



GEMS Winchester School Dubai



Multilingual Policy

Person(s) Responsible: Deputy Head of Primary & Head of Multilingual

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1. Introduction

GEMS Education 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 Education'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 GEMS Winchester School Dubai, 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.

At GEMS Winchester School Dubai, 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.

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2. Aims & Objectives

The aims and objectives of this policy are:

- 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

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3. Definitions

The KHDA (Knowledge and Human Development Authority) Inspection Framework defines EAL students as 'students for whom the language of instruction is an additional language.' In the UAE, we have 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 ELL provision.

Multilingualism – 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 our home language 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 the home language as part of multilingualism can lead to positive outcomes for individuals, our families, and communities

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

English Language Learners (ELL) – An English Language Learner (ELL) student at GEMS Winchester School Dubai 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 with participating fully in educational activities conducted in English.

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

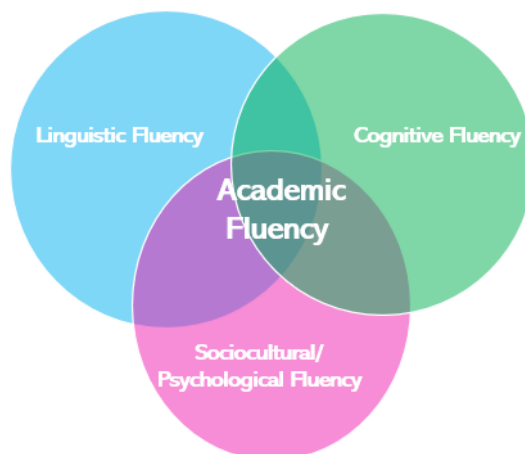
- They are in the process of acquiring proficiency in the English language, whilst also developing their content knowledge and academic skills
- They have varying levels of proficiency in English, ranging from beginner to advanced
- They are students who struggle in accessing the curriculum due to language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

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4. Fundamental Principles of Multilingual Provision

At GEMS Education, 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.

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5. Identification of ELL Students

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) or Language Screener 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/Head of EAL for any further assessment and recommendations.

FS1 and FS2

For students in FS, admission process begins with parents applying and attending a play-based assessment. For FS1, there is no requirement for children to speak English; however, the assessment focuses on communication and language, physical development, and personal, social, and emotional development (PSED).

For FS2, an expected level of English proficiency is required, as the curriculum includes Phonics, Reading, and Writing components. If a child entering FS2 is not at the expected level of English, the family will be advised to attend nursery to support their child's language development before the start of the school year in September. Students identified as English Language Learners (ELL) will be required to register for the paid FS2 ELL Programme, which is part of the conditional offer. This programme aims to improve their English language skills to meet FS2 curriculum expectations.

As part of the FS staggered start, a three-week period is allocated for baseline assessments in each class. During this time, ELL students will also be screened for potential language needs. This screening ensures that students who were not identified during the admission process receive early intervention, beginning in Term 1, to address any gaps in language development.

Year 1 to Year 6

For students in Years 1 to 6, the identification of ELL (English Language Learners) students begins with the assessment of their English proficiency. If a student's CAT4 SAS score is below 85, this is further triangulated with their performance on the New Group Reading Test (NGRT). A potential language gap is then identified through teachers' observations, review of classwork, and external data. If a language gap is suspected, the student is referred to the paid EAL/ELL support programme.

To assess language proficiency, we use the Flash Academy Proficiency assessments as our language screener, which includes:

The EAL team conducts the language screener, and the results provide a comprehensive understanding of the student's language needs. This data helps to determine the level of support required, ensuring that each student receives targeted and appropriate support for their English language development.

Year 7 to Year 13

For students in Year 7 to 13, we use a structured approach to identify English Language Learners (ELLs) and students learning English as an Additional Language (EAL). Methods of identification include:

- *CAT4 Assessments*: Low verbal scores may indicate a need for additional ELL/EAL support.
- **NGRT targeted offers**: In line with GEMS' Read Like a Gem playbook, new international students and students new to reading English receive tailored support, access to ReadingWise Zip Phonics Programme and the opportunity to access Flash Academy via the EAL Programme.
- *Classroom Observations*: Teachers monitor student engagement, comprehension, and written output. Difficulty following instructions, limited vocabulary, and trouble expressing thoughts may indicate ELL/EAL needs.
- *Formative Assessments*: Regular tasks, quizzes, and assignments track language proficiency.
- *Teacher Collaboration and Referrals*: Subject teachers refer students to English teachers if language barriers are observed or if there is a need for further intervention. English teachers refer to EAL team to screen for a possible placement in the paid EAL support programme of the school.
- *EAL Team and Parental Communication*: The EAL team communicates with parents to discuss language support and offer placement in the EAL support programme if needed.

