Greenwood International School Teaching and Learning Policy

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Teaching and Learning Policy

Our School

- Is an American curriculum school emphasizing 21st-century skills, critical thinking, and responsible global citizenship.
- Is an eco-friendly school that promotes environmental awareness and responsibility through its mission, curriculum, and activities.
- Engages students through innovative technology tools and varied instructional methods.
- Develops productive, proactive, and disciplined learners.
- Has a team of qualified, tolerant, and resilient educators with diverse cultural and national backgrounds.
- Promotes an inclusive, safe, and supportive learning environment.
- Integrates social-emotional learning into students' educational journey.

Purpose

To provide a framework for a shared understanding of high-quality learning for educators. The policy outlines the strategies, methods, and practices teachers should use to promote effective learning and ensure that all students have access to a high-quality education.

Student Success

Achieving student success at Greenwood International School is a multifaceted process encompassing numerous factors such as effective teaching, student engagement, support systems, and resources. Here are some approaches to guarantee students' success:

- **Set high expectations:** GIS educators set high standards for academic achievement and personal responsibility and provide support and guidance to help students meet those expectations.

- **Create a supportive learning environment**. The school's academic team ensures that teachers create a classroom culture that fosters respect, collaboration, and positive relationships.

- **Use effective teaching strategies:** Teachers are trained to use various effective teaching strategies to engage students and help them learn. These strategies include active, project-based, differentiated, AI-driven, and technology-based learning.

- **Provide individualized support:** Every student in Greenwood International School is unique and has distinctive needs and strengths; therefore, the school provides individualized support through remedial classes, Individualized Education Programs, and personalized accommodations to help every student succeed.

- **Partner with families and the community**: A parents' council is elected on a yearly basis to create a strong support system for students. The council members advocate for students' concerns and needs and communicate strategies to improve the school's community. Likewise, Teachers are urged to communicate students' progress regularly with families to involve them in their child's education.

- **Monitor and adjust:** Teachers regularly monitor student progress and utilize internal and external data to adjust their instruction as needed. This can help ensure that all students are learning and making progress toward their goals.

- **Prepare for universities:** GIS strives to meet the highest educational standards and aims to fulfill the most rigorous university admission requirements worldwide. It is committed to providing a comprehensive and challenging academic program that prepares students for successful transitions into higher education.

- **Foster an inclusive learning environment:** GIS involves various strategies to foster an inclusive learning environment by implementing a diverse curriculum and adopting a universal design for learning (UDL) to deliver content that is accessible to all learners, including SOD.

School's Teaching and Learning Philosophy

At GIS, we believe that:

- Every student has the capacity to learn and grow, and it is the responsibility of the teacher to facilitate that process.
- Students learn best when they are supported and encouraged to develop autonomy and take ownership of their learning.
- Learning should be a dynamic and interactive process where students are actively engaged in their own learning and are encouraged to ask questions, explore ideas, and make decisions.
- Teaching should be student-centered, and it is important to differentiate instruction to meet the needs of each individual learner.
- Assessment should be authentic and ongoing, providing students with opportunities to reflect on their learning and receive feedback on their progress.
- Making mistakes is an essential part of the learning process and should be embraced as opportunities for growth.
- Learning is a social process; students are encouraged to interact with their peers and faculty to develop their identity and enhance their learning journey.
- Distinctive students' needs significantly shape the teaching and learning process.
- A positive school culture is a nurturing and supportive environment that fosters academic excellence, student well-being, and a sense of community among all stakeholders.

Teaching and Learning Methodology

GIS teaching and learning approach is as follows:

Kindergarten:
For kindergarten children, a play-based learning approach is implemented. This involves teaching through fun and engaging activities such as singing, dancing, storytelling, puppetry, and art. Hands-on activities are also emphasized to help children develop their motor skills and learn by doing. Additionally, visual aids, such as pictures, flashcards, and videos, are utilized to keep children engaged and focused. Field trips are also incorporated to provide real-world experiences that connect learning to the environment around them. At this stage, the ethical and responsible introduction of age-appropriate AI tools (for example, interactive story apps or voice assistants) is encouraged to spark curiosity while ensuring safety and digital well-being.

Elementary School:
For elementary school children, a combination of experiential and inquiry-based learning is integrated. This involves allowing students to explore and discover new concepts on their own. The teachers' role is to facilitate this process by providing guidance, asking open-ended questions, and encouraging collaboration. Hands-on activities, field trips, and project-based learning approaches are employed to promote engagement and critical thinking. Ethical and effective use of AI, such as adaptive learning platforms and guided research tools, is incorporated to support personalized learning and responsible digital citizenship.

