

## **GEMS Cambridge International Private School Sharjah** **Curriculum Policy**

**Last Amended:** August 2022 **Policy Review Date:** August 2023

### **Our Mission Statement**

GEMS Cambridge International Private School Sharjah provides a world class, outstanding education whilst ensuring individual and collective excellence in learning, teaching and leadership. We empower lifelong learners for their future.

### **Our Aims**

We provide a high-quality curriculum which will build on the firm foundations created in the Foundation Stage. Each child is valued as a unique individual, and teaching and learning activities are based on the understanding that children develop at different rates.

### **We aim to:**

- Provide an inclusive, welcoming and safe environment in which every student is valued, cared for and supported
- Offer a broad and creative curriculum that recognises the uniqueness of every student and provides challenge and enjoyment through a personalised learning approach
- Ensure that all students are able to realise their potential through high quality learning experiences that promote and value all achievement and raise self-esteem
- Promote a culture of respect, inclusion and equality whilst celebrating the rich cultural diversity within our school, empowering all students to succeed
- Inform and encourage all students to adopt a healthy lifestyle by promoting healthy eating, regular enjoyable exercise and physical and mental well-being
- Develop an appreciation of our community, the world in which we live and an awareness of our environment to encourage students to be responsible citizens of the future

### **The Primary Curriculum**

The British National Curriculum is organised on the basis of key stages:

Key Stage	Year Groups	Ages
Early Years Foundation Stage	KG1 / FS2	3 – 5
Key Stage 1	KG2 – Grade 1 (Year 1 – 2)	5 – 7
Key Stage 2	Grade 2 – 5 (Year 3 – 6)	7 – 11

The children in the Foundation Stage classes follow the Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum and work towards achieving the Early Learning Goals in prime areas: personal, social and emotional development; language and physical development and in specific areas: Maths; Literacy; Expressive Arts and Design and Understanding of the World.

In Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 students learn the following subjects:

- English
- Mathematics
- Science
- French ( KS2)
- Computing
- History and Geography
- Art
- Physical Education (PE)
- Moral Education
- Design Thinking/STEAM
- Arabic
- Islamic (for Muslim students only)
- Social Studies

## **SUBJECTS TAUGHT BY CLASS TEACHERS**

### **Mathematics**

Each child is taught numeracy skills and given a wide range of mathematical tasks and problems. Children are taught mental maths and an emphasis is placed on children using and applying their maths in a range of real-life situations. We use a variety of software in the classroom to complement the children's maths work as well as Education City – an online learning programme for which each child has a personal account.

### **Science**

All children are curious and have a natural desire to explore their surroundings and our science teaching aims to develop this. Pupils acquire skills of investigation as well as scientific fact and learn by carrying out experiments, observing demonstrations and recording results.

Children develop scientific knowledge of biology, chemistry and physics in the following topics which are taught throughout Primary School:

Plants and animals  
Materials  
Rocks and Soils  
Light and Sound  
Electricity  
States of Matter  
Forces  
Physical Processes

### **History and Geography**

Children will develop contextual knowledge of the location of globally significant places – both terrestrial and marine – including their defining physical and human characteristics and how these provide a geographical context for understanding the actions of processes. They will understand the processes that give rise to key physical and human geographical features of the world, how these are interdependent and how they bring about spatial variation and change over time.

## **Moral Education**

The School's Moral Education Curriculum covers the four pillars of teaching and learning outlined in the Ministry of Education Framework: Character and Morality • The Individual and the Community • Civic Studies • Cultural Studies

## **Social Studies B**

The School's Social Studies B Curriculum covers the expectations of the MOE Curriculum and has to be followed without any exceptions

## **SPECIALIST SUBJECTS**

### **English**

Many of our children learn English as an additional language. The most effective way to learn another language is to be immersed in it. Children learn to express themselves with growing confidence and are given opportunities to speak to a widening range of audiences; their teacher, the class, to visitors and at formal occasions such as school productions. Listening is an important part of learning and children are taught to listen attentively for increasing lengths of time.

