English Language Learners Policy

2024 - 2025

مـــدارس دبــي
DUBAI SCHOOLS
نـد الشـــبا
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Dubai Schools English Language Learners Policy

Purpose

This policy will outline how Dubai Schools intend to support students who require significant additional support to enhance their literacy skills and access the curriculum in its totality.

Whilst almost all students in Dubai Schools are Bilingual and Multilingual learners, with Arabic being the first language, there is an additional group of English Language Learners (ELL) who require access to further intervention to remove language barriers to their learning. The support for this group aims to promote inclusion and equality of opportunity, in line with Taaleem's values.

This policy should be used in conjunction with our English Language policy, its associated working practices and high impact strategies.

Specific Aims of the ELL Programme

- To support all ELL learners with their right to access the American Curriculum. This is best achieved within a whole school context. Students learn more quickly when socializing and interacting with their peers who speak English fluently and can provide strong language and learning role models.
- To embed and facilitate a school culture where all teachers are English language teachers.
- To support students to communicate and express themselves in various social and academic contexts allowing them to engage successfully when learning through the American curriculum.
- To encourage students to develop effective literacy habits and self-help approaches to learning in English.

- To support work across subjects by developing a comprehensive understanding of linguistic and literary texts. Students need to access various texts for information and communication. Learning text conventions, accurate grammatical usage, academic vocabulary, and research skills, and developing spoken, written, and visual communication, are central to learning how to process and produce texts in all subject areas.
- To monitor the attainment and progress of pupils who may be at the earliest stages of learning English.
- To ensure that the cognitive challenge remains appropriately high and not be reduced because the English language demand has been reduced. ELL learners' conceptual thinking may be in advance of their ability to speak English.

Definitions

English as an Additional Language (EAL)	English as an Additional Language (EAL) refers to those students whose first language is not English. The student may already be fluent in several other languages or dialects, which is why the term English as a second language (ESL or E2L) is not used. All students within Dubai Schools are recognized as Bilingual, Multilingual Learners.

English Language Learners (ELL)	English Language Learners (ELL) are students who are unable to communicate fluently or learn effectively in English, who often come from non-English-speaking homes and backgrounds, and who typically require specialized or modified instruction in both the English language and in their academic courses. Due to their challenges, they are classified as a potentially vulnerable group. It is important to note that students identified as ELL will be at distinct stages of their English language acquisition and require different support. It is also important to note that almost all ELL students may fall under the classification of EAL, a significantly smaller group will be classified as ELL.

Initial Identification and Referral

Dubai Schools has established a system using information from admissions, teacher referrals, classroom observations as well as data (from CAT4 – Verbal, MAP English and NGRT) to identify students who may encounter challenges in using English as a language of study. Once identified, we use the WIDA (World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment[1]) tool to baseline a student on measures involving reading, writing, listening, and speaking. These learners are not diagnosed with Special Educational Needs (SEND); however they are added to our internal ELL register, and we use various levels of support to assist in their language development.

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[1] https://wida.wisc.edu

WIDA and Proficiency Levels

The WIDA proficiency levels describe a student's ability to use (speak and write) and process (read and listen) social and academic English in terms of the six WIDA English language proficiency levels (1-Entering, 2-Emerging, 3-Developing, 4-Expanding, 5-Bridging, and 6Reaching). These levels represent the stages of English language development. For instance, a student who is new to the English language (or a beginner) may have scores in Level 1 or Level 2, whereas a student with more advanced proficiency in English may have scores ranging from Level 3 to Level 4. For the purpose of establishing a collective understanding of proficiency levels, the following WIDA English language proficiency levels and descriptions will be used for students on the ELL register for Dubai Schools.

Academic Identification	WIDA Assessment Score	WIDA Level	Description of WIDA Proficiency Levels	
ELL Beginner (ELL-B)	0.0 → 2.9	1	**Entering** - Knows and uses minimal social language and minimal academic language with visual and graphic support	• Learners with no English or very basic language skills • Learners who need to secure their BICS
		2	**Emerging** - Knows and uses some social English and general academic language with visual and graphic support	
ELL Advanced (ELL A)	3.0 → 4.9	3	**Developing** - Knows and uses social English and some specific academic language with visual and graphic support	• Learners who have secured their BICS • Learners who have advanced and developed their English but still need support Learners who are in the process of developing their • CALP
		4	**Expanding** - Knows and uses social English and some technical academic language	
ELL Independent (ELL-I)	5.0 → 6.0 (no ceiling)	5	**Bridging** - Knows and uses social English and academic language working with grade-level material	• Learners who have developed an equal competency level to their English-speaking peers Learners able to • independently access the curriculum Learners who have secured • their age- appropriate CALP
		6	**Reaching** - Knows and uses social and academic language at the highest level measured by this test	

