



Greenwood International School

English Language Learners Policy

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**Vision**

The ELL Department aims to help ELL students feel like equal members of the classroom and to minimize the language barriers that hinder their academic and social progress across all curricula.

Mission

The ELL Department aims to help ELL students reach their full potential in an inclusive, student-centred environment across all curricula, and to ensure that instructional strategies are adapted to fit the educational needs of the ELLs.

Aims and Objectives

- **Language Proficiency:** Help non-native English speakers achieve a high level of proficiency in English, including their speaking, listening, reading, and writing skills.
- **Effective Communication:** Enable students to communicate effectively in formal and informal real-life situations, including their ability to understand and convey ideas, opinions, and information accurately.
- **Cultural Awareness:** Teach the cultural aspects of English-speaking countries so students understand the cultural nuances and context behind the language they are learning.
- **Language Acquisition Strategies:** Equip students with effective strategies for learning vocabulary, improving pronunciation, and developing their language skills autonomously.
- **Integration and Inclusion:** Help students integrate into English-speaking academic, professional, and social environments, including adapting to the culture, norms, and expectations of English-speaking communities.
- **Academic Support:** Prepare ELLs for academic success, including understanding academic language, writing research papers, and participating in class discussions.
- **Language Assessment:** Accurately assess students' language proficiency and progress using standardized assessments. ELL Student Support Plans (SSPs) use the NWEA student profile to identify key areas for improvement for each student.
- **Tailored Instruction:** Provide instruction tailored to individual students' needs

and language levels, including differentiated levels of instruction within each class and personalized support for specific challenges.

- **Multimedia and Technology Integration:** Incorporate modern technology and multimedia resources — including Level-Up, Read180, and Achieve3000 — to enhance language learning.
- **Professional Development:** Offer workshops and ongoing professional development to teachers across the school, helping them stay current with teaching methods, linguistics research, and educational technology, and guiding them in applying the ELL Department's recommended accommodations without disrupting curriculum pacing.
- **Enrichment for Proficient Readers:** Provide enrichment for strong readers across the school. Students who score highly on standardized tests are selected for the Reading Mentors program, in which they lead morning reading sessions with elementary students and teach comprehension skills.
- **Individualized Assessment and Instruction:** ELL teachers assess individual students' language proficiency and design instructional approaches suited to their specific needs during pull-out sessions, enabling more effective and faster progress.

ELL Accommodations

English / Social Sciences / Humanities

- Give instructions and directions both in writing and orally, and ask ICQs (instruction-checking questions) after giving instructions to check learners' understanding.
- Use CCQs (concept-checking questions) after introducing new academic or target vocabulary.
- Highlight key vocabulary and provide glossaries when applicable.
- Assess comprehension through demonstration or alternative means (gestures, drawings, visuals, etc.).
- Rephrase questions, directions, and explanations for ELL students.
- Use plain, accessible vocabulary — for example, “point out the difference between” instead of “differentiate between.”
- Use group projects rather than individual work when applicable.
- Pair ELLs with strong readers to guide them through reading activities.
- Provide audio-visual materials related to the subject taught.
- Allow extended time for assessments and projects when needed.
- Provide hands-on activities and explanations, and encourage students to use drawings, sheets, or other hands-on materials to demonstrate understanding.
- Provide access to a grade-appropriate dictionary on the LMS or other platform in use and encourage students to look up unfamiliar words.
- Model read-alouds and think-alouds.
- Ask questions that promote text-to-text, text-to-world, and text-to-self connections.
- Use word maps and graphic organizers when introducing vocabulary essential to the concept being taught.
- Use annotation: circle key words and underline or mark unfamiliar or difficult words.
- Engage students in discussion to talk through their ideas before they begin writing.
- Model writing before assigning written tasks (e.g., provide a sample written response to the given topic).
- Encourage students to ask questions and provide opportunities to clarify their understanding.
- Use portfolios of student work as a form of assessment (e.g., instead of an exit slip, have the ELL student compile a list of newly learned words and match each to a drawing or quote that demonstrates understanding).

Math

- Use visuals such as pictures, graphs, tables, and charts to convey mathematical concepts.
- Provide additional time to complete math assignments and assessments.
- Use manipulatives, such as blocks or counters, to teach math concepts.
- Use real-life examples and problem-solving scenarios to show the relevance of math concepts.
- Simplify math vocabulary and use visuals to illustrate new terms.
- Provide written instructions and worked examples of math problems.
- Use bilingual dictionaries or translation tools to support word problems.
- Have students read math problems aloud to support comprehension.
- Allow students to explain their thinking and reasoning in their native language.
- Use scaffolding techniques — such as breaking a complex problem into smaller steps — to build understanding.

Science / STEM

- Use visuals, such as diagrams, photographs, and models, to support understanding of science concepts.
- Use hands-on activities, experiments, and labs to engage ELL students and make concepts more concrete.
- Provide extra time for learning and assessment so ELL students can fully understand and express their knowledge.
- Simplify science vocabulary and use visuals to illustrate new terms.
- Use real-life examples and problem-solving scenarios to show the relevance of science concepts.
- Provide written instructions and examples of science concepts.
- Use bilingual dictionaries or translation tools to support scientific terms and concepts.
- Have students read science passages aloud to support comprehension.
- Provide opportunities for ELL students to work in pairs or small groups to collaborate and learn from peers.
- Use scaffolding techniques — such as breaking a complex concept into smaller steps — to build understanding.
- Consistently remind ELLs to use DARTs (Directed Activities Related to Texts) and other active reading strategies; follow up on their text markings, marginal notes, and brainstorming.

ELL Support and Services

The ELL Department provides support lessons during the school week, running in parallel with reading, writing, and phonics/English classes across the school, through two formats: pull-out and push-in classes.