Children read in small groups with their teacher every week. In this way, the teacher can give children individual attention and read books which are suitable to their reading ability. All children in our school have access to our school library and may take home a different book each week. Children learning to read will be given a book by their teacher which is appropriate to their level. We encourage parents to read at home with their children as much as possible and discuss with their child what they are reading. Parents are invited to share their comments in a reading record book.

Phonics is taught once a day to children in Key Stage 1. In the first term, parents are invited to a presentation on phonics by our phonics coordinator to learn more about how phonics is taught in school. Once children have a firm grasp of phonics, they move on to develop a more advanced understanding of spelling strategies, for example understanding more complex letter patterns; understanding how words relate to each other or where they originate from. In Key Stage 2, children are allocated a spelling group and learn ten words every week which they are tested on. Spelling test books may be sent home at a parent's request.

Writing is taught alongside reading to enable children becoming increasingly independent writers. The children write for a wide range of purposes and confidently communicate in a range of genre. Each term, children study poetry, fiction and non-fiction texts.

### **Physical Education (PE)**

Children have two PE lessons every week and develop skills in a variety of areas such as gymnastics, swimming, dance, athletics, fitness, invasion games and net games.

### **Music**

In our music programme, children learn how to use their voices expressively and creatively by singing songs and speaking chants and rhymes. They learn how to play tuned and un-tuned instruments musically as well as developing skills in composing themselves. In Key Stage 2, children develop their understanding of music by learning about the history of music as well as about famous composers and examples of their work.

### **Art**

Through art and design technology children communicate and express themselves. Pupils evaluate their own work as well as that of professional artists and designers. They are given

opportunities to investigate the visual world and to develop a wide range of skills and techniques such as painting, drawing and working in three dimensions.

### **Computing**

All children use our computing suites once a week to enable them to use equipment and software confidently and purposefully. The computing curriculum is divided into three main elements of programming, designing and creating programs and E-Safety and Digital Citizenship (learning how to use technology safely, respectfully and responsibly).

**Arabic** – from KG2 / Year 1 onwards

**Islamic** – from Grade 1 onwards

**Social Studies A** – from Grade 1/ Year 2 onwards

### **The Secondary Curriculum**

Our curriculum is designed to provide our students with a wide variety of intellectual experiences. These will bring them the skills they need to succeed and thrive, without neglecting to provide them with the wide and secure knowledge base they will need as both cultural capital and the foundation for further study.

Key Stage	Year Groups	Ages
Key Stage 3	Grade 6 – 8 (Year 7 – 9)	12 – 14
Key Stage 4	Grade 9 – 10 (Year 10 – 11)	14 - 16

### **Pastoral Care**

At GCS, we know that pastoral welfare and academic success are inextricably linked: successful learners have positive mind-sets and feel happy and confident in themselves. We have an experienced group of teachers that will work with our students to reinforce the core values of the school. It is our aim to foster young adults who are principled, determined and ready to face the challenges of an everchanging world.

Our tutoring system forms the front line of pastoral care within the school. Your child will form a strong relationship with their tutor, with whom he/she will meet at least once a day. A key role of the tutor is to mentor the students in both pastoral and academic matters. They will also have the support of our Pastoral Leader.

Compassion, courage, commitment and communication form the bedrock of well-rounded and successful individuals, and all students are encouraged to embrace these attributes as they progress through the school.

### **Aims of Our Curriculum**

The curriculum at GCS aims to create independent learners equipped with the qualifications, knowledge and skills to flourish in the modern world and make positive contributions throughout their lives and in their communities. We aim to offer a broad and creative, Design Thinking

curriculum that recognises the uniqueness of every student and provides challenge and enjoyment through a personalised and collaborative learning approach.

The curriculum aims to develop the schools' values of Kindness, Honesty, Integrity and Respect, along with the Islamic Values ensuring the academic, social and emotional progress of all our pupils. The curriculum encourages high expectations and a belief that GCS pupils can achieve in any field they choose but this requires hard work – there are no shortcuts to success. At GCS, we believe in a clear, sequenced curriculum allowing pupils the opportunity to use and commit to long term memory their prior learning, knowledge and skills; this will enable them to access further concepts in both the same academic year, across key stages, and ultimately at GCSE. There is, in all subjects, a strong emphasis on reading and communication.