Based on these assessments, students are either placed in the mainstream curriculum with tailored support or, if language difficulties are significant, enrolled in the IGCSE English as a Second Language program.

Band Assignment

At GEMS Education we use the CEFR framework to check the language proficiency of our students. The CEFR was published in 2001 in English and French after a period of development from 1992 to 1996 and piloting from 1997–2000. It has been translated into 40 languages and is now accepted as the international standard for language teaching and learning.

Mapping of levels to CEFR (See [Appendix](#) for CEFR level descriptors)

	Basic User		Independent User		Proficient User
CEFR	A1	A2	B1	B2	C1/C2
FlashAcademy	A	B	C	D	E
	New to English	Early Acquisition	Developing Competencies	Competent	Fluent

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6. ELL Support in Mainstream Lessons

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 are able to 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 EAL on 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.

FS1 to Year 1

These strategies ensure ELLs in both FS1 and FS2 can effectively engage with the curriculum and develop their English language skills in a supportive learning environment:

1. Differentiated Instruction: Lessons are tailored to meet the diverse language abilities of students, using simplified language, visual aids, and additional support where needed.
2. Visual Supports: Pictures, flashcards, and real-life objects (realia) are used to reinforce vocabulary and concepts, helping students make connections between words and meanings.
3. Collaborative Learning: ELLs work in pairs or small groups to encourage language development through peer interaction and collaborative activities.
4. Language Support: Teachers model key phrases, sentences, and provide opportunities for students to practice functional language in context.
5. Pre-Teaching Vocabulary: Key vocabulary relevant to upcoming lessons is introduced in advance to help students build a stronger foundation for new content.
6. Scaffolded Tasks: Tasks and activities are broken down into manageable steps, with clear instructions and support provided, allowing students to engage progressively with content.
7. Visual Timetables and Instructions: Visual schedules and step-by-step instructions help students understand the structure of the day and follow along with lessons and routines.
8. Ongoing Assessment: Continuous assessments are conducted to monitor ELL progress, ensuring timely and targeted support is provided to meet individual needs.

Year 2 to Year 6

At WSD, English Language Learners (ELLs) receive targeted support within mainstream lessons through Quality First Teaching (QFT) strategies that ensure accessibility, engagement, and progress.

Teachers employ a range of evidence-based techniques, including dual coding, scaffolding, and explicit vocabulary instruction, to support language acquisition alongside subject learning. Visual aids and sentence stems enhance comprehension, while collaborative learning and mixed-ability grouping foster peer support. Teachers use formative assessment and adaptive teaching methods to differentiate instruction, ensuring ELLs develop their language skills while accessing the full curriculum

Year 7 to Year 13

To support ELLs/EALs in accessing the curriculum, we implement the following strategies:

1. Scaffolded Instruction
 - Use visual aids, graphic organisers, and key vocabulary.
 - Pre-teach subject-specific vocabulary.
 - Provide sentence starters and structured writing frames.
2. Modified Lesson Delivery
 - Simplify instructions while maintaining academic rigor.
 - Encourage bilingual resources and peer support.
3. Language Support Across Subjects
 - Embed literacy activities such as guided reading and writing tasks.
 - Encourage oral discussions to develop speaking and listening skills.
 - Differentiate worksheets and assessments based on language proficiency.
4. Ongoing Monitoring and Intervention
 - Provide regular feedback and personalized support plans.
 - Offer access to EAL specialists and learning support teams for targeted help.

These strategies ensure all students, regardless of language background, have equal access to the curriculum and support their progression toward IGCSE First or Second Language English.

