

Teaching & Learning Policy

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DUBAI SCHOOLS
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Dubai Schools Teaching & Learning Policy

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APPLIES TO apply group names to define applicable areas of staff					
GROUP 1	Senior Leadership Team	GROUP 2	Middle Leadership Team	GROUP 3	Teachers
GROUP 4	Teaching Assistants	GROUP 5	Parents	GROUP 6	Students

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1	Principal	N/A	N/A Version 1	John Garman



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Introduction

Across Dubai Schools, we follow the New York State Common Core Learning Standards and Ministry of Education (MoE) curriculum as a framework, which we adapt to ensure conceptual, contextualised and meaningful learning experiences for our students.

Our mission to become a *beacon of academic quality* is driven through combining an inquisitive teaching approach and future-focused skillset we work hand-in-hand with the community to nurture students to become independent and empathetic learners. We offer an American education that will be guided by Arabic principles and Islamic values which will foster future-ready graduates, driven by pride and tolerance.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy document is to provide clarity for all leaders, teaching staff and other stakeholders as to what our understanding and expectation of high-quality teaching and learning means within Dubai Schools.

Teaching & Learning Principals

Personalised learning, adaptive instruction and student agency is at the heart of high-quality learning and teaching. At Dubai Schools, we recognise the need to develop strategies that will allow all children to learn in ways that best suit them so that they will achieve their potential. A diverse range of learning opportunities are made available to the children that take account of their interests, learning preferences and needs. These include but are not limited to:

- investigation and problem solving
- enquiry, research and exploration
- flexible groupings and collaborative work
- independent work
- whole-class work



- questioning
- effective use of Ed Tech to redefine learning opportunities
- a range of experiences including visits and visitors
- creative and expressive activities
- debates, role-plays, public speaking opportunities and oral presentations
- designing and making things
- learning outside the classroom
- ensuring awe and wonder promotes engagement of students to ignite passions

Learner Values

The Dubai Schools learner values should underpin all aspects of teaching and learning, with relevant and meaningful links being made where possible as part of curriculum mapping, planning and teaching strategies. There should be a progression of skill and expectation as students move through grade levels. It is the responsibility of school leaders to ensure staff have a shared understanding of what the values mean to them and how they are embedded within school life. The Dubai School Values are outlined below:

Future Ready

Equipping students with the necessary life skills to face future challenges, both national and global, with resilience, while encouraging them to be ambitious self-directed learners.

Collaboration & Inclusions

Working together with education partners, parents and the wider community to achieve shared goals, making every member of the school community feel valued. Cultivating an inclusive culture that recognizes and honours individuals' strengths and abilities.

Trust & Respect



Developing a home-school relationship based on trust and respect, while fostering a welcoming school environment in order for every student to flourish and every parent to feel reassured. Bringing empathy into our classrooms and embedding it as a core value.

Cultural Preservation

A dynamic and forward-thinking learning system that is rooted in the Emirati culture. Guided by Arabic and Islamic values to further foster a culture of strong identity and tolerance, while maintaining a global outlook.

Academic Excellence

A strong international curriculum that prepares and inspires students to contribute positively towards the future in a caring and inclusive environment. High-quality innovative education will be delivered to equip students with essential problem solving, critical thinking and life skills, so that they graduate with a thorough understanding of the world they will inhabit and lead in their future.

Enabling Environments

The learning spaces within Dubai Schools should facilitate students learning and act as a 'second teacher' within the classroom and shared spaces. Their main function is to **scaffold, challenge, motivate and celebrate learning for all.**

There are some core features and expectations which should be adhered to across all learning environments:

- The *process of learning* should be valued over the end product
- Student work is prioritized and resources to support learning should be the main focus of any displays (*less is more* and a neutral color palette should be aimed for to keep student work at the center)
- BML students are supported and valued through *dual-language* where possible
- *Consistency* across grade levels and subjects is paramount
- It is evident that a level of *pride* is taken in the presentation of all work, including on displays and in books. This should reflect the high standards and expectations we collectively have of both students and staff alike
- Environments should enable students to be *independent* in their learning processes



Further guidance can be found in the [Enabling Learning Environment – Principles, Guidance and Features of Highly Effective Practice](#) documentation.

