GEMS

American Academy Qatar

Parent and Student Handbook
KG1-Grade 12

2025–2026

WELCOME TO GEMS AMERICAN ACADEMY QATAR

Dear GAAQ Community,

On behalf of the faculty, we welcome you to the 2025-2026 school year. We would like to extend a special welcome to those of you who are new to Qatar and/or GAAQ. If there is anything we can do to ease your transition, please let us know. We are here to help you, and any staff member with a red/blue lanyard can help. The Student Handbook serves as the primary reference for important information, combining the Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MOEHE), GEMS Corporate Policies, and our school procedures into a single document. Additional details will be provided to you via school-wide communications, the GAAQ website, and at special events like Back to School Night.

We are accredited by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC) which is an independent, voluntary, nonprofit membership organization that partners with over 1500 public, independent, and international schools in the US and worldwide to assess, support, and promote high-quality education for all students through accreditation, professional assistance, and pursuit of best practices. NEASC aspires to provide a process for meaningful, ongoing whole-school improvement while honoring the unique culture and context of each institution it supports. This accreditation is a testament to the high quality of educators and leadership we have at GAAQ that meet demanding international standards.

Our school also has strong, professional relationships with many outstanding partners:

- Teaching Strategies
- Benchmark Literacy
- College Board (MAP, AP courses, PSAT, SAT) (We are an SAT Test center.)
- National Collegiate Athletic Association
- Our local athletic conferences

As part of the 60+ year legacy of GEMS Education, we are supported by our corporate partners led by Mr. Sunny Varkey, Mr. Dino Varkey, and Mr. Jay Varkey. A family-operated business, GEMS strives to ensure that the ‘most important gift we can give any child is a quality education and values that will guide them through life.’ We value their partnership and dedication to GEMS' ongoing growth and guidance.

Please read this handbook carefully. We hope that all students and their parents/guardians will have a good understanding of the contents. Lack of knowledge of the information contained in this handbook will not constitute an excuse for falling short of expectations.

Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have questions or concerns. Go Raptors!

Dr. Susan Borden, Head of School/CEO

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GAAQ K-12: Information, Policies, and Procedures

1.0 GAAQ Philosophy and Principles

1.1 School Identity Statement and Core Values

GEMS American Academy Qatar offers our multicultural student body a rigorous college-preparatory American curriculum from Pre-Kindergarten through Grade 12. In addition to standards-based academics, culminating with the Advanced Placement program, we also provide a robust extra-curricular program to support the development of the whole child. Our school equips students with skills to fulfill their potential and achieve their goals.

Core Values: **Respect ~ Innovation ~ Leadership ~ Purpose ~ Tenacity**

1.2 GEMS Education Philosophy

https://www.gemseducation.com/the-gems-difference/our-heritage/

1.3 Mission and Vision

Mission: GAAQ will become one of the best schools worldwide and we believe the best schools produce learners who are *purposeful, tenacious, innovative, and respectful leaders.*

Vision: GAAQ will empower students to attain their goals and to become successful citizens of our global community.

2.0 General Information:

2.1 Parent Communication

We encourage regular home and school contact and ask that parents begin any communication with the faculty member most closely related to the matter at hand. Informal meetings, email correspondence, and telephone conferences are encouraged whenever teachers or parents have concerns or questions. To ensure a productive conversation, please do not discuss student progress without prior contact or during pick-up and drop-off times.

Two Parent-Teacher conferences are held during the year to report and discuss each student's academic, social, and emotional progress. If parents cannot make scheduled meetings or conferences, we would once again like to strongly encourage parents to contact their child's teacher or any member of senior leadership anytime.

2.2 Report Cards

Report cards will not be distributed if student accounts are not in good standing, if school property has not been returned, or if there are excessive absences.

2.3 Prayer Times

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Prayer rooms and designated spaces are available for student use during specific times, which must be strictly adhered to. The Administration has set these times to ensure students can observe their prayers following their faith requirements, while maintaining the smooth running of the school day.

2.4 School Uniform

Except on certain school-approved or special occasions, students must wear the following regulation GAAQ uniform every day:

- A light blue tailored shirt of an appropriate size, tucked in at the waist
- dark blue slacks for boys
- knee-length or longer dark blue skirts or slacks for girls
- black shoes with non-marking soles and black laces
- black leather belts for slacks
- dark blue hooded sweatshirt or sweater with school logo
- red polo shirt (KG1-KG2)

Each student must also have the prescribed school PE clothing and proper athletic shoes. Clothing should be clearly labeled with the student's name.

GAAQ may not require uniforms while students are participating in after-school or out-of-school activities or on designated special dress days such as School Spirit Days and UN Day; however, students should be appropriately dressed in a manner that is not offensive to our host country. These rules will apply:

- No skirts above the knee
- No tight clothing
- No spaghetti-strap shirts
- No offensive logos or expressions on clothing
- Males are not permitted to wear earrings
- No shirts that expose the back
- No exposed midriff
- No low-cut shirts or blouses
- Tattoos must not be visible at any time in school
- Clothing should be respectful for both men and women.

The school administration has the final judgment on dress code violations. Students may be required to return home to change their clothes if their attire is deemed unacceptable.

2.5 Lanyards and ID

At GEMS American Academy, lanyards and ID cards (for both students and parents) are an essential part of our school's safety and security system. All students and parents are required to wear their lanyards/ID cards while on campus.