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7. Language Support Interventions

The following table summarises the Language Support Interventions offered at WSD:

Tier	CEFR	Interventions
Tier 3	Pre - A1 - A2	<u>Intensive Interventions</u> • Tier 3 support students who have no or minimal background in English • Parents agreed undertaking of additional ELL/EAL support which incurs an additional cost to parents • Students will have a personalised Individual Learning Plan (ILP) which needs regular reviews and is amended as progress is made • Regular communication with mainstream teachers to share progress and identified strategies which work best of each student • Home/School communication to highlight the successes and challenges of each academic week
Tier 2	B1 / B2	<u>Semi-intensive interventions</u> • Tier 2 literacy interventions through in class support by the Teaching Assistants/Intervention team or pull-out sessions from the ELL/EAL team • Parents may agree to undertaking of additional ELL/EAL support which incurs an additional cost to parents. In this case, students will have pull-out sessions and have a personalised Individual Learning Plan (ILP) which needs regular reviews and is amended as progress is made • Regular communication with mainstream teachers to share progress and identified strategies which work best for each student • Home/School communication to highlight the successes and challenges of each academic week
Tier 1	C1/C	<u>High Quality Teaching (Graduated Approach)</u> • This tier describes the support available to all students, including those with and without SEN. In Tier 1, needs are met through quality first teaching. • Teachers accommodate individual differences and ability, additional needs and behaviour through high quality inclusive and adaptive teaching practices. • Tier 1 provision may include one or more of the following: ○ Personalised planning and resources ○ Assistive technology ○ Interventions led by class teacher/Head of Year/leadership team • Cross curricular communication to share progress and identified strategies which work best of each student

For students entering in Year 8, 9, 10 the following recommendations may be given in addition to any appropriate ones from Tier 1,2 or 3:

- Additional studies option for Year 10 to provide tailored support
- Consideration for demotion to the year below if deemed necessary for academic progress
- Limitation on the number of iGCSE subjects to accommodate necessary support
- Option to choose iGCSE second language English to cater to language needs

For students entering Year 11 to Year 13 whose language proficiency is A1 or A2, parents will be informed that their English language level will affect their ability to access the curriculum at KS4 or KS5 and may limit their access to external examinations.

For students whose language proficiency is B1/B2 a conditional offer will be given with the expectation that an English course will need to be completed, and certification submitted to the school. Parents will be required to sign a contract outlining the school expectations to ensure the best possible outcomes for their child.

Assessment Accommodations

At WSD, we endeavour to support our ELL learners during assessment periods. This includes:

Accomodations											
25% extra time	ELL 25% ET & Dictionary (NOT L&L / LA)	Reader	Scribe	Assistive Technology	4 Function Calculator	Modified Paper	Separate Room (Achievement Centre)	Restbreaks	Preferential Seating- minimize distractions	Use of Aid	Focus Prompts

- Accommodations in red require an official report from an Educational Psychologist (if applying for official exams)
- Official exam accommodations allow bilingual dictionaries, word to word only (not a dictionary with any definitions)
- 25% additional time/ separate room (if it helps reduce anxiety)

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8. 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 GEMS Winchester School Dubai, our Head of EAL has responsibility for the ELL provision within the school, while Assistant Principals have responsibilities for developing literacy across the curriculum through quality first teaching. 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
- ILPs are in place to support and monitor student progress and enable teachers to implement strategies to help students access the curriculum
- ILPs 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 Self Evaluation Framework reflects accurately the strengths & areas for development of ELL students
- All Departments (Secondary) and Year Groups (Primary) have appropriate provision for supporting ELLs within their lesson planning and delivery
- Individual teachers have access to key information regarding ELLs and plan differentiated experiences accordingly

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9. Links to Other Policies

The school policy on the curriculum embraces WSD's aims and ethos, reflected in its policies and procedures. Key policies which are explicitly linked are:

- Inclusion Policy
- Gifted and/or Talented Policy
- Safeguarding Policy
- Wellbeing Policy
- Learning & Teaching Policy

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10. Monitoring Arrangements

This Multilingual Policy will be reviewed annually by the Corporate Head of Multilingualism, At every review, the policy will be approved by Mr David Irish, SVP of Children's Services and Lisa Crausby, OBE, CEO Education.