Key Stage 3 (Year 7 - 9) focusses on the learning of key knowledge and skills through high quality engaging teaching. We focus on learning and enthusing our students with the joy of our subjects so they are inquisitive about learning and enthusiastic to learn more. These three years of school allow pupils to acquire a broad and balanced education, introducing them to the widest variety of subjects and engaging them with learning. Specialist teachers who put the passion into their subjects lead our pupils and ensure they become independent, creative learners who are solution focused and can communicate eloquently and effectively. We believe this knowledge and an explicit focus on our key values will give our students both the cultural capital and the academic underpinning they require to make them excel in their lives, at GCSE, and beyond.

At Key Stage 4 the curriculum is designed to meet the needs and future needs of our pupils; their talents and interests. It builds on the breadth of knowledge and skills our students have acquired at Key Stage 3

Throughout all years our pupils' holistic development is promoted through the promotion of Physical Education, student well-being and student leadership.

The curriculum aims to equip our pupils with the knowledge and skills to become global citizens who are able to make positive contributions to their communities. Our innovative Enrichment Programme provide pupils with opportunities to explore and develop their talents and serve to broaden horizons. They form an important part of our curriculum adding to academic success as well as developing the whole child. The curriculum is our most important vehicle to deliver the aim that all pupils from GCS make exceptional progress and are successful in a future destination that is aspirational and in line with their abilities and interests.

In Key Stage 3 students learn the following subjects:

- English
- Mathematics
- Science
- French
- Computing
- History and Geography
- Art
- Physical Education (PE)
- Moral Education
- Design Thinking/STEAM
- Arabic
- Islamic (for Muslim students only)
- PSHE (for Non-Muslim students only)
- Social Studies

### **Art**

Art should engage, inspire and challenge students, equipping them with the knowledge and skills to experiment, invent and create their own works of Art. As students progress, they should be able to think critically and develop a more rigorous understanding of Art and Design

every half term. Students will analyse the work of an artist or artistic movement that links to the topic covered.

Students will produce creative work, exploring their ideas and recording their experiences using artistic language and vocabulary so that they can demonstrate the artistic process. Students will evaluate their work at consolidation phase of their lessons.

Students will become proficient in drawing, painting, sculpture this will enable our students to accurately realise their intentions and find themselves as artists. Students will gain experience of water colour, acrylic paint, pencil sketching, charcoal drawing, collage, printmaking and sculptural techniques over the course of Grade 6 – 8/Year 7 – 9.

Students will evaluate and analyse creative works using the language of art so that they can evidence the link between their own work and the work of artists or artistic movements this will further enhance students' preparation for GCSE.

## **Computing**

Computing or Computer Science is the study of principles and practices that underpin an understanding and modelling of computation, and of their application in the development of computer systems. At its heart lies the notion of computational thinking: a mode of thought that goes well beyond software and hardware, and that provides a framework within which to reason about systems and problems. This mode of thinking is supported and complemented by a substantial body of theoretical and practical knowledge, and by a set of powerful techniques for analysing, modelling and solving problems.

In Key Stage 3, Computing is deeply concerned with how computers and computer systems work, and how they are designed and programmed. Students studying computing gain insight into computational systems of all kinds, whether or not they include computers. It allows us to solve problems, design systems and understand the power and limits of human and machine intelligence. It is a skill that empowers, and that all students should be aware of and have some competence in. Furthermore, students who can think computationally are better able to conceptualise and understand computer-based technology, and so are better equipped to function in modern society.

The Computing curriculum at Key Stage 3 has been designed to prepare students for Key Stage 4 and beyond, whether this is in the Computer Science and IT field or not. E-Safety and Digital Citizenship is at the core of all curriculum content (learning how to use technology safely, respectfully and responsibly).