In the event a lanyard/ID card is lost, the following policy will apply:

- A replacement lanyard and ID card will be issued upon request.
- A replacement fee of QAR 15 will be charged for each lost card.
- Parents and students are requested to take care of their lanyards, as they are required for daily entry and access on campus.

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3.0 Bullying Policy

3.1 Definition of Bullying

At GAAQ, the school environment should be one where all students feel safe, comfortable, and welcomed, where they can be themselves without fear of teasing or bullying from any person at the school. Therefore, bullying in any form is not accepted at GEMS American Academy Qatar, and all instances and accusations are taken seriously and thoroughly investigated.

Bullying is defined as an ongoing and deliberate misuse of power in relationships through a repeated pattern of abusive behavior. Just because a behavior might not be classified as bullying does not mean it's not inappropriate. Such instances will fall under our standard Code of Conduct and disciplinary procedures. In order to be considered an instance of bullying, there should be evidence of the following:

- An Imbalance of Power: Kids who bully use their power—such as physical strength, access to embarrassing information, or popularity—to control or harm others. Power imbalances can change over time and in different situations, even if they involve the same people.
- Repetition: Bullying behaviors happen more than once or have the potential to happen more than once.
- Intention to cause harm.
- Targeted: Actions and behaviors are directed to specific people.

Bullying can take many forms; however, it is usually labeled as one of four categories:

- **Verbal Bullying:** Saying or writing mean things: Teasing, Name-calling, Inappropriate sexual comments, Taunting, Threatening to cause harm
- **Physical Bullying:** hurting a person's body or possessions: Hitting/kicking/pinching, Spitting, Tripping/pushing, Taking or breaking someone's things, Making mean or rude hand gestures
- **Social Bullying**: sometimes referred to as relational bullying, involves hurting someone's reputation or relationships: Leaving someone out on purpose, telling other children not to be friends with someone, spreading rumors about someone, or embarrassing someone in public
- **Cyberbullying:** any bullying that takes place over digital devices such as cell phones, computers, and tablets. It can occur via text or instant message, email, social media post, gaming, apps, etc., and can include any or all of the other types of bullying listed above.

3.2 Consequences of Bullying

Once an accusation of bullying has been investigated and verified, the following procedures should be followed. Responsibilities are divided into Reporting Staff Member/Teacher, Counselor, Administration, and Student. Please see the table below for reference:

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Report #	Responsible Role	Actions
1st Report	Reporting Staff Member	• Investigate the incident. • Speak with involved students. • Speak with homeroom teacher (+ counselor/Dean if applicable) & document via email. • File ALMA Incident Report (MAJOR).
	Classroom Teacher/ Counselor/Dean	• Contact parents. • Have instigating student(s) complete Reflection Sheet. • Repair relationships (possible: verbal/written apology, restorative practice).
	Counselor	• Meet all involved students to review the Bullying Policy. • Arrange follow-up check-ins.
2nd Report	Reporting Staff Member	• File ALMA Incident Report (MAJOR). • Email the classroom teacher, counselor, Dean, and AP/Principal for documentation. •Counselor meets student(s), explains the process, and contacts parents.
	Teacher / Dean + Counselor	• Implement disciplinary actions. • Host parent meeting (student present). • Student signs “Stay Away” contract.
3rd Report	Reporting Staff Member	• File ALMA Incident Report (MAJOR). • Email the classroom teacher, counselor, Dean, and AP/Principal for documentation.
	Teacher / Dean / Counselor / Admin	• Meet to decide next steps before proceeding. • Possible: loss of privileges, out-of-school suspension.
4th Report	Reporting Staff Member	• File ALMA Incident Report (MAJOR). • Email the classroom teacher, counselor, Dean, and AP/ Principal for documentation.
	Administration	• Case handled entirely by administration from this point.

4.0 Attendance Policy

To update attendance, please email **attendance_aaq@gemsedu.com** with a copy of the medical note or provide a hard copy to the attendance counter at reception.

4.1 Absence Excused

Medical notes need to be provided to be marked absent excused. A medical note must be provided within 5 days of return to ensure that the absence is marked as excused; medical notes provided later than this will not be accepted. Students will be marked absent excused if they can produce a medical certificate.

4.2 Absence Unexcused

Students who have accumulated **20** unexcused absences or more within the academic year

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may be retained or withdrawn from GAAQ. Decisions on withdrawal or retention are made on a case-by-case basis, considering academic performance, attitude to learning, and school behavior in the administration's decision.

Absence policy is as follows:

- 5 Unexcused Absences - Email Home
- 10 Unexcused Absences - Contact made by Attendance Secretary
- 15 Unexcused Absences - Meeting with Division Principal
- 20 Unexcused Absences - Meeting with Administration and possible retention or withdrawal from GAAQ.

Parents of absent unexcused students will be notified via SMS by the school for every day that their child is absent. Parents will be notified by the end of the first period.

4.3 Attendance for After-School Activity or Sports Teams

For a student to participate in an after-school activity (ASA) or Sports team, they must be in attendance during the last two classes of the school day. Students are not permitted to participate in or attend an after-school activity or Sports Team on a day they are absent from school. In order to participate in an activity, students must be present by no later than 12:00 noon on the day of the activity. Failure to attend regularly could result in removal from the activity or team.

