



مدرسة كامبردج انترناشيونال
Cambridge International School, Dubai

Teaching and Learning Policy and Procedures

NAME OF POLICY	Teaching, Learning Policy and Procedure
APPROVED BY	Principal
DATE APPROVED	October 2025
DATE OF REVIEW	August 2026
RELATED POLICIES	1. Professional Development Policy and Procedure 2. Teacher Growth and Supervision Policy and Procedure 3. Assessment Policy 4. Marking and Feedback Policy 5. Inclusion Policy 6. Curriculum Policy 7. Student Code of Conduct 8. Teach Like a GEM Handbook 9. Digital Learning Policy 10. Alternative Pathways Policy

Rationale:

At Cambridge International School, Dubai (CIS) we **Collaborate** with passion, **Innovate** with purpose and **Succeed** with excellence. It is our commitment, drive and purpose to provide our students, with the best possible teaching and learning opportunities, every single day. We believe that it is our role as educators, to facilitate our student's learning, through high-quality positive interactions that provide a platform for the holistic development of students: academically, socially, and emotionally.

This policy has been designed in line with the 'Teach Like a GEM' playbook, grounded in cognitive science, educational research and best, international, pedagogical practice.

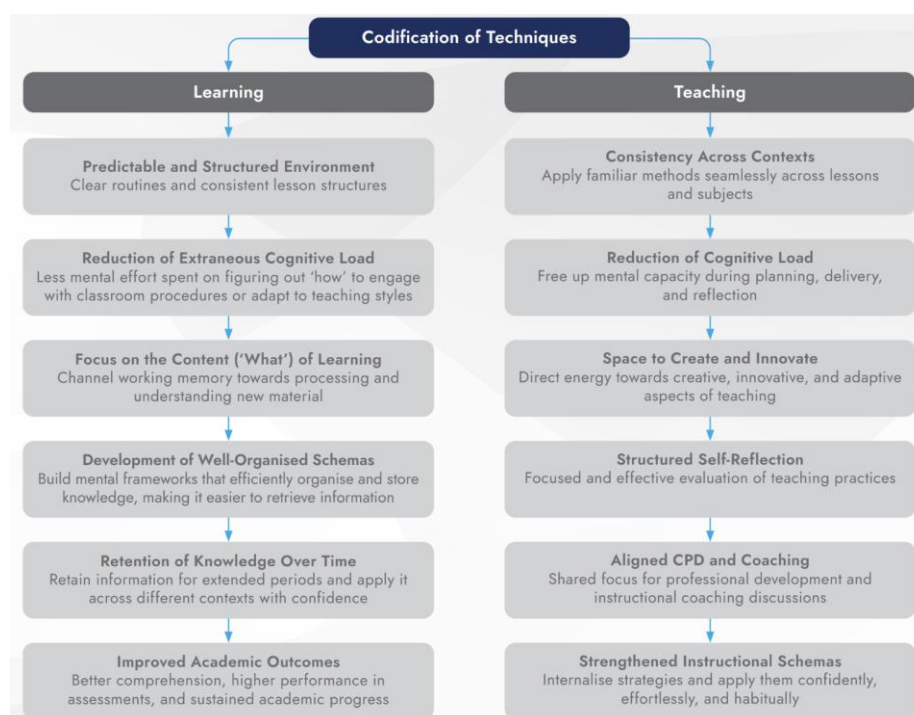
Aims:

- To ensure high quality teaching that enables the acquisition of skills, knowledge and understanding which will underpin all future learning.
- To ensure consistency and continuity across the school.
- To ensure all learners achieve the highest academic standards, meeting and exceeding UAE and international standards.
- To establish fully inclusive classrooms with support and challenge for all learners including those with special educational needs, disabilities, EAL Learners and Emirati students.
- To provide a broad and balanced curriculum which provides opportunity for all learners to make progress through enjoyment and challenge.
- To promote a wide range of enrichment experiences which enable children to make connections between all forms of learning.
- To integrate Emirati culture and Islamic values into learning experiences.