Middle School:
For middle school children, various teaching strategies are implemented; problem-based learning is among the most used strategies to enhance students' critical thinking and problem-solving skills. The teachers' role is to offer guidance and support as needed, but the focus is on students working together to develop creative solutions. EdTech tools and AI-powered applications are widely used in every teaching strategy to enhance learning. Emphasis is placed on teaching students how to use AI ethically, responsibly, and effectively, preparing them for thoughtful engagement with emerging technologies.

High School:
A combination of didactic-based, problem-based, and inquiry-based approaches is employed for high school students. Discussions and debates are significantly implemented to promote critical thinking and communication skills. All teaching strategies utilize EdTech tools and AI-powered platforms to create adaptive learning modules. High school students are guided to critically analyze and apply AI tools with a strong focus on ethics, academic integrity, and effective use, ensuring that they are prepared for higher education and future careers in a technology-driven world.

School's Learning Environment

- **Safety and Security:** The school has appropriate safety and security measures in place to ensure the safety of students and staff, including security personnel, cameras, and emergency procedures.

- **Classroom Design:** The classrooms are spacious and well-ventilated, with ample natural light. Each classroom has comfortable seating, desks, and chairs appropriate for the age of the students. Additionally, classrooms are equipped with interactive Promethean boards, active panels, projectors, and air quality monitors.

    Inclusion Rooms: The school has four dedicated inclusion rooms to support SEN students. Equipped with specialized learning materials and assistive technology, these rooms provide individualized instruction and a nurturing environment that promotes independence, confidence, and active participation in the curriculum.

- **Libraries:** The school has three libraries. The libraries have a variety of fiction and non-fiction books. Comfortable seating and tables allow students to study, read, and work on projects. Technological tools such as computers are also available to facilitate collaborative project work.

- **Science Labs:** The school has five well-equipped science labs for conducting experiments and investigations. Labs are designed to promote hands-on learning and allow students to explore scientific concepts in depth.

- **STREAM Rooms:** The school is equipped with two STREAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) rooms designed to provide students with a dedicated space to explore and learn about these subjects through hands-on, project-based activities.

- **ICT Labs:** The school has four dedicated technology centers equipped with computers, printers, and other digital tools for students to use for research and other academic purposes.

- **Sports Facilities:** The school has sports facilities, such as a gymnasium, playing fields, and a swimming pool, to promote students' physical activity, fitness, and well-being.

- **Arts Facilities:** The school has three dedicated art studios. Students can explore and develop their artistic skills through classes and extracurricular activities.

- **Outdoor Spaces**: The school has several outdoor spaces, such as playgrounds, gardens, and green spaces for students to explore and engage in outdoor physical and learning activities.

- **Language Labs:** The school has 4 Arabic language labs that serve as a specialized space equipped with Arabic resources to facilitate language learning and teaching.

- **Robotics Room:** The school has one specialized facility dedicated to studying, developing, and experimenting with robotics and automation technologies.

- **English Language Learner Rooms (ELL):** The school has two dedicated ELL rooms to support students who are learning English as a second or additional language by providing targeted instruction, resources, and a supportive environment that helps these students develop their English language skills.

Teaching and Learning Culture

The school's culture promotes innovation, curiosity, practical experience, and students' agency. This multifaceted approach involves all stakeholders through various strategies:

Student Autonomy: The school encourages students' autonomy by allowing them to choose what and how to learn. They reflect on their mistakes and correct them independently. This fosters confidence, responsibility, and active engagement in their learning.

Creativity & Innovation: Encourage teachers and students to think outside the box and creatively solve problems through brainstorming sessions, design challenges, and project-based learning activities.

Access to Technology: Provide access to the latest technology, tools, and resources to enable students to explore and experiment with new ideas and concepts. This includes access to 3D printers, coding software, and Artificial Intelligence tools.

Curious Mindset: Foster a curious mindset in students by encouraging them to ask questions, seek answers, and explore new ideas. This is achieved by creating a safe and supportive learning environment where students feel free to express themselves and take risks.

Real-World Experience: Incorporate real-world experience into the curriculum by connecting students with industry experts, entrepreneurs, and other professionals. This strategy helps students to see the relevance of what they are learning.

Practical Learning: Support practical learning by providing opportunities for students to apply what they have learned in the classroom to real-world situations through internships, competitions, and other project-based learning opportunities.