## **English**

The Key Stage Three English Curriculum at GCS has been designed to spark students' interests and creativity, whilst also providing them with a solid basis of preparation to meet the rigours of Key Stage 4 and 5. It is designed to challenge students, promote valid and respectful discussion and debate, as well as introduce them to a wide range of different texts and genres. The overarching intention is that students are able to confidently discuss, analyse and make their own judgements about a piece of writing. Within different units, students will develop a wide variety of skills. These will include analysing language and its impact on the audience/ reader; discussing how structure within a text is used for effect and how context helps to impact writers and their work. Students will also study a wide range of non-fiction texts including newspaper articles and speeches, and learn how to use language and structure to argue their own point of view successfully. Students will also have opportunities to write creatively, both within the texts and genres they are studying and beyond. Through this work students will also learn subject-specific vocabulary to be employed within their own writing, as well as how to structure their work successfully and with flair.

## **Inspire English International**

Each unit of work in Inspire English International focuses students on the specific curriculum areas of either reading or writing. In the reading-focused units, in addition to responding to a

range extracts, students frequently to write their own texts to deepen their understanding of the choices that writers make and the impact these can have on a reader. Similarly, in the writing-focused units, as well as crafting their own texts, students explore a range of extracts in depth in order to emulate the skills exemplified and so develop their own.

Each unit is also sharply focused on a specific text purpose: for example, Reading Information, Writing Description, Reading Narrative, etc. The units are designed to support students in exploring and building the skills essential in either responding to, or achieving, that particular text purpose. Units are unified with an overarching theme, linking the reading extracts and writing tasks, providing an accessible and familiar topic for students to work with, allowing them to concentrate their efforts more closely on developing skills than on familiarising themselves with, or generating, content.

Over the course of the three years' learning that Inspire English International is intended to support, each skill is visited and re-visited as appropriate, each visit building on the last. This recursive, skills-focused approach has been designed to foster and build a cumulative competence and confidence in the application of these essential skills throughout the broader English curriculum and, indeed, the whole school curriculum.

The Skills Boosts that appear in each section have been designed to encourage students to explore and understand the mechanics of spelling, punctuation and grammar, rather than simply to provide rote practice. Embedded within the context of the broader skill focus, the intention is to make the Boosts both relevant and integral to the effective crafting of fluent and accurate responses, both in reading and writing.

## **Geography**

By the end of KS3 we want students to understand the breadth and relevance of geography in their present and future lives. We want them to understand the importance of a good balance between human and physical phenomena and that, being educated in these areas allows them to look at the world from a number of lenses and critically evaluate their observations. We want our students to comfortably use academic terminology when discussing and writing about geographical concepts and use all the knowledge they have gained to inform their future opinions. Our curriculum deliberately includes a balance of units from human and physical geography, which often overlap and layer knowledge within topics.

Every unit has been created with the aim of enhancing students' ability to thrive in their understanding of the key geographical concepts of place, space, scale, interdependence, physical processes, environmental interaction, sustainable development, cultural understanding and diversity.

These are important as they will help our students have a better understanding for the wider world around them, how it functions and the implications human actions are having on the natural world. By the end of KS3 they will know how migration and globalisation are interconnected and how the concept of interdependence is tied in with this. They will also learn about the causes and impact of flooding and plate tectonics, understanding the delicate balance between human and physical geography

These concepts are fundamental in becoming a successful geographer and to make the most out of GCSE and A 'level. The curriculum has been written with challenge in mind with the ambitions and expectations that students will take geography further. It has been influenced by the current KS5 and KS4 curriculums with the necessary skills and knowledge they need to be successful through their academic experience of the subject.

## **History**

The Key Stage Three History Curriculum at GCS is a vitally important and challenging phase of students' learning. It is designed to be ambitious, enjoyable and knowledge rich; sparking students' curiosity and passion for learning about the past. The overarching intention is that

students become articulate and deeply knowledgeable subject specialists. Students are expected to write, speak and adopt the habits of historians, for example making substantiated judgements, having a deep respect for evidence and using academic vocabulary confidently. The history curriculum is designed to ensure students develop the crucial subject-specific knowledge and disciplinary understanding and beyond by providing a solid foundation, embedding critical knowledge and skills and providing opportunities for students to problematise the discipline's second-order concepts: change and continuity, causation, significance, interpretations, evidence and diversity. As such, each unit is framed by an overarching, challenging enquiry question and lessons are sequenced and designed to ensure pupils make progress by acquiring the knowledge needed to answer that question effectively as a means of assessment. KS3 as a journey is a process of acquiring the knowledge, skills and habits of an expert historian. By the end of Key Stage Three we expect students to understand the significance of studying history, its relevance for understanding the world today and its importance in key areas such as developing tolerance, respect and understanding towards others.