We insist that our school is warm, welcoming, clean, bright, well-organised, and an enabling environment, conducive to learning. Classroom procedures are to be routinised and consistently applied in line with our 'Be a GEM' framework. Staff are to uphold the highest possible behaviour for learning expectations of all students.

'Teach Like a GEM':

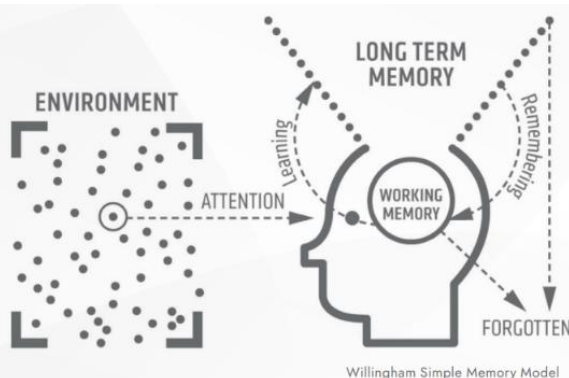
The 'Teach Like a GEM' playbook is implemented with maximum fidelity across the whole school with a focus on codifying techniques to support and manage the extraneous load of both students and teachers. The rationale for this and process is outlined below:



The design of the playbook which guides our pedagogical approach in the school is based on the following guiding research:

Teach Like a GEM emphasises the artful, intuitive aspects of teaching alongside the evidence-based, scientific nature of learning processes. It is based on **Doug Lemov's Teach Like a Champion**, **Barak Rosenshine's 10 Principles of Instruction**, **Retrieval Practice**, **Cognitive Science**, and **Cognitive Load Theory**. These frameworks emphasise explicit instruction, active student engagement, and effective management of cognitive load to optimise learning.

At GEMS Education, world-class teaching requires all staff to understand the **mechanisms of the mind**—how we think, learn, and remember.



As captured in the **Simple Memory Model**, learning begins when **information** from the **environment** enters **working memory**, but only if we are paying **attention**. Working memory is the bottleneck of our thinking, limiting how much we can process at any one time.

For information to be retained, it must be encoded into long-term memory through focused attention, meaningful engagement, and deliberate practice. In this sense, **learning** is best understood as a change in **long-term memory**.

Remembering plays a crucial role. When we retrieve information, we bring it back into working memory, re-engage with it, strengthen connections, and build deeper understanding. Without strong encoding or regular opportunities for remembering, knowledge is easily **forgotten**.

The 'Teach Like a GEM' playbook identifies 18 techniques that we encourage our teachers to utilise through the codification of language and deployment of the strategies to support our learners. These 18 techniques are broken down into 3 categories:

- 6 'GEMS Essentials' which must be present in all lessons
- 8 'GEMS Talk' which promote communication, collaboration, and provide assessment for learning opportunities
- 4 'GEMS Culture' which supports with behaviour for learning, which is complimentary of the 'Be a GEM' framework which is also deployed in the school.

An overview of the 18 techniques and their categorisation can be seen below:

GEMS Essentials: Structuring Learning for Impact



GEMS Talk: Fostering a Culture of Discourse



GEMS Culture: Optimising Learning Opportunities



Retrieval Practice:

It is the expectation that all lessons at CIS start with a 'Do Now' activity. This activity must be carefully designed to promote opportunities to:

- Retrieve- information from the long-term to the short-term memory to strengthen memory traces and activate existing schemas.
- Re-Engage- information by explaining it, applying it and manipulating it to expose gaps or misconceptions.
- Re-Encode- information back into the long-term memory, stronger than before.

Teachers must also use this opportunity to address any misconceptions that may arise.

Learning Outcomes and To Know Statements:

Every lesson at CIS Dubai is designed and constructed around well thought out and planned 'Learning Outcomes' and 'To Know Statements'. The two are interdependent of one another and ensure a clear focus to guide instructional planning, whilst ensuring learning remains purposeful and efficient. The learning outcomes is a measurable statement, articulating what every learner is expected to achieve or demonstrate by the end of the lesson, linked to the English National Curriculum objective of focus. To know statements identifies the essential substantive and procedural knowledge that a learner must be aware of, or be able to demonstrate, in order to successfully achieve the learning outcome. Both the learning outcome and to know statements are shared with learners at the start of each lesson and are referred to, at necessary points throughout the lesson.