4.4 Absence due to Extenuating Circumstances

In case of absences due to extenuating circumstances, the administration requests that parents contact the school as early as possible to apply for a waiver of the absence policy. Proof of circumstance may be requested.

4.5 Absence due to Grievance

Students with an immediate family member passing away are allowed 5 days of excused absence. Parents must inform the principal via email.

4.6 Late Policy

Students arriving after 7:30 a.m. will be considered late. This will be recorded and will appear on student report cards. When a child is late, parents must notify the teacher or reception. If a student has excessive or frequent lateness, the school principal will meet with the parents to help address this issue. The teacher may assign additional consequences as per school guidelines.

All students will be marked as late unexcused unless they can provide proof to the attendance secretary or principal to update to late excused.

5.0 General Behavioral Policies

5.1 Drug, Alcohol, and Tobacco Policy

The use of drugs, controlled substances, and alcohol is injurious to student health and the

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school environment. The possession, use, sale, or distribution of drugs, alcohol, or tobacco, or paraphernalia on school property, on school-provided transportation, or at school-sponsored or chaperoned functions is prohibited and constitutes a grave contravention of school rules and Qatar Law, and will not be tolerated. The following policy includes, but is not limited to, sporting events, social functions, and co-curricular activities. Both the Qatar government and schools have a zero-tolerance policy regarding alcohol or drug use or prohibited items. Violations will result in an immediate, indefinite suspension from class and all school activities until due process is completed, with probable expulsion from school.

5.2 Other Policies

Discrimination: GAAQ has a zero-tolerance policy on discrimination. Offenses may result in student suspension and/or expulsion. All people are to be treated respectfully, regardless of gender, ethnicity, or ability.

Damage to school property: Students will be individually charged and expected to reimburse the school for any damage they cause to school property.

Textbooks and supplies: Textbooks are provided on loan to students. Students are responsible for their books and must pay for loss or damage, including deliberate defacing (i.e., writing and graffiti). Report cards will be withheld for outstanding or lost textbooks.

Respect for local culture: As previously stated, the above rules and infractions are merely guidelines, as it is not possible to develop a completely comprehensive list of student behaviors. Moreover, GAAQ student discipline policies are superseded by local Qatari regulations and customs. For example, this includes but is not limited to public displays of affection and inappropriate dress, which are deemed culturally inappropriate in our host culture.

5.3 Acceptable Use of Technology Policy (AUTP)

Access to the school network and the Internet is a privilege, not a right. Access is available only for educational and administrative purposes. GAAQ's technology resources are to be used under this AUTP, and all users will be required to comply with its regulations. Noncompliance will result in disciplinary action. The following guidelines are intended to help users understand appropriate use. The school may restrict, suspend, or terminate any user's access to the school's computer systems upon violation of the AUTP. This policy applies to all facilities and technology associated with GAAQ, not just computers and equipment in the IT lab or on mobile carts.

5.3.1 Ethical Conduct:

It is the responsibility of all users to recognize and honor the intellectual property of others, comply with legal restrictions regarding plagiarism and the use and citation of information resources, and restrict the use of GAAQ's technology resources to the mission of the school. The use of computer systems for personal use unrelated to the mission of the school or for private gain is prohibited. This includes, but is not limited to, posting to social media, using video games, and downloading explicit material, among other activities, to help maintain the integrity of the school network and equipment. Deliberate tampering or experimentation is not allowed.

It is a violation to modify and/or copy any protected system files, system folders, or control panel

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files without prior approval of the Network Administrator or IT Coordinator. The use of non-GAAQ proxies or VPNs inside the school is also prohibited.

5.3.2 Educational Use

Users are responsible for the ethical and appropriate use of their network accounts.
Saving to the hard disk drive of a school-owned computer is granted only by permission of the teacher (for students) or IT Coordinator (for faculty/staff).
Playing commercial or online games is not permitted unless approved by the school.

5.3.3 Respect for Security

Reading, modifying, or removing files and/or mail owned by other users is not allowed without prior approval by the instructor or IT Coordinator. Any attempts to transmit software designed to compromise the operation or security of the network are prohibited.

5.3.4 Software Installation

Software may only be installed on the school's information systems (including all individual workstations) with prior approval from the IT Coordinator.

5.3.5 Software Copyright

The only software, other than student projects, to be used on school computers is that for which the school owns a valid license. Licensed/copyrighted software is not available for borrowing and may only be used at other sites with the approval of the IT Coordinator. Copyrighted software shall not be downloaded from the Internet or further transmitted in any form without compliance with all terms of a preauthorized licensing agreement. Infringement or violation of U.S. or international copyright laws or restrictions will not be tolerated. Any attempts to circumvent the licensing control or the copying of software from the network without the IT Coordinator's permission are prohibited.

5.3.6 Hardware

Report equipment problems immediately to the instructor/tech assistant/Network Administrator/IT Coordinator. Any attempt to move, repair, reconfigure, modify, or attach external devices to existing information and network systems without the permission of the Network Administrator and/or IT Coordinator is prohibited. Borrowing of school hardware is not permitted unless the IT department has given email authorization.