Evidence Collection

Dubai Schools will collate evidence of learning and progress in the following ways:

- Via copybooks
- Online platforms, e.g. Seesaw
- Internal and external data

The role of copybooks is to showcase learning outcomes, however, more importantly is the process of learning and therefore the progress of students. Copybooks must be in place for all core subjects. The number of expected pieces of work can be dictated by school leaders in accordance with the grade level, subject and school expectation, however the amount of work in each copybook **must** be substantial enough to show good levels of progress and high-quality pieces of output. Online platforms to be used as a communication tool but also to evidence learning experiences which may not be evidenced in copybooks.

Expectations of feedback and marking may differ according to individual school expectations, however they must all ensure the following consistencies:

- Marking and feedback to be impactful on student learning, i.e. addressing misconceptions, challenging student outcomes or used to inform planning
- A variety of feedback to be utilized (weighting will be dependent on student age and phase and subject), including verbal, self-assessment, peer-assessment, written feedback, whole-class feedback

Further detailed information can be found in individual schools' marking and feedback policies.



Planning

All planning across Dubai Schools must sit within the Atlas online platform. Teachers across all subjects and phases are expected to complete the following documentation:

- Scope and sequence – unit planning
- Weekly planning
- Lesson planning (when required for inspection and observation purposes)

All planning must align fully with the Dubai Schools Curriculum Policy and ensure the following:

- Planning is informed by recent and relevant assessment, including internal and external assessment outcomes where available
- All planning offers opportunities for support and challenge for all students
- Planning documentation clearly states students who have an identified need/barrier to learning and how this is being supported in sessions
- The role of all adults in the lesson is clearly outlined in planning

Resourcing

Resources must support student outcomes in the following ways:

- Resources are well-prepared and link directly to the intended learning outcomes
- Differentiated resources allow for varying levels of challenge and support
- Resources allow for translanguaging, i.e. Arabic and English, where possible
- Students are motivated by resources and engage well with them

All resources align with US and MoE curriculum standards. Teachers are encouraged to utilize HMH resources where possible, and mandatory MoE resources. All teaching staff hold a responsibility for vetting resources to ensure all texts, visuals and media are culturally appropriate. There are a number of other schemes of work/subscriptions which individual schools might utilize, e.g. TT Rockstars, IXL, which teachers must feel confident using for the benefit of students and in line with school expectations.



Home Learning

Across Dubai Schools, there are some consistent expectations in place to ensure any home learning is impactful and aligned with our schools' shared vision and values. School leaders and teachers are encouraged to reflect on the following when planning and sharing home learning with students and parents:

Logistics and Communication

- There is a consistent system and processes in place for dissemination of home learning, including where and how home learning is accessed and recorded.
- Students and families have an appropriate time frame to complete home learning.
- All completed and returned home learning is acknowledged by a staff member.
- There are to be accommodations available for translation for students and parents.

Content & Purpose

- There must be a clear intended outcome for home learning, which will benefit the student in their knowledge, skill or understanding.
- Task-based home learning should be consolidation of learning which has taken place in school, rather than students accessing activities which include new/unknown curriculum content.
- Pre-reading or research-based home learning can be either consolidation or new learning.
- Reading should be an expectation for all students to varying levels.
- Home learning should support student led learning skills, including research, revision and recording through a variety of mediums.
- Home learning mandatory activities should not exceed 1 hour per week for KG and elementary students (aside from reading guided timings) and 2 hours per week for middle school students. High school students can expect up to 4 hours per week of home learning.
- Home learning will primarily be based around core subjects, with a balance of some non-core curricular focus too.