Scaffolding and Modelling:

Learners have their learning scaffolded through the 'I Do, You Do, We Do' model to ensure a gradual release that shifts the cognitive load from the teacher, to the joint responsibility of the teacher and the learner, to full independent practice and application. Scaffolding and modelling will take place in a variety of ways and will often involve students modelling to one another, where possible.

Assessment: (See separate Assessment and Marking and Feedback Policy)

Our assessment procedures allow us to give students and parents clear guidance about the standard of their work and precise ways in which students can improve, develop and achieve. Student progress and attainment is closely monitored throughout the year. Assessment, marking and feedback improve learning and raise standards by:

- Sharing learning outcomes with the students so that they are able to monitor their own learning towards these goals.
- Providing students with constructive feedback that enables them to identify what they need to do next (*Marking and Feedback Policy*).
- Involving students in their own self-assessment and peer-assessing so that they are aware of what they know, understand and can do (*Marking and Feedback Policy*)
- Using assessment information within the lesson (AFL) and over time to inform learning to suit the needs of the students.

Lessons are characterised by a number of 'Affirmative Checking' opportunities to provide the teacher with information and data, for how best to adapt their lesson and respond accordingly. Informal strategies such as: 'Cold Call', 'Show Me', 'Everybody Writes' are employed routinely. Technology is also utilised in this process through quick quizzes to identify: whole class misconceptions, which students need their learning extending or which students might require further support. All lessons finish with an 'Exit Ticket' which assesses each student's level of understanding of the learning outcome to guide future practice and instruction.

In Primary and from Y7-Y10, students completed pre and post diagnostic assessments on CENTURY Tech for English, Maths and Science. This provides teachers with data on each

individual students' level of attainment in relation to the curriculum objectives being accessed so that they can adjust their planning accordingly and personalise learning for each student. Post-diagnostic assessments then provide instant feedback on how well a child has progressed from their start-point and if they require any further support with particular concepts.

Marking and Feedback: *(See separate Marking and Feedback Policy)*

At CIS Dubai, our approach to feedback is that it is most impactful when delivered 'in the moment', to support, re-direct or extend learning. Our marking and feedback policy has been designed, utilising the latest educational research and best practice guidance. CIS Dubai adopts a 4 quarters approach to marking and feedback which provides a balance of: bespoke 1-1 feedback for each student, whole class misconceptions being addressed, peer and self-assessment. Teachers are expected to circulate their classroom throughout a lesson, intervening where necessary. Peer and self-assessment opportunities are provided regularly to boost metacognition, using rubrics where necessary.

Adaptive Teaching

Teachers at CIS are expected to make adaptations to their teaching, during a lesson, to ensure it provides all learners with the opportunity to meet and exceed expectations. Learning will be effectively planned prior to the lesson, as well as necessary adjustments being made to teaching and learning throughout the lesson. Teachers have high expectations for every pupil in their care. Within the practice of effective adaptive teaching, all learners experience the same high expectations set out by the teacher, with differing layers of support, to help them make good progress and achieve well over time. Teachers effectively use assessment for learning strategies throughout their teaching to: adapt, contextualise, support and extend the learning for individuals or groups of students, as well as addressing misconceptions to ensure consistent progress is made.

Differentiation:

Teaching and learning at CIS Dubai functions to provide highly effective learning opportunities to students from a range of backgrounds and abilities. Assessment information is to be used to inform planning and learning for all. All lessons are modified to meet the needs of the class with clear pathways for support or challenge. Teachers at CIS Dubai plan lessons with ambitious goals and support/scaffold and stretch/challenge students appropriately based upon formative and summative data and assessment for learning opportunities deployed in a lesson. Strategies such as 'Right is Right' and 'Stretch It' are utilised in lessons and a culture of excellence in everything that we do, is promoted.