5.3.7 Internet/World Wide Web Usage

Internet access is available to all students and teachers at GAAQ. These communication links offer vast, diverse, and unique resources to both students and staff, and their availability outweighs any possible access to information that is not consistent with the educational goals of GAAQ. All users are prohibited from accessing portions of the Internet that do not promote the instructional mission of GAAQ. All school web pages are subject to initial approval of the administration and should reflect the mission and values of the school.

5.3.8 Personal Equipment

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Users must follow all of the school's AUTP policies, even while using their personal equipment.

5.3.9 Device Requirements
Students are required to bring their own device to facilitate their learning. The school will provide internet access to students on one device only. The school takes no responsibility for any damage to devices brought to school by students.

5.4 Forgery of Documents
The submission of forged, altered, or falsified documents — including but not limited to medical notes, parental letters, or official records — is a serious offense. Such actions may result in disciplinary consequences up to and including expulsion, and may also be referred to law enforcement for further action.

5.5 Mobile Phone Policy
GAAQ has a strict no-phone policy as per MOEHE and GEMS guidelines. Mobile phones are brought to school at the owner's risk. The school will not be involved in disputes and/or investigations over damage, loss, or theft. Phones being used during school hours may be confiscated and turned over to the office or administration. Repeat offenses can result in permanent confiscation until the parent can pick up the phone.

6.0 Parent and Student Services

6.1 School Health Office Services
The Health Office's responsibilities include administering first aid, treating minor ailments, providing health education, maintaining health records, updating vaccinations and medical information, and liaising with the Supreme Health Council.
The Health Office requires that the following completed forms be kept on file at school to enable us to care for your child effectively. These forms must be completed and returned to the Health Office directly, prior to your child starting school.

- Health Information Form
- Medical Consent Form
- Immunization Record (copy)

The Health Office and Registrar should be informed immediately of any change in telephone numbers/contact information so that we are always able to reach a parent or guardian in the event of sickness or accident. In anticipation of both parents being out of contact or traveling outside the country, an alternative contact number must be left with the Health Office and Registrar.

Sickness at school: When students become ill during the school day and feel the need to go home, they must go to the Health Office to discuss their health issue with the nurse. The best course of care will be decided. If it is determined that the student should go home, the nurse will contact the parent/guardian and inform the teachers. It is expected that the student's parent/ driver will collect the student within an hour of receiving the nurse's phone call. Upper school students may go home via taxi, as per the parents' instructions to the nurse.

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Sickness at home: A sick child cannot learn effectively and is unable to participate in class in a meaningful way. Keeping a sick child at home prevents the spread of illness in the school community and allows your child an opportunity to rest and recover. If your child is ill and unable to attend class, please inform the school by 8 AM.

School medical examinations: The Supreme Health Council requires that students in selected grades undergo a school medical examination by our school nurses. If you prefer, your private family physician may conduct the medical exam and then submit the report to the Health Office for your child's file.

Medications and Allergies: If your child must take any regular medicines during school hours (on a long- or short-term basis), kindly give these medications to the Health Office to be administered by our nursing staff. Students are not permitted to keep medications with them, except in the case of personal inhalers to prevent/treat asthma attacks and *EpiPens* for students with life-threatening allergies. It is the responsibility of parents to advise the Health Office if their child has any allergies.

6.2 Counselor Services

Elementary School Counseling

The Elementary School Counselor manages the progress of each child by facilitating communication among students, parents, and faculty. Counselors support teachers and administrators in ensuring the academic and behavioral success of each student. Counselors work with students individually, in small groups, and at the classroom level.

Middle School Counseling

Counselors are an integral part of the Middle School (MS) educational team. They aim to support all students in acquiring the necessary skills, knowledge, and understanding to succeed in personal/social, academic, career, and global perspective domains. Counselors also focus efforts on helping students prepare to lead positive lives as respectful, purposeful, tenacious, and innovative active global citizens. Services are delivered through school guidance curriculum, individual student planning, responsive services, pro-social programs, and system support. The MS Counselor may be contacted at any time to discuss academic, social, and/or emotional concerns.

High School Advising and Counseling

School counseling at the GEMS American Academy- Qatar means supporting all students and advocating for their success.

Our primary goals include:

- Academic development
- Career exploration and college readiness
- Acquisition of self-knowledge and interpersonal skills

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- These goals are accomplished through:
- Classroom guidance and instruction
- Small group counseling
- Individual student planning
- System support
- Responsive services

University/Career advising is proactive at GAAQ, formally beginning in the second semester of Grade 10. GAAQ students will attend annual college fairs, host visiting universities on campus, and explore various career pathways throughout the school year. We use the Unifrog program as a tool to research universities and career pathways. Students can meet with their counselor individually as often as needed during the university application and transition process.

6.3 Student Support Program for Academic Differences

We recognize that our students learn in diverse ways and possess varying academic abilities. To address the needs of our students who are enrolled in our academic services program, the administrative staff, counselors, and teachers recognize the importance of implementing the following academic support:

- access to peer tutors for any subject (Grade 6-12 only)
- assistance with homework, essay reviews, and study preps
- implementation of exam, homework, and project accommodations as required by the student's educational evaluation and their Individual Education Plan (IEP)
- assistance with organization, time management, and study skills.

Our priority is to provide the best possible academic support for the success of all students.