- Pull-out classes take place during library periods/Reading Skills Lab/ Assembly.
- Push-in classes take place during English periods.

In the elementary stage, the ELL teacher focuses mainly on reading skills. In middle school, the teacher works on reading, writing, and critical thinking skills, with a stronger emphasis on applying active reading strategies across multiple genres of literary and informational texts. In High school, the ELLs receive extra practice in language mechanics and reading comprehension that helps them with their assessments. ELL support extends beyond core language skills to explicitly target the academic and testing vocabulary, timed-response strategies, and text-analysis skills required for standardized assessments, ensuring ELL students are equipped to demonstrate their true ability under exam conditions.

ELL support extends to all ELL students flagged across the grade levels.

Morning Reading Time: High School and Middle School students take part in the Reading Program, supporting flagged Elementary students in reading and applying active reading strategies across a range of books.

ELL Identification Process

ELL students in Grades 1–10 are identified using three triangulated data sources:

- CAT4 Verbal score
- MAP Reading RIT score
- i-Ready SAS

ELL Filtration/ Identification Process for AY 26-27

ELL students are flagged based on 3 categories of data which are triangulated; the categories are:

- CAT4 Verbal Deficit
- MAP Reading RIT(Spring)
- iReady SAS Score (THIRD ROUND)

	MAP Reading	CAT 4 VD	iReady SAS/National Norm
ELLA	Students falling more that two grade levels below norm.	Verbal Deficit of -15 and above	National Norm Percentile lower than 10 th SAS of 89 or below
ELLB	Students falling 4 or more grade levels below norm.	Verbal Deficit of -30 or above	National Norm Percentile lower than 5 th SAS 79 or below

ALL THREE CRITERIA HAVE TO BE MET FOR A STUDENT TO BE FLAGGED EXCEPT in KG2 moving to G1, only MAP is used along with the teachers' recommendations.

The flagging process involves G1-10 students ONLY.

Current Plan

Multifaceted Language Proficiency: The ELL Department envisions students who are fluent in English and who understand its nuances well enough to communicate effectively across contexts — from academic language for rigorous coursework to confident expression in social settings. At GIS, the department encourages ELL students to get involved in extracurricular programs and events.

Cultural Agility: The ELL program builds appreciation for global cultures while nurturing a strong sense of Emirati identity, helping students practice empathy and open-mindedness with peers from around the world. At Greenwood, the peer reading program highlights and celebrates Emirati culture.

Integrated Technology: The ELL Department integrates tools and platforms such as Read 180, Achieve3000, and Level-Up, along with AI-powered tools such as Class Companion for personalized feedback, and collaborative online projects, to strengthen engagement and language acquisition.

Professional Development for Staff

The ELL Department holds training and professional development sessions throughout the year for targeted groups of teachers, covering the following areas:

1. Foundations of ELL Instruction

- Understanding language acquisition stages (BICS vs. CALP, Cummins' model).
- Language objectives vs. content objectives in lesson planning, through the Reading Across the Curriculum initiative.
- Common challenges Arab ELLs face, where relevant to the subject's context.

2. Classroom Strategies Across Subjects

- Scaffolding techniques (sentence starters, visuals, word banks, modeling).
- Differentiation for ELLs (tiered tasks, adapted texts, choice boards).
- Reading strategies for ELLs across the curriculum (unified text-marking/annotation conventions used school-wide, skimming, graphic organizers).
- Writing scaffolds (frames, outlines, shared writing, peer feedback).
- Speaking and listening activities (structured discussions, collaborative dialogues).

3. Assessment for ELLs

- Adapting tests and quizzes for language needs while maintaining rigor.
- Using rubrics with language accommodations.
- Tracking progress with MAP and other standardized data, alongside classroom observations, through MAP Reflection Forms.

4. Building Vocabulary and Academic Language

- Teaching disciplinary vocabulary across all subjects to support vocabulary acquisition.
- Using morphology (prefixes, suffixes, roots) to build decoding skills.
- Encouraging academic sentence stems (e.g., "The evidence suggests...", "In contrast...").
- Strategies for developing disciplinary literacy (e.g., science and ICT vocabulary).

5. Cultural and Social-Emotional Dimensions

- Culturally responsive teaching that values students' home languages and cultures.
- Addressing bias and misconceptions about ELLs.
- Supporting newcomer students' social and academic adjustment.

6. Technology and ELLs

- Using AI, translation tools, and digital platforms to support ELLs.
- Gamification and apps for vocabulary building and fluency.
- Leveraging tools such as Level-Up, Achieve3000, HMH Read180, Rigby Library by HMH, and ReadWorks.org for differentiated texts.

7. Collaborative Practices

- Co-teaching models (push-in, pull-out, parallel teaching).
- Shared responsibility between content teachers and ELL specialists.
- Building a school-wide reading culture that supports multilingual learners.

Future Plan

Collaborative Learning Communities: The ELL Department envisions a collaborative ecosystem in which educators, students, parents, and the community work together to enrich the language-learning experience. Regular workshops, seminars, and cultural events will deepen language skills while promoting belonging and mutual respect. Planned workshops and events — for students, teachers, and parents where applicable — will support a school-wide reading culture, covering topics such as:

- Reading as a hobby rather than an academic burden.
- Maintaining positive affirmations with ELLs at home.
- Engaging other subjects in inter-disciplinary literacy instruction using the articles on Achieve3000 and aligning them to the curriculum of other subjects.
- Reinforcing reading comprehension strategies with children at school and at home.

Parent and Community Engagement: The ELL vision extends beyond the classroom through workshops and collaborative events for parents, building a holistic support network that reinforces language acquisition beyond school hours.

