

Cambridge International School

Curriculum Policy

NAME OF POLICY	Curriculum Policy and Procedures
APPROVED BY	Principal
LAST REVIEW DATE	AUGUST 2025
NEXT REVIEW DATE	AUGUST 2027
RELATED POLICIES	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Teaching and Learning Policy,• Inclusion Policy, Gifted and Talented Policy,• ELL Policy,• Assessment,• Recording and Reporting Policy,• Curriculum Handbooks

Introduction

All children at Cambridge International School – Dubai have a right to a broad, balanced and relevant education which provides continuity and progression and takes individual differences into account. Our curriculum has breadth and balance throughout the areas of learning with particular emphasis of mastering skills. It is fully in keeping with the school's aims, guidance from the National Curriculum for England and local UAE educational policies. The curriculum is all the planned experiences that we organise in order to promote learning, personal growth and development of our learners. It includes not only the formal requirements of the National Curriculum for England, but also the range of extra-curricular activities that the school organises in order to enrich, inspire, challenge, safeguard and enable them to become:

- Successful Learners who enjoy learning, make progress and achieve
- Confident Individuals who are able to live safe, healthy and fulfilling lives
- Responsible, moral citizens who make a socially and economically positive contribution to society

CIS fully implements the UAE Ministry of Education (MoE) curriculum standards for all national mandatory subjects, including Arabic, Islamic Education and Social Studies. The school adheres to the KHDA's mandatory requirements to ensure that all students experience a curriculum that reflects the cultural identity, heritage and values of the United Arab Emirates.

Aims and Values

Our school curriculum is underpinned by the Cambridge International School – Dubai Learner Profile that we hold central to our school. We empower our learners to aim high. As a World Class accredited *High Performance Learning* school the curriculum is the means by which the school achieves its objective of educating children in the knowledge, skills and concepts that they need in order to lead fulfilling lives and become lifelong learners.

As a GEMS school, we aim to build a caring and supportive community where each individual is able to grow in a safe and secure environment. We recognise that each child is a unique individual with his/her own contribution to make to the life of the school and consequently we provide extensive opportunities through a broad, balanced and ever-evolving curriculum. We value the social and moral development of each person, as well as their intellectual and physical growth.

Through our Curriculum we aim to:

- Provide broad and balanced learning experiences
- Build up children's confidence and motivation to learn through the use of a range of learning and teaching styles
- Embed key skills and attributes in order to prepare children for real-life and everyday situations
- Provide opportunities to apply knowledge and learning in practical ways
- Provide a creative approach to planning and delivery that will incorporate and embed key aspects of the National Curriculum for England and EYFS framework
- Provide enrichment opportunities where learning and teaching can take place beyond the classroom
- Enable children to be creative and to develop their own thinking
- Utilise technology strategically to support and enhance teaching and learning opportunities
- Develop social skills and encourage children to become more active citizens within the school community and beyond
- Promote a positive attitude towards learning, so that children enjoy coming to school, and acquire a solid basis for lifelong learning
- Enable children to have respect for themselves and high self-esteem, and to be able to live and work co-operatively with others

The teaching of Arabic, Islamic Education and Social Studies plays a central role in promoting the school's aims of developing responsible, respectful and culturally aware learners. These subjects support students' understanding of UAE identity and heritage and contribute to their moral, social and cultural development in line with national expectations.

Organisation and Planning

We aim to emphasise the effectiveness of the curriculum by providing real life experiences and useful resources which will enrich learning experiences for our diverse learners.

Every year group has curriculum handbooks that provide an overview of the subjects taught. Teaching staff regularly review, adapt and evolve these handbooks to meet the requirements of the UK National Curriculum, Cambridge Curriculum (KS4 &5), DSIB expectations and our local and global context. Details of the main content and topics taught each term are provided for parents in the form of Year group specific monthly curriculum overviews in Primary and as topic planners and course summaries in Secondary.

Curriculum planning for all MoE subjects follows the UAE National Curriculum standards in full. Curriculum maps are reviewed annually to ensure complete alignment with KHDA requirements, including increased instructional time for Arabic, Islamic Education and Social Studies from the 2025–26 academic year. In accordance with KHDA regulations, the school organises separate classes for Arab and non-Arab students in Arabic and Islamic Education, due to distinct curriculum expectations and language-of-instruction requirements.

