

Gulf English School

مدرسة الخليج الإنجليزية



Teaching and Learning Policy

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“Hard thinking: the heartbeat of our student-led curriculum”

Vision

At Gulf English School, our teaching and learning philosophy is rooted in Rosenshine’s Principles of Instruction, ensuring that every student receives high-quality, evidence-based teaching that maximises understanding and long-term retention.

Our secondary school vision is to create a dynamic, knowledge-rich learning environment where students develop deep subject mastery through explicit instruction, guided practice, and independent application. We believe in a structured approach to learning, where teachers model excellence, check understanding through effective questioning, and provide ample opportunities for review and retrieval practice.

“Students don’t just learn our curriculum — they think their way through it.”

We expect all staff to embody the highest standards of professional practice, continually refining their teaching to ensure every student thrives. Every lesson matters. Every child counts.

Our curriculum is designed to foster thought, curiosity, and a love for learning in all students, regardless of their background, strengths, or needs. It is ambitious, challenging, and engaging, providing a clear progression from primary to post-16, and equipping students with the essential knowledge, skills, and understanding to become informed, reflective, and responsible global citizens.

Our approach to teaching and learning draws out big ideas, connecting key concepts across subjects and encouraging students to become critical thinkers who make meaning, not just memorise facts.

Growth Mindset & Resilience

We are deeply committed to nurturing resilient learners with a ‘can do’ attitude. Students are taught to understand that:

- Making mistakes is not a failure — it’s part of the learning process.
- Not yet is not the same as never — progress takes time and perseverance.
- Every challenge is an opportunity to grow.

“Thinking hard is not optional — it’s built into our curriculum.”

“Resilience is learned — and we teach it every day.”

By embedding a growth mindset, we help students embrace challenges, persist through difficulties, and take ownership of their learning journey. They know that effort, reflection, and feedback are the building blocks of success.

Our Curriculum Aims to:

- Deliver excellent exam results to transform pupils' educational achievement
- Provide a solid foundation for future learning at every stage
- Cultivate well-rounded, intelligent, and socially aware pupils
- Develop responsible global citizens with an understanding of rules, rights, and responsibilities
- Encourage the core principle of serving humanity through social participation within the school and wider community
- Promote leadership, resilience, and independence in every student
- Empower pupils to discover, explore, and develop their individual strengths
- Prioritise physical and mental wellbeing for lifelong success
- Equip pupils with the skills to play a full and inclusive role in society, consistent with their beliefs and principles

"A broad curriculum opens minds — a balanced one shapes futures."

Curriculum Design

Our ambitious, broad, and balanced curriculum at Key Stage 3 is designed to offer a wide range of subjects, ensuring students develop a strong foundation of knowledge and skills to support their transition into Key Stage 4 and 5. The curriculum meets the requirements of the National Curriculum of England (revised 2014), with suitable amendments to reflect our local context, including the Kuwaiti Ministry of Education requirements for our Arabic-speaking students, ensuring they follow the Arabic and Religion programmes of study.

In English and Maths, students take teacher-assessed tests to determine which set group they will be placed in. For non-core subjects, students are taught in mixed-ability groups.

In Years 7 and 8, alongside the core subjects of English, Mathematics, Science, Arabic, Kuwait Social Studies, and Islamic Studies, we offer a broad curriculum including Art, Drama, Music, French, History, Geography, ICT, and PE.

At the end of Year 8, our most able students are invited to apply for our Fast Track Programme. Successful applicants will begin their IGCSE studies early and join their Year 10 peers.

All students in Year 9 embark on a more detailed study and preparation of IGCSE content. This phase of learning builds on the foundational knowledge acquired in earlier years, introducing students to more complex concepts, scientific methods, and subject-specific skills. Lessons are carefully designed to deepen understanding, develop analytical and practical competencies, and familiarise students with the format, expectations, and assessment criteria of the IGCSE examinations.

By the end of Year 9, students will have a solid grounding in key topics, positioning them for success as they formally begin their IGCSE courses in Year 10.

Gulf English School is an Examination approved Centre for the Cambridge and Edexcel Examination Boards and is regularly monitored by examination authorities to ensure we continue to adhere to strict requirements and guidelines.