Modification: *(See Inclusion Policy)*

We offer modification of a curriculum for children with special educational needs. This refers to the process of making intentional and individualised adjustments to the educational content, materials, methods, and assessments to better meet the unique learning requirements of students who have diverse learning abilities, disabilities, or exceptionalities. These modifications aim to provide an equitable and inclusive educational experience that allows these students to access and engage with the curriculum effectively, achieve learning goals, and maximise their educational potential. When planning work for students of determination (SoD), we give due regard to information and targets, contained in the students' Individual Education Plans (IEPs). Diverse Learners (English Language Learners, Exceptional Learners and Emirate students) also have termly targets and Individual Learning Plans that drive personalised learning throughout the year. It is the expectation that all staff provide quality first teaching opportunities to every student in their class, through careful planning, appropriate resourcing and strategies to foster inclusion within the classroom, including through collaboration and the learning environment itself.

Challenge:

Students at CIS Dubai are effectively challenged in all lessons. Teachers use relevant data about their students to plan effectively to challenge. It is expected that teachers plan for this prior to the

lesson but also adapt to the needs of their students during the lesson. A variety of data contributes to the planning of challenge both before and within a lesson. CAT4 data is used to identify 'Exceptional Learners' (ExL) who must have bespoke challenge activities planned for them in each lesson in line with their ExL plans. Teachers must also be cognisant that groupings within a lesson are flexible and must be vigilant to identify students who are capable of accessing more challenging work.

Reading Across the Curriculum:

At CIS Dubai, it is the responsibility of everyone to support the development of literacy for each student. In line with the 'Read Like a GEM' programme, students are offered support and access to improve their reading literacy levels in every lesson. Teachers develop subject specific vocabulary, provide opportunities to speak and listen, read a range of text and write for subject specific purposes. All teachers are expected to monitor spelling, grammar, vocabulary and handwriting and address this with students where necessary. When planning all teachers should consider the literacy demands of the lesson or lessons and take necessary steps to ensure these are taught alongside the subject specific content. Within a lesson, teachers are aware of and utilise strategies from the 'Read Like a GEM' playbook, including but not limited to: modelling fluent reading, transaction costs, bridging, spot check, focal point, skimming and scanning. Subject readers are also present so that students have opportunities to 'Read Like A': Geographer, Scientist, Linguist, Historian and Mathematician.

Teaching and Learning in the Early Years:

The EYFS Framework identifies four guiding principles which we use to shape our practice in school:

- Every child is a unique child, who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and selfassured.
- Children learn to be strong and independent through positive relationships.
- Children learn and develop well in enabling environments with teaching and support from adults, who respond to their individual interests and needs and help them to build their learning over time. Children benefit from a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and/or carers.
- Children develop and learn at different rates.

The framework covers the education and care of all children in early years provision, including children with special educational needs and disabilities. The EYFS framework includes seven areas of learning and development, all of which are important and interconnected. Three areas are crucial for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, for building their capacity to learn and form relationships and thrive.

The Prime Areas	The Specific Areas
• Communication and Language • Physical Development • Personal, Social and Emotional Development	• Literacy • Mathematics • Understanding the World • Expressive Arts and Design

The EYFS Framework identifies three characteristics of effective learning. Both our curriculum and pedagogical approach have been developed with these characteristics in mind:

- Playing and exploring - children investigate and experience things, and 'have a go'.
- Active learning - children concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties, and enjoy achievements.
- Creating and thinking critically - children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things.

We believe it is essential to have a balance between adult and child-led learning in the Early Years. This allows children to practise new skills and take ownership of their learning by applying

it in different situations. Carefully planned adult-led activities are important to ensure children learn specific skills and knowledge. During play, they can practise these skills and we can then see how much of this learning children have embedded.

Outdoor learning is a fundamental part of the Early Years and it has a positive impact on children's development. Being outdoors offers children the freedom to explore, use their senses and be physically active. It also offers opportunities to do things in different ways and on different scales compared to indoors. Our outdoor environment provides a range of resources and activities for children to explore and we try to ensure each of the curriculum areas are incorporated into the outdoor environment each day. Both FS1 and FS2 have access to outdoor areas and they either have free-flow access or timetabled sessions inside and outside. Outdoors is both a teaching and learning environment, where there is a balance of child led and adultled learning.