National Agenda- UAE Vision and E33

The National Agenda aims for all schools to be innovative and has set as a target that our learners rank among the best in the world in Reading, Mathematics and Science exams, and to have a strong knowledge of the Arabic Language. We acknowledge the National focus of the UAE being within the top 20 countries of the PISA and in the top 15 countries for TIMSS assessments.

Moral Social Curriculum (Moral Education and UAE Social Studies) is also a statutory part of the curriculum and is taught in an imaginative way to help learners become more nationally and globally aware and develop independent skills. This is combined with additional Careers guidance which is built into the tutorial programme and takes the form of assemblies, webinars, fairs, exhibitions, guest speakers and use of platforms such as My Mentor, My Compass, Lifology and Unifrog.

It is also compulsory that learners, who have an Arabic passport study the MOE curriculum for Arabic until Year 13 and non-Arabs until Year 10 and in the same way all Muslim learners will study the MOE curriculum for Islamic until Year 13.

If a learner displays signs of having special needs, the learner's teacher will work with the family and the Head of Year to gather evidence and observations of the key barriers to learning. At Wave 1 the learner will have a Cognitive Overview that will give short bursts of intervention. Support will be given through in-class interventions. Should the need for further support be deemed necessary after one or two cycles of Wave 1 support, then with the permission of the parents the Ace Team will be called to observe and assess. At this point the learner will either be given Wave 2 intervention and an Accommodation Plan or the learner will be referred to one of the in-school therapists or external professionals.

Particular care and focus is taken to ensure that planning encompasses as many opportunities as possible to promote the UAE's culture, history and heritage. Emirati students have bespoke learning pathways and individual education plans (see Emirati Learners policy).

Inclusion (*Please see separate inclusion policy*)

All students have an entitlement to a broad and balanced curriculum, which is differentiated to enable them to understand the relevance and purpose of learning activities. Experience levels of understanding and rates of progress that bring feelings of success and achievement. Teachers use a range of strategies to meet students' needs. Lessons have clear learning objectives; we differentiate work appropriately, and we use assessment to inform the next stage of learning.

Individual Education Plans (IEP), which employ a small-steps approach, feature significantly in the provision that we make in the school. By breaking down the existing levels of attainment into finely graded steps and targets, we ensure that children experience success and reduce barriers in learning.

We support students in a manner that acknowledges their entitlement to share the same learning experiences that their peers enjoy. There are times when to maximize learning, we ask the student to work in small groups, or in a one-to-one situation outside the classroom. The school also offers a project base (BTEC) and vocational (ASDAN) as an alternative pathway.

The above is aligned with pedagogy which differentiates and/ or modifies teaching and learning keeping in mind student baseline and to reduce learning barriers. In their planning, teachers ensure that they give SoD the opportunity to develop skills in practical aspects of the curriculum.

Teachers ensure that the work for Student of determination:

- Takes account of their pace of learning and the equipment they use.
- Takes account of their effort and concentration needed in oral/ written work.
- Allows opportunities for them to take part in educational visits and other activities linked to their studies.
- Uses assessment techniques that reflect their individual needs and abilities and to reduce barriers to learning.

Fundamental British values

The curriculum includes opportunities for Cambridge International School, Dubai to promote the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs. Learner's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted through Positive Enhanced Education Curriculum (Geelong Grammar School-PEEC Program), extra- curricular activities such as Debate Clubs, MUN and subjects such as Islamic, Moral Education, Social Studies, History, IGCSE Global Perspectives and PSHE.

Through this provision of the curriculum we aim to:

- enable students to develop their self-knowledge, self-esteem and self-confidence;
- enable students to distinguish right from wrong and to respect the civil and criminal law of England
- encourage students to accept responsibility for their behaviour, show initiative, and to understand how they can contribute positively to the lives of those living and working in the locality of the school and to society more widely;
- enable students to acquire a broad general knowledge of and respect for public institutions and services in England;
- further tolerance and harmony between different cultural traditions by enabling students to acquire an appreciation of and respect for their own and other cultures;
- encourage respect for other people;
- encourage respect for democracy and support for participation in the democratic processes, including respect for the basis on which the law is made and applied in England.