## **Mathematics**

The Maths Department at GCS follow Pearson's Maths Progress International scheme of learning that is purposefully designed to create a strong foundation of knowledge and allow a seamless transition from KS3 to KS4.

Mathematics is a creative and highly inter-connected discipline that has been developed over centuries, providing the solution to some of history's most intriguing problems. It is essential to everyday life, critical to science, technology and engineering, and necessary for financial literacy and most forms of employment. The Maths Department at GCS, in line with the National Curriculum, seeks to provide a high-quality mathematics education that therefore provides a foundation for understanding the world, the ability to reason mathematically, an appreciation of the beauty and power of mathematics, and a sense of enjoyment and curiosity about the subject.

The aims of the KS3 Curriculum at GCS, in line with the National Curriculum for Mathematics aims to ensure that all pupils: become fluent in the fundamentals of mathematics, including through varied and frequent practice with increasingly complex problems over time, so that pupils develop conceptual understanding and the ability to recall and apply knowledge rapidly and accurately. reason mathematically by following a line of enquiry, conjecturing relationships and generalisations, and developing an argument, justification or proof using mathematical language can solve problems by applying their mathematics to a variety of routine and nonroutine problems with increasing sophistication, including breaking down problems into a series of simpler steps and persevering in seeking solutions.

## **Modern Foreign Languages**

At GCS, we offer French as a modern foreign language. By the end of Key Stage 3, a successful linguist, will be confident in the receptive skills of listening and reading and the productive skills of speaking, writing and translation. This will enable them to listen for detail, infer meaning, tackle larger texts, speak spontaneously and translate accurately and convey meaning. The most successful linguists will be able to apply existing knowledge to new situations and produce language creatively.

Grammar is the foundation of all language learning and our KS3 topics expose students to the necessary structures and vocabulary needed to be a competent linguist. These topics allow students to develop their understanding in order to further succeed at GCSE level. They also provide the basis for future language learning.

We encourage a vibrant school community in raising their global awareness and cultural knowledge by allowing them to interact with people from a wide variety of backgrounds. Our up to date resources contain current cultural references and students are encouraged to research further. This not only enables them to understand what it is to be a global citizen but also

improves their literacy in the English language. Languages are your passport to the world and we offer various routes to travel.

## **Music**

Playing an integral part of everyday life, music should be celebrated and studied thoroughly in school. In Music, students will explore a variety of mediums and genres, including rap, pop, and a variety of cinematic soundtracks, ranging from horror, science fiction, and animation. In addition, the lessons will provide a strong cross curricular connection, as students will write lyrics to an original song, study and write music reviews and critiques, and finally use professional software to compose their song, resulting in an individual album for each form group.

The journey on which the students will embark will provide a swift transition to Key Stage 4. with the hopes and intentions of preparing a new generation of musicians to inspire audiences in the future.

## **PSHE**

In PSHE (Personal, social, health and economic education), students will learn about life and cover all the topics that they sometimes do not get a chance to cover in other subjects. This is to ensure you leave GCS as responsible citizens. Students will be taught about three main topics and each one will have sub-topics within it. These are: Health and wellbeing; Relationships and community and Living in the wider world

The PSHE curriculum has been devised to facilitate pupil wellbeing and develop resilience and character that we know are fundamental to pupils being happy, successful and productive members of society.

Central to this is pupils' ability to believe that they can achieve goals, both academic and personal; to stick to tasks that will help them achieve those goals, even when the reward may be distant or uncertain; and to recover from knocks and challenging periods in their lives. This should be complemented by development of personal attributes including kindness, integrity, generosity, respect and honesty.

## **Physical Education**

Physical Education aims to create active, healthy, confident individuals who enjoy taking part in physical activity and can make informed decisions about their own and others performances. Students will develop knowledge of what it means to lead a healthy lifestyle as well as being able to work effectively as an individual and within in a team.