Phonics:

Systematic synthetic Phonics is taught from FS1 upwards using the Floppy Phonics scheme. Children in FS1 to Year 2 are expected to be taught phonics four times a week. Phonics teaching is expected to be taught consistently following the programmes guidelines. Students are tracked weekly to ensure they are on track. All Year 1 students sit the Phonics Screening at the end of year 1 and this is re-taken by any student that has not passed in Year 2. All new joiners to Year 2 are screened at the start of the year to enable effective planning to meet their needs. Students with EAL access FlashAcademy intervention to support new to English, or those struggling with phonics, students.

Digital Technology: *(See Digital Learning Policy).*

Teachers use digital platforms and technologies as an integral part of lessons to enhance their learning experience where appropriate. Technology is effectively used in planning, teaching, learning, collaboration and assessment. Teaching activities and software is well chosen to support and extend learning and enable teachers to collect live assessment information to drive adaptive teaching. Research opportunities are provided to students where necessary, with guidance on how to best conduct research, with the integration of AI, provided.

Support For Staff:

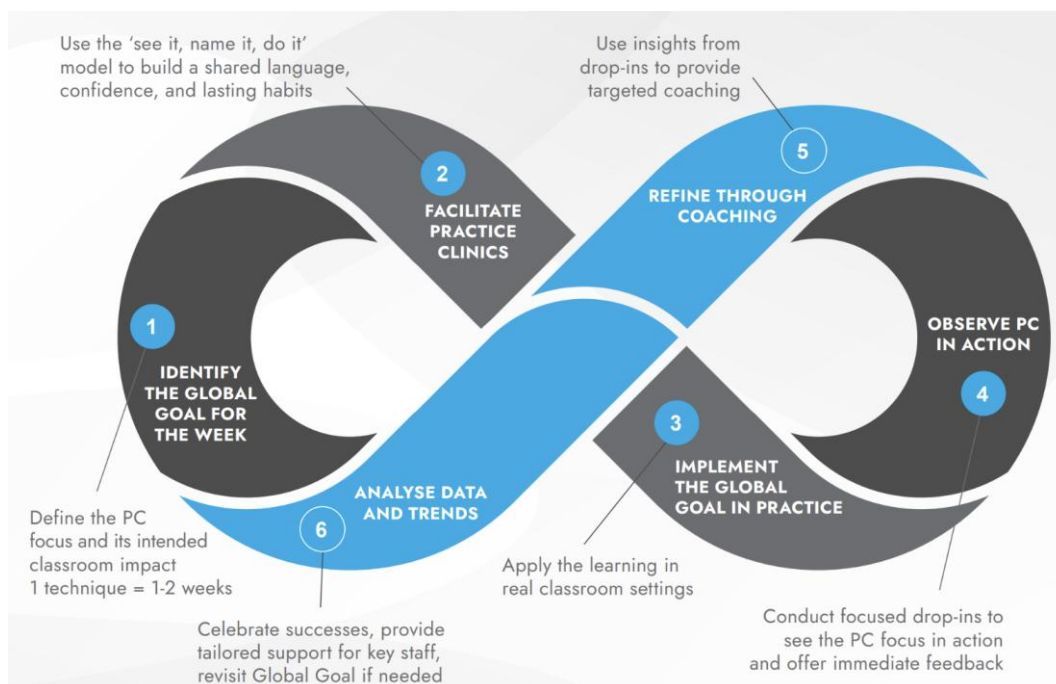
Teachers at CIS Dubai are supported in a variety of ways, prior to starting their formal employment, to throughout their entire career at CIS.