Examples of actions taken at CIS include:

- Humanities curriculum includes where appropriate to the age of learners, material on the strengths, advantages and disadvantages of democracy, and how democracy and the law work in Britain, in contrast to other forms of government in other countries;
- Ensure that all CIS learners have a voice (Student Voice- Upstrive, Student Voice email, Speak Up) that is listened to, and demonstrate how democracy works by actively promoting democratic processes such as running hustings for Student Leadership positions such as the Head Boy/ Girl and a School Council whose members are voted for by the learners;
- Use opportunities such as general or local elections to hold mock elections to promote fundamental British values and provide pupils with the opportunity to learn how to argue and defend points of view (Model United Nations sessions);
- Use teaching resources from a wide variety of sources to help pupils understand a range of faiths, (Global Perspectives and participation in the celebration of various festivals- Christmas, Diwali and Eid);
- Consider the role of extra-curricular activity, including any run directly by pupils, in promoting fundamental British values such as the various clubs- Debate, MUN, Scholars' Cup, Finance Literacy, Reading, Book, Art, History etc.

Primary Curriculum

Early Years Foundation Stage

In EYFS, we follow the Early Years Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage, published in September 2021 by the DfES. This Framework specifies the requirement for learning and development in the Early Years and provides specific areas of learning we must cover in our curriculum.

The Early Years programme at CIS adopts a bilingual instructional model in which Arabic is embedded as a core language of learning. In line with UAE expectations, one-third of children's total instructional time is delivered in Arabic in FS2 and Year 1 to ensure strong early linguistic exposure and cultural identity development. Arabic is taught in companioned groups for Arab and non-Arab learners and all instruction for all students is delivered in Standard Arabic as required.

Islamic Education is mandatory for all Muslim children in the Early Years and is delivered through three weekly lessons in accordance with MoE curriculum expectations. All learners in FS1, FS2 and year 1 receive 5 Arabic sessions per week, ensuring compliance with UAE national subject requirements. These lessons are integrated within a play-based, culturally rich bilingual environment that aligns with KHDA and MoE standards for curriculum implementation and cultural identity development.

There are seventeen Early Learning Goals, across the 3 prime and 4 specific areas of learning.

Prime areas:

- Communication and Language Development
- Physical development
- Personal, Social and Emotional Development

Specific areas:

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the World
- Expressive Arts and Design

FS Specialist Subjects:

- Music
- Arabic
- Islamic

Key Stages 1 and 2

All class lessons are based on the National Curriculum for England, with the majority of curriculum time focused on the core subjects of English, Mathematics and Science. All other subjects are integrated through carefully planned learning themes. Curriculum trackers ensure that all statutory objectives are taught and revisited throughout the academic year.

Learning is both differentiated and aspirational, with high expectations for all pupils. The expectation is that students make outstanding progress, leading to high levels of attainment. Our thematic approach ensures a holistic learning experience, where knowledge and skills are thoughtfully linked across subjects.

Each new topic begins with an Inspiring Sensational Start, designed to engage and motivate pupils while providing meaningful context for learning. Topics conclude with a Fabulous Finish, allowing pupils to consolidate and showcase their learning. Every topic is underpinned by a high-quality core text, ensuring learning is deeply rooted in literacy and supports the development of reading, writing and oracy skills across the curriculum.

KS1 and KS2 – Class Teacher

- English
- Mathematics
- Science
- Connected Curriculum - Design and Technology, Humanities, Art and Design and Computing
- Social Moral and Cultural
- PSHE
- Curriculum for Life
- Phonics (KS1)

KS1 and KS2 - Specialist Subject Teachers:

- Arabic A and Arabic B
- Islamic Studies
- Social Studies
- PE
- Music
- Art (Y3-6)
- French (Y3-6)
- Philosophy for Children (Y3-Y6 for non-Muslim students)
- Target Time (Y3-Y6 for non-Muslim students)

Thematic and Text-Rich Curriculum

Our school curriculum is connected through themes and texts. We ensure a full coverage of the learning objectives, with clear mapping, frequent repetition and a spiraling approach which encourages our learner to make links and build on prior learning, in turn, this allows for the meeting and exceeding of each learning objective as well as the fluidity of transferable skills. Our curriculum is built on carefully chosen texts that link

with our themes and expose our learners of high-quality language and vocabulary. Learning hyper personalized through dialogue and talk-based learning.

Our text rich curriculum is available in a child friendly display, in each year group; this allows learners to visualize how their learning grows, how ideas and themes link throughout our curriculum and everyday learning.