Teachers' Responsibilities

Planning and Delivering Lessons: Teachers must plan and prepare lessons that align with their students' needs, interests, and abilities. They must also deliver these lessons effectively, using various teaching strategies and techniques.

Assessing Student Progress: Teachers must regularly assess their students' progress and provide feedback on their performance.

Creating a Positive Learning Environment: Teachers must create a positive learning environment that fosters learning and encourages students to participate and engage with the curriculum.

Establishing and Maintaining Communication with Parents/Guardians: Teachers must communicate with parents/guardians about their child's progress, behavior, and any concerns that arise.

Supporting Students' Learning Outside of the Classroom: Teachers may be responsible for providing students with additional support outside of the classroom.

Collaborating with Other Teachers and School Staff: Teachers must work closely with colleagues, the MLT, and the SLT to develop and implement curriculum, coordinate interdisciplinary activities and projects across different cycles and subjects, and ensure effective horizontal and vertical curriculum alignment, while addressing issues related to student learning.

Engaging in Professional Development Sessions: Teachers must engage in ongoing professional development to enhance their skills, stay current with best practices, and improve student learning outcomes.

Classroom Management: Teachers must establish rules and procedures for classroom behavior and enforce them consistently to ensure a safe and productive learning environment for all students.

Safeguarding Students' Well-being: Teachers must take appropriate measures to ensure students' physical and emotional safety within the school premises.

Using Technology in a Secure and Safe Manner: Teachers must ensure that technology, especially AI tools, is used ethically and effectively to protect students' privacy and promote active learning. This includes selecting appropriate tools, guiding students on safe practices, and instructing them on effective AI prompts.

Students' Responsibilities

Attend school regularly: Regular attendance is essential for students to learn and succeed in school. Students should arrive on time and attend all classes unless they have a valid reason to be absent.

Participate in class: Students should actively participate in class discussions and activities by asking questions, offering opinions, and sharing ideas with their peers and teachers.

Complete assignments and homework: Students should complete all assigned work on time and to the best of their ability. This includes homework, essays, projects, and any other assignments given by their teachers.

Respect others: Students should respect their peers, teachers, and other school staff. This includes being polite, kind, and considerate to everyone around them.

Follow school rules: Students should follow all school rules and regulations. This includes rules related to behavior, dress code, use of technology, and other school policies.

Take responsibility for their learning: Students should take responsibility for their own learning by staying organized, setting goals, and seeking help when needed.

Communicate with teachers and parents: Students should regularly communicate with their teachers and parents about their progress and any concerns they may have about their academic or social life.

Manage their time effectively: Students should learn to manage their time effectively by prioritizing tasks, setting deadlines, and avoiding procrastination.

Embrace diversity: Students should embrace diversity and accept differences in culture, race, religion, and other characteristics that make each individual unique.

Use technology in a secure and safe manner: Students must use technology, including AI tools, responsibly, while safeguarding their privacy and personal data. They must also avoid plagiarism by ensuring that all work submitted is their own and that any sources used are properly cited.

Lesson Success Criteria

Learning outcomes: The lesson should be designed to help students achieve specific learning outcomes or objectives that are clearly stated and aligned with the curriculum standards.

Engagement: The lesson should be engaging and interesting to students, capturing their attention and motivating them to learn.

Assessment: Lessons should include assessments that measure student learning, which will provide meaningful feedback to both teachers and students.

Differentiation: The lesson should be differentiated to meet the needs of all learners, including those with different learning styles, abilities, and backgrounds.

Clarity and Structure: The lesson should be clear, well-structured, and easy to follow, with scaffolded instructions that support student understanding.

Use of technology: The lesson should incorporate appropriate technological tools and resources to enhance student learning and engagement.

Active Learning: The lesson should incorporate opportunities for students to actively engage in learning through activities such as discussions, group work, and hands-on projects.

Progress Monitoring: The lesson should include opportunities for progress monitoring so that the teacher and students can track their progress toward meeting the learning objectives.

Relevance: The lesson should be relevant to students' lives and experiences, connecting the content to real-world situations and applications.

Reflection: The lesson should include opportunities for students to reflect on their learning, identify areas of strength and areas for improvement, and set goals for future learning.

Teacher's Post Lesson Reflection

Self-reflect: Take some time to reflect on the lesson by asking yourself questions such as: What worked well? What didn't work? What could I have done differently? What did the students learn? What were the strengths and weaknesses of the lesson?

Seek peer feedback: Seek feedback from a colleague or mentor who observed the lesson. Ask them to provide constructive feedback and suggestions for improvement.