In Years 10 and 11, Gulf English School students study a range of Cambridge IGCSE courses, including mandatory subjects (English, Maths, Arabic, Islamic Studies, PSHE and PE) and five optional subjects. These are chosen during the summer term of Year 9 following discussion between class teachers, form tutors or heads of year, parents, and students. Members of SLT and the academic counsellor are available to offer additional guidance as required. Students follow a mixture of IGCSE programmes provided by Cambridge International (CIE) and Pearson/Edexcel.

To promote deep learning and reduce cognitive overload, our curriculum structure allows students to complete two IGCSEs in Year 10, enabling a more focused and manageable approach to their final examinations in Year 11. This ensures that students are well-prepared, confident, and able to achieve their full potential.

In Years 12 to 13, students choose between two to four AS subjects depending on their IGCSE results. Achieving at least a B grade at IGCSE secures the right to study the same subject at AS level. Anything below a B is considered on a case-by-case basis, with the student signing a contract.

“Great teaching doesn’t happen by chance — we train for it.”

Professional Development Review (PDR)

As part of our commitment to fostering a culture of continuous improvement and reflective practice, all teaching staff will participate in the Professional Development Review (PDR) cycle. At the start of the academic year, staff will complete a self-audit against key professional standards to reflect on their current practice and identify areas for growth. This will form the basis of a structured meeting with their line manager in September, during which three professional development targets will be agreed: one aligned with whole-school priorities, one focused on subject-specific teaching and learning, and one tailored to individual career aspirations. Follow-up review meetings will take place in January and May to evaluate progress and refine goals as needed. The PDR cycle is designed to promote a growth mindset, encourage ownership of professional learning, and cultivate a climate of reflective, forward-thinking practitioners across the school.

"The GES PDR cycle empowers staff to align purpose, practice, and potential."

Continued Professional Development

At GES, we are committed to fostering a culture of continuous professional growth, ensuring that all staff have access to high-quality training and development opportunities. Our CPD model is structured to support excellence in teaching, learning, leadership, and pastoral care, equipping staff with the skills and knowledge needed to enhance student outcomes and contribute to whole-school improvement.

As part of our commitment to high-quality professional development, we are transitioning to WalkThrus as our core CPD package. WalkThroughs provide a clear, research-based approach to improving teaching and learning through step-by-step instructional guides, evidence-informed strategies, and practical classroom techniques.

This shift ensures that all staff have access to consistent, actionable, and high-impact professional learning, supporting both individual growth and collective excellence. WalkThroughs will be embedded into our CPD sessions, lesson observations, and coaching cycles, enabling staff to refine their practice in a structured and collaborative way that strengthens every key strand of our professional learning offer.

WHOLE SCHOOL TEACHING & LEARNING	
GES Way	Embedding effective learning behaviours and expectations in all classrooms.
Pedagogy	Equipping staff with evidence-informed teaching strategies to enhance student engagement and progress.
Assessment	Using formative and summative assessments to track student progress and inform teaching strategies.
Pastoral Procedures	Implementing structured pastoral systems that support student well-being and behaviour.
BEHAVIOUR PROTOCOL & PASTORAL DEVELOPMENT	
Behaviour Protocols	Ensuring consistency in applying behaviour management strategies across all subjects.
Culture & Routines	Setting clear routines to establish high expectations and a positive learning culture.
Safeguarding	Providing staff with up-to-date safeguarding training and protocols to ensure student safety.
Role of the Form Tutor	Developing the role of form tutors in pastoral care, academic monitoring, and student mentoring.
LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT	
Middle Leadership Training	Developing middle leaders to manage teams, drive school priorities, and enhance teaching practices.
NPQs	Providing staff with access to NPQ qualifications to support career progression into leadership roles.
DEPARTMENT	
Curriculum Design	Structuring subject curricula to ensure knowledge is sequenced effectively and meets learning objectives.
Progress & Achievement	Using student data to track progress, identify gaps, and implement intervention strategies.
Personal Development & SIP	Ensuring that departmental planning contributes directly to the School Improvement Plan (SIP).
ONLINE & SELF DIRECTED LEARNING	
Online Courses (NOC)	Offering self-paced, accredited courses to enhance subject knowledge and pedagogy.
Individual Support	Providing individual coaching and support to help teachers address specific professional challenges.
ECT and Professional Growth	
ECT Training	Structured induction for Early Career Teachers to build foundational teaching skills.
Coaching & Mentoring	Pairing teachers with experienced mentors to provide personalised professional guidance.
Growth Plans	Creating tailored career growth plans to align with professional aspirations and school priorities.