguistic Diversity

Multilingualism refers to the presence and use of multiple languages in schools. This can include students who speak languages other than the language of instruction at home, as well as schools that offer instruction in more than one language. **GEMS Education** recognises and embraces the linguistic diversity of students, providing them with the opportunity to develop proficiency in multiple languages and a deeper understanding of different cultures.

Celebrating home languages is an integral part of a child's multilingualism, contributing to their cultural identity, cognitive development, academic success, and social well-being. Embracing and valuing home languages as part of multilingualism can lead to positive outcomes for individuals, families, and communities.

These students have a range of English language proficiency, and not all multilingual students require ELL provision.

#### English Language Learners (ELL) Definition

An **English Language Learner (ELL)** student at GFA refers to an individual whose primary or dominant language is not English and who requires support to develop proficiency in English for academic purposes. ELL students typically have varying levels of English language proficiency and may face challenges in accessing the curriculum and participating fully in educational activities conducted in English.

A student would be classified as an ELL learner if they have one or more of the following characteristics:

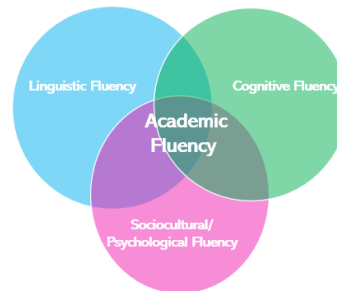
- They are in the process of acquiring proficiency in the English language while also developing their content knowledge and academic skills.
- They have varying levels of proficiency in English, ranging from beginner to advanced.
- They struggle to access the curriculum due to language barriers.
- They have limited vocabulary, grammar, and language skills, which impact their communication, comprehension, reading, writing, listening, and speaking abilities in an academic setting.



## Fundamental Principles of Multilingualism Provision

At GFA we believe that there are three dimensions which need to work together to achieve academic English fluency: Linguistic fluency, Cognitive fluency and Sociocultural/ Psychological fluency.

These dimensions were first identified by Kern in 2003, who argued that all three must be addressed by schools for all students to reach their true potential.



To help our students achieve **Linguistic fluency**, we need to help them understand

- how language functions (grammar rules, intonation, parts of words parts)
- where and when to use certain genres and forms of writing
- how to organise and structure different text types (discourse markers etc)
- academic vocabulary, including words that are used across subject areas, for example: analyse, explain.

To help our students achieve **Cognitive fluency**, we need to teach them

- critical thinking skills
- higher order thinking skills
- how to identify fact from opinion
- how to read texts critically
- how to write and speak persuasively using evidence
- to think about their own language acquisition
- how to evaluate /monitor their own learning.

To help our students achieve **Sociocultural/Psychological fluency** we need to expose students to

- “Social and cultural norms, values, beliefs, attitudes, motivations, interests, behaviours, practices, and habits” (Scarcella 2003); and
- “The particular conventions and norms that characterise the people who use it” (Scarcella, 2003);

Gee (1996, 2002) points out that students learn these conventions by “participating in specific ways of being and acting in academic contexts.” **Socio-cultural/psychological fluency is learnt through communicating in classrooms and cannot be taught explicitly.** This is why **we strive to keep learners in the mainstream as much as possible.**

### Identification of ELL Students

Following ADEK guidelines, students requiring EAL support are identified through:

- Initial language assessments upon enrollment.
- Ongoing formative and summative assessments (using Flash Academy proficiency assessments).
- Teacher observations and feedback.



- Standardised language proficiency tests where applicable.

During the admission process, the following *may* indicate a student needs some level of English language support:

- ELL is indicated on the admissions form.
- The student is currently attending a school in a non-English speaking country.
- The student is currently attending a school where English is not the medium of instruction.
- The student demonstrates low levels of English proficiency or literacy based on reports.
- The data from the admissions test (CAT4)/NGRT (New Group Reading Test) or the information in the admissions file indicates that the student is operating at a significantly lower level than the expected year group in Literacy.

For any of the above, the Admissions team will refer the student to the Inclusion Department for any further assessment and recommendations.

### Language Proficiency Levels

Teachers initially assess every child’s language proficiency using the **Bell Foundation Proficiency Assessment**. This is then quality assured using ‘Flash Academy’ language proficiency assessment. Following this, students are then tracked using the Bell Foundation assessment criteria and their progress is tracked over the course of the year.

### Band Assignment

At GEMS Founders School – Masdar City (GFA), we use the Bell Foundation’s EAL Assessment Framework for Schools to support the language development of learners who use English as an Additional Language. The framework provides a clear and structured approach to assessing and tracking English language proficiency, enabling teachers to tailor support to individual learner needs. By using the Bell Foundation’s tools, we promote inclusive teaching practices, ensure consistency across the school, and help all learners access the curriculum and achieve their full potential.

### Mapping of levels to Bell Foundation

	Basic User		Independent User				Proficient User			
CEFR	A1		A2		B1	B2		C1	C2	
IELTS	0 - 4		4.5	5	5.5	6	7	8	8.5	9
Bell Foundation	A		B		C		D	E		
	New to English		Early Acquisition		Developing Competence		Competent	Fluent		
WIDA	1	1	2_3		4_4.5		5+			
	Entering	Beginning	Developing		expanding		Bridging			

### ELL Support

All teachers are teachers of English Language Learners and as such they continue to remain responsible for the teaching and learning for their students. Teachers and assistants use support strategies to ensure that students can access the curriculum.