6.4 Bus Transportation Services and Rules

Bus transportation to and from school is available through our school bus service. Information about our bus service is available through the Public Relations Officer and/or our Transportation Coordinator. Parents are in no way restricted to the use of this bus service and are welcome to investigate alternative methods of transportation. Bus transportation information can be found on the school's website.

Bus rules

Established rules ensure safety on the buses. Parents are advised to review these rules with their children.

- Always wear your seatbelt.
- Put away pencils, markers, rulers, and any sharp or pointed items.
- Keep your arms, legs, and head inside the vehicle at all times. Keep windows closed.
- No changing seats while the bus is moving or parked at traffic signals, and without asking the monitor/teacher.
- Do not throw anything while on the bus.
- Do not distract the driver. Please keep your voice volume down.
- No use of music players, video games, or electronic items without earphones.
- Stay away from control panels, automatic doors, etc., as injury can occur.

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- Place trash in the bin or take it home with you.
- No eating on the bus.
- Keep the aisles clear.
- No smoking.
- Foul language, bullying, or any behavior that would not be tolerated while at school will not be tolerated on the bus.

All Lower and Upper School disciplinary rules are in full effect while a student is riding a school bus. The consequences of bus infractions by students are at the discretion of the school administration. Upper School students are reminded that they ride the bus with younger students, so they should be mindful of their language and behavior.

6.5 Withdrawal Procedures

1. Parents should notify the Principal and Registrar, and students should notify their teachers of the withdrawal date as far in advance as possible, preferably a minimum of two weeks ahead of time.
2. The Registrar will issue a withdrawal form, which the student will take to all concerned teachers and the library, and then return to the Registrar. The Registrar will notify parents, the Principal, and the Head of School of any outstanding fees. Transfer certificates will be given to parents once all outstanding payments are settled and parents have met with the Principal and/or Head of School.
3. Parents who wish to pick up their children's records in person may be accommodated; however, they should notify the school of their desire to do this, and ample time must be given to assemble records. Issuance of report cards and records at the end of the year may be delayed due to the scoring of exams. In that case, transcripts and/or records will be forwarded to the new school or the parents by mail. (Parents should leave their forwarding address and a stamped envelope for this purpose.) Confidential student records and/or letters of reference will be sent directly to the receiving school. Records cannot be released until all outstanding fees are paid.

6.6 Campus Security

School guidelines for safety and security are detailed in a Security Manual that is used by all GAAQ staff to ensure uniform, orderly, and timely responses to emergencies. Teachers review emergency procedures for building evacuation and lockdown drills with students each year. Drills are practiced so that students know the appropriate responses in emergencies. In the event of an emergency, you will be contacted by the school with further information and instructions.

6.7 Textbooks, Subscriptions, and Supplies

Textbooks are provided on loan to students. Students are responsible for their books and must pay for loss or damage, including deliberate defacing (i.e., writing and graffiti). Report cards will be withheld for outstanding or lost textbooks.

A school supply fee is charged annualy. Parents have the option of bringing a list of supplies of

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equivalent value to school. Parents must request the list prior to September 15. If a list is not requested, the current fee is applied to the account on September 16 and becomes a part of the balance owed. Parent fees support our wonderful programs, staff, events, sports, and the enhancement of the facility. Collecting fees on time allows the school continue to serve students at the highest levels. We kindly request on time payment or payment plans so that we can maximize the use of all school funds to the benefit of our students.

6.8 Re-Enrollment

Re-enrollment is allowed only when all fees are paid in full. Please be aware that accounts which are not settled in full by June 30 of each year will have their seat cancelled for the following year on July 1. Any re-enrollment fees will be applied to the balance on the account existing on June 30 - simultaneous to the seat cancellation.

6.9 Code of Ethics

All private schools and kindergartens in the State of Qatar must abide by this charter.
The Arabic version is the main reference for this charter. **Code of Ethics**

6.10 Complaint Committee and Process

Sometimes, you may have a concern about the classroom learning or environment. Please know that our process at GEMS is to first speak with the teacher regarding your concern. In most cases, the teacher can share information that may help resolve the concern. Parents can do this through Class Dojo, ALMA, email or by making an appointment. If the concern cannot be resolved, our Grade Team Leaders or Heads of Department may be able to help. Please communicate with them after speaking with the teacher.

Assistant Principals are your next opportunity. Please expect that they will need time to gather background information to give you the best answer. Principals can help if the Assistant Principals are unable to resolve your concern. Finally, the Complaint Committee or Head of School may be the next place to seek help. In all cases, we seek to solve any concerns at the school level and the MOEHE supports all schools in this endeavor.

As always, setting an appointment with any member of staff is important as teachers are teaching throughout the day. We will do our best to maintain a commitment to respond within 48 business hours to your communications.

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GAAQ Lower School (KG1- Grade 5): Information, Policies, and Procedures

1.0 General Information

1.1 Schedule Layout

Instruction starts promptly at 7:30. Doors will open at 7:15 for students to begin walking to class. Parents may not enter the learning areas in the morning and are requested to say good-bye to their children at the glass doors before entering the Elementary Wing of the school. All grade levels have a designated dismissal procedure that is communicated to parents. Students will not be released to parents during the dismissal transition. Parents must only pick up their children from that grade level's designated dismissal area after 2:15 (1:30 on Thursdays).