New staff access a bespoke induction week, prior to starting CIS, with informative presentations and workshops taking place, along with mandatory courses for safeguarding and health and safety. They are provided with a 'buddy' in school to support them and to help them settle in. All new staff access a 'Probation Support Plan' which is a programme designed to support with the induction for the new teacher, with a combination of peer observations, formal observations, target setting, and instructional coaching. Similar programmes are in place for existing staff members who may need support (Teacher Support Plan) or those that wish to improve their pedagogy and professional development (Teacher Level Up Plan).

All staff have access to the CPD library, a specific section with a range of books linked to pedagogy, leadership and education. In addition to this, all teachers access 2 internal CPD afternoons per week, linked to school development priorities and areas that staff identify as requiring further support with. External CPD is offered through TELAL and several teachers and middle leaders are enrolled on NPQs each year. A number of teachers also access PDQ courses annually.

To support teachers with the implementation of the 'Teach Like a GEM' playbook, all teachers receive instructional coaching, with the support of a trained coach. Bi-weekly 'drop-in' sessions take place which are recorded on 'StepLab'. Staff receive training in a 'Practice Clinic', following the 'See it, Name it, Do it' model to break each technique down into 'micro-steps' and receive

instructional coaching to support and monitor the execution of the focused techniques. This is an ongoing, cyclical process to support individual teachers to continually refine their techniques and to further enhance their capabilities:



Performance management and appraisal takes place on BlueSky, an online platform. Teachers have targets linked to school development priorities but also targets set by them, that are personal to their own development. Evidence is uploaded and regular meeting points between the staff member and their line-manager take place and are recorded.

Quality Assurance and Monitoring:

A rigorous quality assurance cycle ensures that the highest possible standards in teaching and learning are maintained. A number of formal and informal checks take place on a peer-to-peer level, by Middle Leaders and by members of the Senior Leadership Team. Formal observations take place 3 times a year and are recorded on BlueSky, against the UAE inspection framework. Regular learning walks, book audits, planning audits and drop-ins take place routinely and are followed up with formal feedback to staff members.

Appendix 1: Formal Lesson Observation Template

	CLASS:		TEACHER:		Lesson Number:	Male		SoD		Emirati	
	DATE:		SUBJECT:			Female		ELL		ExL	

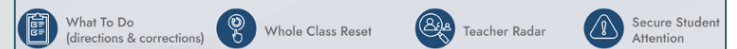
GEMS Essentials: Structuring Learning for Impact



GEMS Talk: Fostering a Culture of Discourse



GEMS Culture: Optimising Learning Opportunities



Learning Outcome:

By the end of this lesson, you will be able to:

To Know:

Meeting the needs of all pupils

Main Activity	
Challenge	
SoD Strategies	- Modification: - IEP/Passport target (L2/L3 students only):
ExL Strategies	
Emirati Strategies	
ELL Strategies	
Low PASS Strategies	

Link to National Agenda:	- Critical thinking – - Problem Solving –	Research-based learning –
Cross-curricular Subject(s) / Interleaving Opportunities:		
Read Like a GEM: Literacy opportunities and Key Vocabulary:		
Sustainable Development Goals:		



Appendix 2: Alternative Pathways Lesson Planning Template

	CLASS:		TEACHER:		Lesson Number:	Male		SoD		Emirati	
	DATE:		SUBJECT:			Female		ELL		Exl	

GEMS Essentials: Structuring Learning for Impact
 Do Now (retrieval practice)
  Learning Outcomes
  To Know

GEMS Talk: Fostering a Culture of Discourse
 Turn and Talk
  Show Call
  Show Me
  Everybody Writes

GEMS Culture: Optimising Learning Opportunities
 What To Do (directions & corrections)
  Whole Class Reset
  Teacher Radar
  Secure Student Attention

 I Do, We Do, You Do
  Affirmative Checking
  Exit Ticket
  Cold Call
  Right is Right
  Stretch It
  Habits of Discussion

Learning Outcome:	
By the end of this lesson, you will be able to:	
To Know:	
Meeting the needs of all pupils	
Main Activity	
Challenge	
SCERTS objectives	
Sensory integration	
Communication strategies	
Behaviour strategies	
Assistive technologies	
Asdan challenge number and objective (if applicable)	