By the end of KS3 pupils should have a basic understanding of skills, tactics and rules in a variety of activities. This will enable them to develop competence to excel in a broad range of physical activities. They should also be able to describe/lead a suitable warm up and discuss what fitness components are needed for specific sports. Students will be required to be physically active for sustained periods of time and be engaged in competitive sports and activities.

The KS3 curriculum is designed to allow pupils to develop the skills and knowledge that underpin the GCSE courses in KS4 to ensure they can be successful. In terms of content, pupils will be given the opportunity to experience a wide variety of activities across the three years learning the essential skills for each. Enjoyment and engagement underpin our KS3 curriculum.

## **Science**

The KS3 Science curriculum provides the foundations for understanding the world through the specific disciplines of biology, chemistry and physics. Science has changed our lives and is vital to the world's future prosperity, and all pupils will be taught essential aspects of the knowledge, methods, processes and uses of science. Through building up a body of key foundational knowledge and concepts, pupils will be encouraged to recognise the power of rational explanation and develop a sense of excitement and curiosity about natural phenomena. They

will be encouraged to understand how science can be used to explain what is occurring, predict how things will behave, and analyse causes.

The curriculum aims to ensure that all pupils:

- develop scientific knowledge and conceptual understanding through the specific disciplines of biology, chemistry and physics
- develop understanding of the nature, processes and methods of science through different types of science enquiries that help them to answer scientific questions about the world around them
- are equipped with the scientific knowledge required to understand the uses and implications of science, today and for the future.

In Key Stage 3, students will study organs, tissues, cells and systems; energy; acids and alkalis; electricity; muscles and bones; forces; matter; food and nutrition; the periodic table, fluids; rocks; genetics and reactivity. They will study these topics in detail, providing the prerequisite knowledge for GCSE Science. The KS3 curriculum is designed to robustly prepare students for study at GCSE Science by ensuring they have the knowledge and skills needed to be successful.

## **Ministry of Education Subjects**

### **Arabic**

### **Islamic**

### **Social Studies**

### **Moral Education**

## **Design Thinking at GCS**

Design Thinking is both an ideology and a workflow, concerned with solving complex problems in a highly user-centric way. Design Thinking is a mindset and approach to learning, collaboration, and problem solving. In practice, the design process is a structured framework for identifying challenges, gathering information, generating potential solutions, refining ideas, and testing solutions.

The Key Stage 3 curriculum has been carefully designed to underpin the principles of Design Thinking.

### **Phase 1: Empathise**

Empathy provides the critical starting point for Design Thinking. The first stage of the process is spent getting to know the user and understanding their wants, needs and objectives. This means observing and engaging with people in order to understand them on a psychological and emotional level. During this phase, the designer seeks to set aside their assumptions and gather real insights about the user. Learn all about key empathy building methods here.

### **Phase 2: Define**

The second stage in the Design Thinking workflow is defining the problem. The key here is to frame the problem in a user-centered way. Once you've formulated the problem into words, you can start to come up with solutions and ideas — which brings us onto stage three.

### **Phase 3: Ideate**

With a solid understanding of your users and a clear problem statement in mind, it's time to start working on potential solutions. The third phase in the Design Thinking process is where the creativity happens, and it's crucial to point out that the ideation stage is a judgement-free zone! Designers will hold ideation sessions in order to come up with as many new angles and

ideas as possible. There are many different types of ideation technique that designers might use, from brainstorming and mind mapping to bodystorming (roleplay scenarios) and provocation— an extreme lateral-thinking technique that gets the designer to challenge established beliefs and explore new options and alternatives. Towards the end of the ideation phase, you'll narrow it down to a few ideas with which to move forward.

#### **Phase 4: Prototype**

The fourth step in the Design Thinking process is all about experimentation and turning ideas into tangible products. A prototype is basically a scaled-down version of the product which incorporates the potential solutions identified in the previous stages. This step is key in putting each solution to the test and highlighting any constraints and flaws.

#### **Phase 5: Test**

After prototyping comes user testing, but it's important to note that this is rarely the end of the Design Thinking process. In reality, the results of the testing phase will often lead you back to a previous step, providing the insights you need to redefine the original problem statement or to come up with new ideas you hadn't thought of before.



Signed.....

Date: 30/08/2022

**CEO/Principal**