Social Studies is a mandatory subject for all Arab students from Year 2 to Year 6 and is delivered exclusively in Arabic, following the UAE Ministry of Education (MoE) curriculum standards. Lessons are taught as standalone sessions during official school hours. Class groups are organised separately for Arab and non-Arab students in accordance with KHDA requirements. Teaching focuses on developing students' understanding of UAE history, geography, culture and civic values, with all instruction aligned to the MoE-approved content framework.

Secondary Curriculum

The Secondary School covers the ages of 11-18, and is split into three distinct stages, Key Stage 3 (Years 7-9), Key Stage 4 (Years 10-11) and Key Stage 5 (Years 12-13).

Key Stage Three

Key Stage Three is where learning is delivered by subject specialists. It provides uninterrupted continuation from our Key Stage Two Programmes and a very clear progression pathway for our Key Stage Four courses, including GCSEs and IGCSEs. We place high value on our curriculum being balanced and stimulating, fostering an academic culture which encourages learners to become independent enquirers and thinkers, learners who read widely, challenge and question.

We aim to develop character in our learners by ensuring our provision, both curricular and extra-curricular, fully engages them in their learning and that learners are confident in developing and applying a range of skills which will ensure they can further their knowledge and enthusiasm across the academic, artistic, cultural and sporting disciplines.

The following subjects are taught at Key Stage Three:

- English
- Mathematics
- Science
- *Arabic A and B
- Islamic Studies
- Social Studies
- Moral Education
- Art
- French
- Geography
- History
- Information Communication Technology
- Music (Y7&8 only)
- Drama
- Physical Education

From Year 7 to Year 10, Social Studies remains compulsory for all Arab students and continues to be delivered in Arabic using the prescribed MoE curriculum. All lessons are scheduled as standalone sessions and follow KHDA requirements regarding class organisation and language of instruction. Instruction

emphasises deeper historical analysis, national identity development and civic understanding, ensuring a smooth progression from the primary phase.

Cambridge Curriculum (CIE)

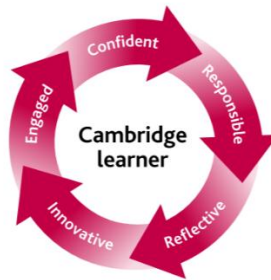
In Key Stage Four (IGCSE) and Five (AS/A Level), the Cambridge Curriculum Pathway offered is coherent with clear progression from Key Stage Four to Key Stage Five, builds on learners' previous learning – a 'spiral approach' that reinforces what learners have learned, while at the same time taking them forward.

The Curriculum ensures our learners develop deep subject knowledge, conceptual understanding and higher order thinking skills. The curriculum combines an emphasis on mastering subjects in depth, at the same time as developing skills for study and work in the future.

- **Deep subject knowledge:** helps develop the ability to solve problems, to apply understanding to new situations and to enable learners to progress to the next stage. It is especially important at Cambridge International A Level because most learners aspire to go to university, where deep subject understanding is so vital.
- **Conceptual understanding:** a firm grasp of the subject's key concepts and developing the skills they need to succeed at university. Key concepts help learners develop a deep understanding of their subject and make links between different aspects. Key concepts transform learners' grasp of their subject, and open up new ways of thinking about, understanding or interpreting the important things to be learned.
- **Higher order thinking skills within subject disciplines-** problem solving, critical thinking, independent research, collaboration, presenting arguments- we believe students need to work effectively across disciplines.

Choice and flexibility: We believe that empowering students by allowing them to personalise their learning programme helps build motivation throughout their studies and nurtures their love of learning.

The structure and breadth of our courses offered allows students the choices and combinations of subjects that match their strengths and interests, rather than imposing a narrow or broad range of subjects.



Key Stage Four

In Year 9, learners have the opportunity to choose one option subject to study at GCSE (French) or IGCSE Level (Sociology, ICT, Computer Science and Business), alongside a number of core subjects.

Students will write the final IGCSE/ GCSE examination for the chosen subject in Year 10.

In Year 10 students follow a two-year IGCSE course which includes the mandatory subjects and four other subjects chosen from the different options provided.

- English Language (IGCSE First Language or GCSE English as a Second Language)
- IGCSE Mathematics
- Social Studies (Arab Students)

- Moral Social Cultural Studies
- Physical Education (non-examined)
- Islamic Studies (For Muslim learners only)
- IGCSE Global Perspectives / Global Futures (For Non- Muslim students)
- Curriculum For Life

Added to this, there are a range of options from which the learners select four optional subjects to study in Year 10. Those learners who may commence their IGCSE studies with a low level of English will get additional support through our ELL curriculum which is tailored specifically to each learner's needs.