ELL Register

Due to the elevated level of need at Dubai Schools, ELL support will initially focus on students who fall within the ELL Beginner identification (WIDA Level 1 to 2.9). All students who meet this criterion for ELL will be placed on the school's ELL ISAMs register.

Provision

Level of ELL support Provision

Following placement on the ELL register, ELL learners are grouped according to their linguistic needs, whether they were basic communicative needs (BICS: Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills) or age-appropriate academic needs (CALP: Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency). Based on a students identified WIDA level, they would receive a different level of support, as described in the following table:

Academic Identification	WIDA Assessment Score	WIDA Level	Level of Support
ELL Beginner (ELL-B)	0.0 → 2.9	1 2	Specific and individualized support. Students receive an Individual Language Plan (ILP) which details their current language levels as well as accommodations. They also receive push-in / pull-out support from an ELL support teacher or ELL LSA.
ELL Advanced (ELL A)	3.0 → 4.9	3 4	Supported by differentiation strategies implemented by the classroom/subject teacher.
ELL Independent (ELL-I)	5.0 → 6.0 (no ceiling)	5 6	Require little to no additional support outside of the classroom.

Monitoring the impact of the ELL provisions

Students' progress and learning will be monitored through:

- The WIDA assessment, administered twice per year.

- Stakeholder feedback (staff, student and parent).

- Observations (lesson observations, learning walks, environment reviews).

- Products (work samples, running records, formative and summative internal and external examination data).

- The Individual Language Plan (ILP).

- The ELL register will be reviewed termly to determine progress and effectiveness of the support arrangement.

Exiting the ELL program

Students can exit the ELL program when they have proficient language skills to function independently and successfully in classroom activities and tasks across the curriculum (WIDA Model - 4.5 Overall score or above). This is reviewed on a case-by-case basis and such a decision will always be made in the best interests of the student. The ELL Lead monitors students on the ELL register throughout the year. The parent is always kept informed in writing if the recommendation is to exit the ELL support.

After exiting the ELL program, the student's progress is monitored by the ELL Lead and the classroom teacher to ensure they have the tools to be successful.

The length of time a student is in the program varies depending on their needs and progress. Some will only require a settling in time with guidance from the ELL teacher to support learning and growth. Others need more intensive support for up to 2 academic years. The ELL teacher along with the homeroom teacher triangulate the data and make a joint decision with the families. Data which informs a decision to remove support includes:

- WIDA (4.5 or above)
- MAP scores (need to demonstrate consistent sufficient growth)
- Student's ability to participate and complete tasks in class as well as communicate effectively with peers and teachers.

Students who exit the program are monitored for a year to make sure that the student is able to successfully manage his or her learning without any additional language support.

Responsibilities

Teachers

Everyone in the school (teachers, admin and support staff) are responsible for supporting our ELL children become more fluent in English.

Teachers will:

- Show differentiated work in their planning.

- Have high expectations; expect students to contribute and give more than a single word answers.

- Have high expectations for ELL students and set appropriate and challenging learning objectives based on careful monitoring of student progress.

- Allow children to use their mother tongue to explore concepts.

- Use mixed ability groups to ensure that ELL children hear good models of English.

- Use collaborative group activities.

- Provide a range of reading books that highlight the diverse ways in which English is used.

- Provide phonic software and audio books as appropriate.

- Create visual rich environments using dual-language texts, labels, and visual support within lessons.

- Ensure that there are many opportunities for talking in English to both adults and peers.

Designated ELL lead

The designated ELL lead will:

- Assist in the development, monitoring and evaluation of the ELL policy and programs.
- Manage ELL support teachers and learning support assistants.
- Oversee initial assessment of students' standards of English.
- Maintain a central record / register for ELL and oversee the records of all ELL students. The register should always be up to date and contain relevant information regarding student levels and suggestions to support them.
- Create and review Individual Language Plans (ILPs).