1.1.1 Early Years Schedule

The school day starts at 7:30. Students are allowed to enter the building to go to their classroom from 7:15. The school day ends and dismissal begins at 1:30 for Early Years (KG1 students). The dismissal window is from 1:30 to 1:45. From 1:45-2:15, no parents will be allowed to go to the classrooms. Students with a sibling or students who are bus riders, will be dismissed at 2:15.

1.1.2 KG2-G5 Schedule

Sunday-Wednesday		EARLY RELEASE THURSDAYS
PD 1	7:30-8:20	7:30-8:15
PD 2	8:20-9:10	8:15-9:00
PD 3	9:10-10:00	9:00-9:45
PD 4	10:00-10:50	9:45-10:30
PD 5	10:50-11:40	10:30-11:15
PD 6	11:40-12:30	11:15-12:00
PD 7	12:30-1:20	12:00-12:45
PD 8	1:20-2:10	12:45-1:30

***Please note that on Thursdays, students are dismissed at 13:30 for teacher professional development meetings to take place.**

Lunch timings and snack timings differ by grade level. Classroom teachers will provide a schedule specific to their classroom at Open House or on the student's first day.

1.2 Class Placement

Class placements for the upcoming school year are thoughtfully finalized at the end of the previous academic year through collaboration among homeroom teachers, specialist teachers, the school counselor, and the Senior Leadership Team. This team considers a range of factors—including academic needs, social dynamics, and individual learning styles—to create

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balanced classes that foster the best possible learning environment for all students. As part of our policy, siblings or close relatives are not placed in the same class. Once placements are determined, students remain in their assigned class for the duration of the school year, and changes are not made.

2.0 Program of Study/ Weekly Instructional Minutes

KG1		KG2		Grade 1		Grades 2-5	
Weekly Minutes	1350	Weekly Minutes	2025	Weekly Minutes	2025	Weekly Minutes	2025
Arabic	60	Qatar History	0	Qatar History	60	Qatar History	60
Islamic	60	Islamic	60	Islamic	120	Islamic	120
PE	40	Arabic	60	Arabic	250	Arabic	250
Art	40	Lunch	200	Lunch	200	Lunch	200
Music	40	PE	80	PE	80	PE	60
Library	40	Art	80	Art	80	Art	60
Snack	100	Music	80	Music	80	Music	60
Lunch	150	IT	40	IT	40	IT	40
Small Groups/ Math/Literacy	225	Library	40	Library	20	Library	20
Large Group Discussions	200	Morning Snack	100	Morning Snack	80	Morning Snack	80
Choice time	200	Math	350	Math	350	Math	350
		Literacy	600	Literacy	600	Literacy	600
		Sci/ SS	60	Sci/ SS	60	Sci/ SS	60
						WIN	60

2.1 Specialist Subjects

In addition to the core curriculum, various special classes are part of the Elementary School program, including Art, Arabic Language, Islamic Education, Qatar History, Music, IT, and Physical Education. Each special subject follows a specific curriculum that supports the development of the child at his or her grade level. It is understood that all students will participate in special classes as they do in core classes. All specialist subjects are taught by specially trained teachers in that discipline.

3.0 Assessment Policy

3.1 Philosophy

The aim of assessment at GAAQ is to provide a positive, continuous, and supportive

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mechanism that promotes and improves student learning and achievement, guides instruction and practice, and evaluates program as well as instructional effectiveness.

3.2 Report Cards

The purpose of the report card is to communicate with parents and students about the achievement of specific learning goals. It identifies student levels of performance with regard to those goals, areas of strength, and areas where additional time and effort are needed. Grades are assigned using a four-point scale. GAAQ uses Standards-Based Grading, a system of reporting student proficiency in a number of specific learning goals (or standards). Rather than giving students one grade on a test that assesses multiple skills, this system gives students a number of scores that represent their proficiency in each of the skills assessed. The idea is that at the end of the class/unit, a student will have mastered the essential content necessary for the next level. The focus is on knowledge, not on points. Official report cards are sent home four times a year, at the end of each quarter.

Note: Report cards will not be released if school-related fees have not been paid as per the payment schedule.

3.3 Externally Norm-Referenced Testing

Lower School uses Measures of Academic Performance (MAP) assessment as our externally norm-referenced test.

Below is the MAP Assessment Testing Schedule:

- KG2: Assessed in Reading and Math twice per year
- Grade 1: Assessed in Reading and Math three times per year
- Grade 2: Assessed in Reading, Language Usage and Math, three times per year
- Grade 3: Assessed in Reading, Language Usage and Math, three times per year
- Grade 4: Assessed in Reading, Language Usage and Math, three times per year
- Grade 5: Assessed in Reading, Language Usage and Math, and Science three times per year

MAP reports assist teachers and administrators to:

- establish a student's precise instructional level;
- identify which areas to focus on for academic growth;
- compare a student's academic progress and growth with other students in the class, grade, school, or internationally; and
- track academic growth over time.

3.4 Promotion and Retention Philosophy in Lower School

Students who successfully complete the objectives for a grade are promoted to the next grade level at the end of the year. Students who may need additional time to develop the skills needed for a grade may be retained. Discussions will be held with the parents and classroom teacher as soon as concerns about a student's success become apparent. The Counselor and Principal will also be involved in this decision where learning difficulties are evident.