Assessment for Learning (Responsive Instruction)

Assessment for Learning is a vital part of teaching and learning and is imperative for children to make progress. At all times, the teacher should be continually 'taking the pulse' of the learning in the 'room' and have an astute



awareness of when and how to intervene through questioning and adaptation to move children's learning forward. Outstanding assessment for learning will include the following:

- Timely feedback (verbal, written and recorded) that is personalised and motivating and that addresses misconceptions, identifies next steps and promotes challenge
- Ongoing and regular formative assessment strategies that are used skilfully in the moment to inform and evolve planning, teaching and provision – these include pre and post assessment tasks, cold tasks, prove and move, progress pit stops, etc
- Accurate and effective coordination and integration of all available data sources, including academic and pastoral (quantitative and qualitative) which informs planning and provision, leading to data driven instruction using data such as CAT4 and MAP
- Aspirational target setting that considers a child's full potential
- Observations, annotations and enhancements, including those made by learning assistants, which directly impact planning, in the moment teaching and provision

Further detailed information can be found in individual schools' assessment policies.

Language of Learning

There is a shared understanding across all Dubai Schools that an important part of our teaching and learning process is a shared language of learning, which supports all stakeholders in continuing to drive forward the quality of teaching and more importantly learning skills. There is a clear and progressive language of learning in place within each Dubai School. This has been developed through combining the Dubai Schools Values; relevant assessment data for our students and aligned with the work the project has been involved with linked to Visible Learning.



The purpose of a shared language of learning is to ensure all stakeholders are able to articulate learning skills and how they develop them. Each of the Dubai Schools is engaged in an ongoing cycle of professional learning with Corwin and Visible Learning, which is supporting the process of creating, developing and effectively using a shared language of learning, alongside the importance of teacher clarity and efficacy. The role of the student in driving their learning forward is further supported by a language of learning and embedded systems and processes linked to students understanding how to drive their own attainment and progress forward.

There are some shared commonalities within each school, however schools have autonomy to synonymize their language of learning with their unique approaches to teaching and learning. The use of academic language as part of students' academic discourse is as essential part of each school's shared language of learning.

Monitoring & Review

It is the responsibility of leaders at all levels to ensure regular, impactful monitoring and reviewing of teaching and learning, with the impact on student outcomes as the most important factor in assessing teaching and learning. Monitoring must follow a cyclical approach, with feedback and change actions being the outcome of the monitoring cycle. Expectations linked to monitoring of teaching and learning include:

- A range of approaches of monitoring, including formal observations, learning walks, drop-ins, flythroughs, specific foci, book looks
- Transparency with staff around focus areas
- Feedback in timely manner
- Links to appraisal cycle

Senior leaders should strive to empower middle leaders to play a role in the monitoring and improvement cycle of teaching and learning within their grade level/subject. This should be done through ensuring sufficient non-contact time, alongside coaching and mentoring to upskill leaders at all levels. All monitoring should be recorded in the agreed platforms and formats as directed by senior leaders in each school. Dubai Schools will continue to adopt a 'tiered' system of support, ensuring a bespoke approach to professional development according to the level of need/experience of staff members.



Professional Development

All staff are expected and encouraged to engage with professional learning, both mandatory and self-directed in order to stay up to date and highly skilled in the latest and most impactful teaching and learning strategies.

It is the responsibility of the leaders within each Dubai School to ensure the induction of new staff allows for staff to become knowledgeable and upskilled in the following areas:

- How and why we teach and learn at Dubai Schools, our pedagogy and philosophy
- Effective assessment, both summative and formative processes
- Safeguarding and pastoral policies in Dubai Schools

Throughout the academic year, all in-school professional learning must be relevant and in response to the needs of the cohort of staff and students being targeted. Leaders should continually align any professional development opportunities with the identified priorities of students and staff, with data being collated through monitoring cycles and assessment data.

Professional learning may include, but is not limited to the following:

- PLCs, including planning sessions and moderation meetings
- Whole school/departmental meetings linked to identified priorities
- Accessing online resources as directed by leaders
- External professional learning where required
- Job-a-likes and cluster moderation meetings within Dubai Schools and Taaleem

School leaders should aim to include a balance of self-driven and school-mandated professional learning. Staff should expect for professional development sessions to take place within and external to the school day, e.g. after school hours, as and when required.

Summary

All of the above details are high-level expectations and guidance which schools should refer to when developing individual school policies linked to teaching and learning. This policy is flexible and will be updated and amended according to the ever-changing needs and landscapes of the Dubai Schools Projects.