Collect student feedback: Collect feedback from students on what they found helpful or challenging about the lesson. This can be done through a simple survey, a class discussion, or informal conversations with students.

Analyze student work: Analyze students' work to determine if they met the learning objectives and to identify areas where they may need additional support.

Review student participation: Review students' participation during the lesson to identify areas where students were engaged and areas where they struggled.

Review assessment results: Review assessment results to determine if students have achieved the learning objectives and to identify areas where they may need additional support.

Evaluate the use of technology: Evaluate the effectiveness of technology used during the lesson, including any issues that arose and suggestions for improvement.

Review lesson plan: Review the lesson plan to identify areas where it can be improved, including areas where students struggled or where the lesson lacked engagement.

Make changes: Based on your reflections, change the lesson plan and instructional strategies for future lessons.

Set goals: Set goals for yourself to improve specific areas of the lesson, such as engagement, assessment, or differentiation, and work towards achieving those goals in future lessons.

Teachers' Support

Teachers are supported in improving their teaching practice in the following ways:

Professional Growth: The school supports teachers in their professional growth and development by providing opportunities to attend workshops, training sessions, webinars, and conferences, helping them stay updated with the latest teaching techniques and trends.

Resources and Materials: The school ensures that teachers have access to adequate resources and materials, including textbooks, technology, and classroom supplies, to support their teaching.

Collaboration and Feedback: The school encourages collaboration among teachers by providing opportunities for them to work together, share ideas, and provide feedback to one another.

Classroom Support: The school provides support to teachers in the classroom, including teacher assistants, shadow teachers, and peer mentors, to help manage the classroom, differentiate instruction, and assist struggling students.

Recognition and Appreciation: The school shows appreciation and recognition for teachers' hard work and dedication through public recognition, awards, and other forms of appreciation.

Feedback and Evaluation: The school provides regular feedback and evaluations to teachers to help them improve their teaching and provides opportunities for growth.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The Senior Leadership Team and the Middle Leadership Team at GIS monitor and evaluate the teaching-learning process.

The following process is followed for teaching:

Multiple evaluation methods are used to ensure a comprehensive assessment of teaching effectiveness. Additionally, teachers receive continuous constructive feedback and support to help them improve their teaching skills.

Classroom Observation: SLT and MLT observe the teacher in action and evaluate various aspects of teaching, such as lesson planning, teaching strategies, classroom management, and the extent to which learning is taking place. Each academic year includes two formal observations by MLT, along with regular informal observations by both MLT and SLT members.

Annual Appraisals: Teachers are evaluated through annual performance reviews. These reviews typically involve feedback from subject leaders and SLT members, as well as formal and informal classroom observations, student achievement data analysis, and other relevant metrics.

Peer Evaluation: Teachers are also evaluated by their peers to share best teaching practices. This involves peer observation, feedback, and collaboration to help teachers improve their teaching skills.

The following process is followed for learning:

Utilizing data effectively is critical for evaluating the learning process as it helps educators identify areas of student strengths and weaknesses, track progress, and adapt instruction to meet individual needs. Here are some ways to utilize data for an effective learning process:

Formative Assessments: Teachers use formative assessments such as quizzes, exit tickets, and class discussions to gauge student understanding of concepts and adjust their instruction accordingly.

Summative Assessments: Teachers use summative assessments such as tests and projects to measure student learning at the end of a unit or semester.

Progress Monitoring: Teachers track student progress over time by collecting data on their performance on assignments and assessments.

Feedback and Reflection: Teachers provide students with feedback on their work and encourage them to reflect on their learning to identify areas of strength and areas for improvement.

Data Analysis: GIS uses tools such as Power BI to aggregate and analyze student performance data, identify areas of strength and weakness, and design interventions to support struggling students.

Stakeholders Collaboration

Regulatory Authorities

GIS continuously follows the requirements and statutory mandates set by regulatory authorities, including KHDA, MOE, NEASC, College Board, NWEA, and GL. The senior leadership team is responsible for ensuring that the teaching and learning process is aligned with the expectations of these regulatory bodies.

Parents as Partners

The school actively engages parents in their children's academic and behavioral development. Parents receive regular feedback on their children's progress and guidance on how to support their learning at home. In addition to three official parent-teacher meetings each year, parents may schedule appointments with teachers or the principal as needed. They are also encouraged to participate in school events and workshops.

Governing Board

The school values the important and critical role of the governing board. They act as critical partners that regularly evaluate the school's decisions, operations, and overall performance.