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4.0 Lower School Behavioral Policy

A favorable academic and social climate is necessary for student learning. Responsibility for establishing this climate is shared by each student, faculty member, and parent. We value having students follow reasonable rules and believe it is essential for students to understand their purpose. Part of the learning process involves making decisions and sometimes making mistakes; however, we expect that students will learn from their errors and demonstrate growth. It is our policy to address student mistakes in a developmentally appropriate manner that considers the needs of each child.

4.1 Detention/Suspension/Expulsion

Disregarding school rules may result in consequences as deemed fit by the upper school team. Standard consequences are detention, suspension, and/or expulsion. All infractions are referred to the office and recorded.

- **Detention** may occur during break, lunch, or after school hours. The teacher and/or administrator will hold detention in a designated location. Parents will be notified when after-school detentions are assigned.
- **Suspensions** will be either in school or out of school and may vary in length. The student will have the opportunity to make up assignments given during this time. marks during the suspension period by completing work assigned during their absence from class.
- **Indefinite Suspension** may occur if limited suspensions have not been effective in changing the behavior in question.
- **Expulsion from School** is a last resort reserved for serious and/or repeated infractions and will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis.

4.2 Behavioral Contracts

- **Behavior Probation Contracts** will be given to students who are failing to adhere to the behavior policies of the school. This is a contract in place with shared responsibility among the parents, the student, and the school.
- **Final Behavior Probation Contracts** will be given to students who have not fulfilled, or have not been successful in, their behavior probation contracts. Parents are responsible to have meetings with school administrators to discuss this final behavior probation contract.
- **Stay Away Contracts** will be issued when students are asked to refrain from interacting with each other due to unresolved issues. This contract is made in agreement with all parties involved, along with counselor input, to ensure a safe learning environment.
- **Discontinuation of Enrollment** is for students who have not been successful in their final behavior probation contract, after behavioral interventions and parent meetings. Students and parents will be given this contract stating that the student will not be invited back for the next academic year due to behavioral issues or non-compliance with parent requests for support. Students may be placed on this contract at any point in the school year, following implementation of behavioral interventions and prior behavior contracts.

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4.3 Behavioral Matrix

Please note that the foregoing chart is intended as a reference and does not supersede any policy contained within this handbook. The Lower School administration team will decide upon any violation and consequence thereof and, when appropriate, the Head of School.

- Important: All discipline guidelines are enforceable during field trips and school transportation.
- The following levels of violation identify infractions and potential disciplinary procedures. These are merely guidelines, as it is not possible to develop a completely comprehensive list of student behaviors and consequences.

Behavior Levels and Possible Consequences:

Level 1: Minor Offenses	**Level 1: Possible Consequences**
• Disrupting hallway, class, and/or school functions • Interfering with others' learning • Dress code violations • Inappropriate use of electronic devices • Mistreatment of school property • Mobile phone use • Misbehavior as determined by teachers and/or school administration • Theft of item under 50 QAR	• Conference with homeroom teacher • Lunch detention • Confiscation of a device by a teacher • Dress Code Violations will result in parents being called • Conference with the divisional Assistant Principal • Re-teaching school expectations • Reflection sheet • Referral to counselor

Level 2: Escalated Offenses	**Level 2: Possible Consequences**
• Repeated and severe use of inappropriate language • Possession of items that are deemed unacceptable in school • Repeated rough play with other students • Academic dishonesty (e.g., cheating and/or plagiarism) • Violation of Acceptable Use of Technology Policy (AUTP) • Repeated action(s) considered to be disrespectful to others • Theft of item under 250 QAR	• Detention (one to three days) • Confiscation of unacceptable items • Parent conference • Loss of appropriate privileges • Letter home • No grade for assessment/assignment (academic dishonesty) • Discipline Guidelines for Violation of Academic Honesty • In-school suspension • Behavior Probation Contract • Meeting with the division principal or AP • Referral to counselor

Level 3: Significant Offenses	**Level 3: Possible Consequences**
• Repeated direct defiance of faculty or staff • Repeated or deliberate damage to the property of others/Vandalism • Compromising safety for self and/or others • Bullying (Cyber, Verbal, Physical, and Emotional) • Repeatedly skipping class (Over 10 minutes) • Repeated culturally offensive displays • Fighting • Theft of item under 500 QAR	• School suspension for one to three days • Parent conference • Payment for Damage • Referral to counselor • Letter home • Loss of ASA privileges • Final Behavior Probation Contract • Meeting with the teacher, divisional principal, AP, and parents • Referral to counselor

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Level 4: Major Offenses	Level 4: Possible Consequences
• Physical attack on faculty or staff • Theft of item over 500 QAR • Possession of weapons or dangerous objects (Illegal Substances) • Gross or flagrant violation of school guidelines, endangering the reputation of GEMS, the school, or other students	• Suspension from class and all school activities for one to three days • Final behavior contract • Expulsion • Discontinuation of enrollment/ Discontinuation contract • Meeting with the Head of School, the division principal, and parents • Referral to counselor

subject to change and updates throughout academic year

4.4 Academic Dishonesty, Exam Violations, and Plagiarism

Academic Dishonesty: Schoolwork requires that students do their work. Students are expected to give credit to ideas, language, or thoughts that are not their own. To take ideas, writing, or thoughts from someone else and pass them off as one's own is plagiarism and is a violation of academic honesty. Plagiarism can occur with print or non-print sources, such as the Internet. Acts of academic dishonesty are a serious violation of the school community's trust, and students who commit academic dishonesty will face serious consequences. Academic dishonesty also includes having a parent, nanny, or other adult complete assignments or home assessments.