The option subjects include:

- IGCSE Art
- IGCSE Accounting
- IGCSE Business Studies
- IGCSE Biology
- IGCSE Chemistry
- IGCSE Computer Science
- IGCSE Physics
- IGCSE Economics
- IGCSE English Literature
- IGCSE Environmental Management
- IGCSE History
- IGCSE Information Communication Technology
- GCSE Physical Education
- GCSE Psychology
- IGCSE Travel & Tourism

Key Stage Five

At Key Stage Five, learners have the opportunity to select from a range of International A Levels depending on their academic performance at Key Stage Four. All subjects have entry requirements of post-16 examinations and outlined in the Post 16 guidance booklet.

All learners have to take the following compulsory subjects:

- Arabic A (For Arab learners only)
- Islamic Studies (For Muslim learners only)
- PSHE (For Non- Muslim learners only)

Learners will select a minimum of 3 academic qualification excluding BTECs and up to a maximum of 4 qualifications from the following:

- A Level Art and Design
- A Level Accounting
- A Level Biology
- A Level Business Studies (CIE/ Edexcel)
- A Level Chemistry
- A Level Computer Science
- A Level Economics
- AS Level General English
- A Level English Literature
- AS Level Environmental Management

- A Level History
- A Level Information Technology
- A Level Law
- A Level Mathematics (CIE/ Edexcel)
- A Level Physics (CIE)
- A Level Psychology
- A Level Sociology
- BTEC Level 3 Performing Arts (Subsidiary Diploma)
- BTEC Level 3 Creative Media (Diploma)
- BTEC Level 3 Business (Diploma)
- BTEC Level 3 Applied Science (Diploma)
- BTEC Level 3 Sports (Subsidiary Diploma)

Roles and Responsibilities

Teachers:

- All teaching staff are responsible for the planning and delivery of the curriculum on a day-to-day basis and for making cross-curricular links where appropriate. Staff make amendments to planning in order to optimise learning opportunities when they arise.
- Implementing the curriculum and monitoring learners' progress through assessment

Curriculum & Faculty Leaders:

- Provide direction for the subject. Set clear expectations of teaching and learning
- Support and offer advice to colleagues on issues related to the subject;
- Monitor the quality of teaching, learning and learner progress in that subject area as per the QA calendar including the review of planning, learner book work, lesson observations, homework, classroom displays, capturing learner voice.
- Provide efficient resource management for the subject.

It is the role of each subject leader to keep up to date with developments in their subject. They review the way the subject is taught in the school and plan for improvement. This development planning links to whole-school objectives. Alongside the Heads of School, subject leaders review the curriculum plans for their subject, ensure that there is full coverage of the National Curriculum and that progression is planned for.

Heads of EYFS, Primary, Secondary and Deputy Head of Secondary - Academics:

- Working with the Heads of Department to ensure that the curriculum is planned and implemented to ensure outstanding progress and attainment
- Annual Continuous Professional Development plan and implementation for all staff
- Monitoring planning to ensure curriculum coverage
- Carrying out work scrutiny alongside planning
- Observing teaching and learning to ensure progress is being made within the topics
- Regular reviews of the curriculum
- Formulating an action plan to move the school forward through the SDP
- Arranging PD to ensure creative teaching is shown and taking place
- Manage the resourcing budget

Principal/CEO:

- Provide overall direction and management of the quality of curriculum provision offered to all learners
- Ensure that finances are budgeted to purchase resources
- Monitor review and improve the curriculum through SEF and School Improvement Plan
- Observe teaching, learning and attainment/progress
- Focus on continuous improvement through self-review, performance management and professional development of all teachers
- Provide CPD and support for the Vice Principal, Heads of School and Curriculum & Faculty Leaders

Monitoring and Review

The quality of curriculum provision and the impact on learning is monitored and improved through

- Lesson observations
- Analysis of learner data
- Diagnostic and summative assessment results
- Standardisation and Moderation
- Teacher observations and Performance Management Program
- Teacher Continuous Professional Development
- SEF
- School Development Plan and Post-Inspection Action Plan
- Policy and Procedural Review
- DSIB inspections
- GEMS internal Cluster Visits