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11. Appendix

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

		A1	A2	B1	B2	C1	C2
U N D E R S T A N D I N G	Listening	I can recognise familiar words and very basic phrases concerning myself, my family and immediate concrete surroundings when people speak slowly and clearly.	I can understand phrases and the highest frequency vocabulary related to areas of most immediate personal relevance (e.g. very basic personal and family information, shopping, local area, employment). I can catch the main point in short, clear, simple messages and announcements.	I can understand the main points of clear standard speech on familiar matters regularly encountered in work, school, leisure, etc. I can understand the main point of many radio or TV programmes on current affairs or topics of personal or professional interest when the delivery is relatively slow and clear.	I can understand extended speech and lectures and follow even complex lines of argument provided the topic is reasonably familiar. I can understand most TV news and current affairs programmes. I can understand the majority of films in standard dialect.	I can understand extended speech even when it is not clearly structured and when relationships are only implied and not signalled explicitly. I can understand television programmes and films without too much effort.	I have no difficulty in understanding any kind of spoken language, whether live or broadcast, even when delivered at fast native speed, provided I have some time to get familiar with the accent.
	Reading	I can understand familiar names, words and very simple sentences, for example on notices and posters or in catalogues.	I can read very short, simple texts. I can find specific, predictable information in simple everyday material such as advertisements, prospectuses, menus and timetables and I can understand short simple personal letters.	I can understand texts that consist mainly of high frequency everyday or job-related language. I can understand the description of events, feelings and wishes in personal letters.	I can read articles and reports concerned with contemporary problems in which the writers adopt particular attitudes or viewpoints. I can understand contemporary literary prose.	I can understand long and complex factual and literary texts, appreciating distinctions of style. I can understand specialised articles and longer technical instructions, even when they do not relate to my field.	I can read with ease virtually all forms of the written language, including abstract, structurally or linguistically complex texts such as manuals, specialised articles and literary works.
S P E A K I N G	Spoken Interaction	I can interact in a simple way provided the other person is prepared to repeat or rephrase things at a slower rate of speech and help me formulate what I'm trying to say. I can ask and answer simple questions in areas of immediate need or on very familiar topics.	I can communicate in simple and routine tasks requiring a simple and direct exchange of information on familiar topics and activities. I can handle very short social exchanges, even though I can't usually understand enough to keep the conversation going myself.	I can deal with most situations likely to arise whilst travelling in an area where the language is spoken. I can enter unprepared into conversation on topics that are familiar, of personal interest or pertinent to everyday life (e.g. family, hobbies, work, travel and current events).	I can interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction with native speakers quite possible. I can take an active part in discussion in familiar contexts, accounting for and sustaining my views.	I can express myself fluently and spontaneously without much obvious searching for expressions. I can use language flexibly and effectively for social and professional purposes. I can formulate ideas and opinions with precision and relate my contribution skilfully to those of other speakers.	I can take part effortlessly in any conversation or discussion and have a good familiarity with idiomatic expressions and colloquialisms. I can express myself fluently and convey finer shades of meaning precisely. If I do have a problem I can backtrack and restructure around the difficulty so smoothly that other people are hardly aware of it.
	Spoken Production	I can use simple phrases and sentences to describe where I live and people I know.	I can use a series of phrases and sentences to describe in simple terms my family and other people, living conditions, my educational background and my present or most recent job.	I can connect phrases in a simple way in order to describe experiences and events, my dreams, hopes and ambitions. I can briefly give reasons and explanations for opinions and plans. I can narrate a story or relate the plot of a book or film and describe my reactions.	I can present clear, detailed descriptions on a wide range of subjects related to my field of interest. I can explain a viewpoint on a topical issue giving the advantages and disadvantages of various options.	I can present clear, detailed descriptions of complex subjects integrating sub-themes, developing particular points and rounding off with an appropriate conclusion.	I can present a clear, smoothly-flowing description or argument in a style appropriate to the context and with an effective logical structure which helps the recipient to notice and remember significant points.
W R I T I N G	Writing	I can write a short, simple postcard, for example sending holiday greetings. I can fill in forms with personal details, for example entering my name, nationality and address on a hotel registration form.	I can write short, simple notes and messages relating to matters in areas of immediate needs. I can write a very simple personal letter, for example thanking someone for something.	I can write simple connected text on topics which are familiar or of personal interest. I can write personal letters describing experiences and impressions.	I can write clear, detailed text on a wide range of subjects related to my interests. I can write an essay or report, passing on information or giving reasons in support of or against a particular point of view. I can write letters highlighting the personal significance of events and experiences.	I can express myself in clear, well-structured text, expressing points of view at some length. I can write about complex subjects in a letter, an essay or a report, underlining what I consider to be the salient issues. I can select style appropriate to the reader in mind.	I can write clear, smoothly-flowing text in an appropriate style. I can write complex letters, reports or articles which present a case with an effective logical structure which helps the recipient to notice and remember significant points. I can write summaries and reviews of professional or literary works.

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