- Officially review the register three times a year, during which an evaluation of whether ELL students are reaching their full potential will be made.
- Monitor progress closely to ensure that students have a full range of opportunities to grow and develop their potential.
- Liaise with parents and communicate progress. • Support with recommendations for applications for Arabic exemption (if applicable).

ELL Support teacher

The ELL support teacher will:

- Plan and deliver lessons in English language development.
- Collaborate with classroom teachers and specialists to create ELL friendly classroom environments and ensure appropriate achievement of students who are ELL across content areas.
- Administer formative and summative assessments to monitor progress and ensure student achievement.
- Communicate with and support parents of ELL students.

Subject Exemptions

Some students may require exemptions from certain subjects (for example Arabic) due to their challenges with accessing the curriculum. Requests for exemptions should always be made with

the knowledge of the appropriate curriculum coordinator and the parent should always be informed of potential implications due to changes made.

In terms of Arabic, the school can make an application to KHDA (on the student's behalf) with regards to exemption due to challenges with their ability to access content in English. Such an application depends on the results of their language assessment and the passport they have registered with the school. It also requires a formal letter from the ELL Lead and the Head of Arabic. If a student has an Arabic passport, they are not allowed to be exempted but can be moved from Arabic A to Arabic B as long as an application is made and there is evidence to do so.

A student without an Arabic passport can seek a full exemption. As Arabic is a compulsory subject within the United Arab Emirates (UAE) an exemption to Arabic due to language is valid for one calendar year and then needs to be reviewed. Students whose English language level on the WIDA Model is 4.5 Overall can be transitioned out of ELL and need to return to Arabic.

Professional Development

All staff are encouraged to attend courses that help them to acquire the skills needed to work with ELL students. This may take the form of in-house training or external training as available.

Complaints

Complaints regarding the provision of ELL supportive practices will be taken seriously and every effort will be made to resolve the complaint within the school. The ELL Lead will discuss any complaint with those involved and inform the School Leadership Team where appropriate. Parents/carers must be kept informed regarding the complaint procedure.

Monitoring and Review

The Principal and ELL Lead will monitor this policy's effectiveness regularly and, if necessary, make recommendations for further improvements.

Appendix 1

ELL Parent letter to start support.

To the Parents of _____,

The school year is now under way and the process of identifying and developing students' social and academic skills in English has been initiated. Skills in reading comprehension, written expression, speaking, and listening are all focused on throughout the school.

Through our screening or admissions processes your child has been identified as a candidate who would benefit from our English Language Learners (ELL) support program. As English is the language of teaching and learning within the school, we are asking for your permission to support your child and the classroom teacher by working with your child either individually or in a small group setting during the school week. Our goal is to reinforce the learning that occurs in the classroom and across the curriculum by providing additional assistance with English language skills.

All students identified as ELL students will receive support according to individual needs and levels. The optimal goal is to provide the most support possible in the least disruptive manner and to have students move off the ELL internal register. As a parent, you would receive termly updates on the progress of your child's English Language development.

Please could we ask you to sign and return this letter as soon as possible to confirm that we have informed you of the suggested action of providing ELL support for your child and that you agree. The full extent of the ELL program will be put in place as soon as timetables are finalized.

If you have questions about the nature of the support offered, please contact us any time.

Kind regards, [Name]

Dubai Schools ELL Lead

_____

Please return this section to the Inclusion department as soon as possible.

My child, _____, has been assessed by the ELL team at Dubai Schools and it has been determined that he/she requires additional English language support.

The school has explained to me the support they wish to put in place and have my permission to provide my child with additional English language support.

_____   _____   _____   **Parent**

                                         Signature   **Date**

Appendix 2

Parent letter to remove support

Dear Parents,

The ELL Team and class teachers are regularly monitoring all children receiving ELL support. After discussions with the class teacher, and after reviewing progress on WIDA standards, we recommend that your child is now ready to re-join the class on a regular basis and therefore does not require any further continuous ELL support (whether push-in or pull-out). This change will go into eHect on [date].

The ELL Team will continue to monitor your child and collaborate with the class teacher to ensure continued positive learning outcomes for your child.

Should you wish to discuss this further, please do not hesitate to contact us or your child's teacher. We would be happy to answer any questions you may have.

Kind Regards,
[Name]

Dubai Schools ELL Lead