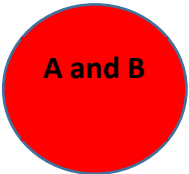
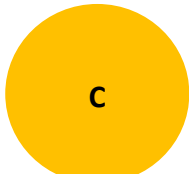



All teachers are responsible for identifying students who are experiencing challenges with learning, and in collaboration with the Inclusion team, will ensure that those students requiring different or additional support are identified at an early stage (when they have not been identified through our admission process).

It is important that all data is correctly captured for these students and routinely updated to track progress.

Students can be referred to the Head of Inclusion upon entry or at any point during their education. In line with our SEN graduated approach, we recognise that there is a **continuum** of ELL needs. Students identified as ELL through the language screener or referral are assigned to one of three tiers of support.

### Language Support Interventions

Tier 3		<p><b>Intensive Interventions:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Personalised timetable to provide intensive literacy support</li> <li>• Students will have a personalised intervention programme mapped out using Flash Academy.</li> <li>• This will include regular reviews and is amended as progress is made</li> <li>• Regular communication with mainstream teachers to share progress and identified strategies which work best of each student</li> <li>• Home/School communication to highlight the successes and challenges of each academic term.</li> </ul>
Tier 2		<p><b>Semi-intensive interventions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tier 2 literacy interventions through in class support or pull-out sessions.</li> <li>• Regular communication with mainstream teachers to share progress and identified strategies which work best for each student.</li> <li>• Home/School communication to highlight the successes and challenges of each academic week</li> </ul>
Tier 1		<p><b>High Quality Teaching (Graduated Approach)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This tier describes the support available to all students, including those with and without SEN. In Tier 1, needs are met through High Quality Teaching or Quality First Teaching.</li> <li>• Teachers accommodate individual differences and ability, learning style and behaviour through high quality inclusive and personalised differentiated classroom practice.</li> <li>• Tier 1 provision may include one or more of the following:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Personalised planning and resources</li> <li>○ Assistive technology</li> <li>○ Interventions led by the class teacher/</li> <li>○ Cross curricular communication to share progress and identified strategies which work best of each student</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

### Curriculum Access and Inclusion

All EAL students have the right to access the full curriculum. The school ensures:

- Adaptations to lesson delivery to support language acquisition.



- Modified assessments where necessary to reflect language development.
- Scaffolding techniques such as modeling, guided practice, and structured group work.
- A culturally responsive curriculum that respects and integrates students' linguistic backgrounds.

## **Professional Development**

Teachers and support staff receive ongoing professional development to:

- Implement best practices in EAL teaching and learning.
- Develop strategies for integrating language support in subject teaching.
- Understand cultural diversity and language acquisition processes.

## **Parental and Community Engagement**

The school fosters strong partnerships with parents by:

- Providing multilingual communication where possible.
- Offering workshops and resources to support language development at home.
- Encouraging parental involvement in school activities and decision-making.

## **Monitoring and Evaluation**

The effectiveness of EAL provision is monitored through:

- Lesson observations, planning audits, book scrutinies and drop ins.
- Regular review of student progress and language proficiency.
- Feedback from students, parents, and teachers.
- ADEK inspection and compliance requirements.
- Continuous improvement strategies based on best practices and research.

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

The Corporate Head of Multilingualism for GEMS and the wider Children's Services Team is responsible for the GEMS ELL provision and strategic development of this policy. The Corporate Head of Multilingualism supports all schools in delivering the best possible provision and outcomes for English Language Learners.

At GFA our Head of Inclusion has responsibility for the ELL provision within the school – working in collaboration with the Whole School EAL teacher and English champions in both Primary and Secondary schools – there is a strong team facilitating EAL provision across the school. This involves working with the Principal, Senior Leadership Team, Heads of Year and specific subject ELL nominated members to determine the strategic implementation of this policy.

### **Responsibilities**

- ELL students are identified using the agreed criteria
- The ELL Register is accurate and updated at least termly
- The classroom provision for students with ELL is well planned and effective
- Learning plans are regularly reviewed and amended to reflect progress
- The impact of provision is monitored and evaluated through learning walks
- Parents and students are kept fully informed of progress and planned provision
- The records of ELL students are accurate, updated and in line with policy
- Professional development is made available to staff to support ELL students in the mainstream
- The SEF (Self Evaluation Framework) reflects accurately the strengths and areas for development of ELL students.



### Links to Other Policies

- Inclusion Policy
- G&T Policy
- Safeguarding Policy
- Wellbeing Policy
- Curriculum Policy
- Teaching and Learning Policy

### Compliance with ADEK Policies

This policy adheres to ADEK's regulations on language acquisition and inclusive education.

The school commits to maintaining ADEK standards and ensuring that all EAL students receive quality education that supports their language development and academic success.

### Monitoring Arrangements

This Multilingual Policy will be reviewed annually by the Head of Inclusion and the Senior Leadership Team.

Signed .....  
10/08/2025

Date

Principal/CEO

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