Test or exam violations: These encompass various actions that undermine the integrity of the testing process, such as copying, using unauthorized materials, seeking improper assistance, sharing exam content, or employing AI to generate or answer questions.

Plagiarism in papers and assignments: includes actions like seeking improper assistance, using others' work without credit, or utilizing AI tools to generate content without acknowledgment. Examples of AI programs unsuitable for academic use include essay generators, text rewriting software, translation tools, math problem solvers, and content aggregators.

4.4.1 Discipline Guidelines for Violations

Incidents of Academic Dishonesty, Exam Violations, and Plagiarism are recorded and tracked throughout a student's time in Middle school and High School. Students will receive the following consequences for breaches of the Academic Honesty policy.

	Probable Consequences
First Breach	• Grade of 0 on the assignment • Verbal and written contact with parents • Incident documented in the student's file
Second Breach	• Grade of 0 on the assignment • Verbal and written contact with parents • Behavioral probation • Official Academic Contract signed by student and parent
Third Breach	• Grade of 0 on the assignment • In-person meeting with parents and principals • Suspension of 1-3 days • Withdrawal from school is recommended because the school may

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	consider expulsion. (Discontinuation of enrolment)

4.4.2 AI Policy

Guiding Statement: Teachers have the individual discretion and academic latitude to decide which of these options they may allow for the course and/or specific assignments. These teacher decisions should be clearly communicated to students.

Any work submitted through turnitin.com that is flagged as above 20% plagiarism or AI-created will be considered Academic Dishonesty.

Lower School Plagiarism Guidelines
0 - 30% = full grade
30 - 70% = 50% of grade
70% and above = a grade of zero

Option 1: Use Prohibited:

Students are not allowed to use advanced automated tools, such as artificial intelligence or machine learning tools (e.g., ChatGPT, Bard, or Dall-E 2), on this assignment. Each student is expected to complete each assignment without substantive assistance from others, including automated tools.

Option 2: Use Only with Prior Permission:

a. Students may use advanced automated tools (e.g., ChatGPT, Bard, or Dall-E 2) on this Assignment if they obtain prior permission from the teacher.
b. To request permission, students must submit a written request to the teacher, clearly stating The purpose and intended use of the AI tool for the assignment.
c. The teacher will evaluate each request and grant permission based on the nature of the Assignment and the student's justification for using the AI tool.
d. If permission is granted, the student can proceed to use the AI tool as specified in the approved request.
e. If permission is denied, the student must complete the assignment without substantive Assistance from others, including automated tools.

Option 3. Use Only with Acknowledgement:

a. Students are allowed to use advanced automated tools (e.g., ChatGPT, Bard, or Dall-E 2) on the assignment, provided they properly document and credit their use.
b. When using an AI tool, students must include a citation in their assignment to acknowledge The use of the specific tool and its source.
c. For example, if ChatGPT-3 is utilized, the student should include a citation similar to: Chat-GPT-3. (YYYY, Month DD of query). 'Text of your query.' Generated using OpenAI. https://chat.openai.com/"
d. Similar citation conventions should be followed for material generated using other AI tools.

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e. Failure to provide appropriate citations may result in grade penalties and/or academic Dishonesty violation.

Option 4. Use Freely Permitted with No Acknowledgement:

a. All students in the class are allowed to use advanced automated tools (e.g., ChatGPT, Bard, or Dall-E 2) on this assignment without the need for special documentation or citation.

b. Students are still expected to abide by all other course requirements and academic integrity Standards.

4.5 Playground Rules and Guidelines

- All children are to share the playground and equipment fairly with one another.
- All swings are to be pushed/propelled/moved only by those using them or an adult. Swings are to be used while in a sitting position and in a back and forth motion only. Children not using the swings are to keep a safe distance at all times.
- Tag and other chase games may be played on the ground only.
- Children must always get permission from a supervising staff member to enter the school playground for any reason.
- Children must be able to be seen by a staff member at all times.
- Equipment should be used for its designated purpose.
- Children should keep their hands to themselves and respect the personal space of others.
- Language must be appropriate.
- We follow the hot weather guidelines of GEMS for approving outdoor play. When approved during warmer weather, water bottles, hats, sunscreen, and reduced intensity of play are expected and encouraged.
- Children should follow the safety requests of supervising staff

4.6 Bathroom Readiness

4.6.1 Urine accidents (Early Years)

Accidents will happen, so please provide a spare set of uniform, underwear, and socks for your child to keep in his or her cubby. Soiled garments will be placed in a Ziploc bag to be sent home. A child having frequent accidents (that is, 2 or more in one week) may be asked to take a 2-week leave from school.

4.6.2 Fecal accidents (Early Years)

Children are expected to be fully potty trained (refer to image above). If there is a poop accident, the teacher will communicate with the nurse and the nurse will call to inform the parent. If a second incident occurs, the same procedure will be followed as the first time and the Early Years SLT office will be notified. The child will be requested to take a 2-week leave from school to practice bathroom readiness.

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5.0 Arrival, Dismissal, and Supervision

5.1 Arrival

The school doors are opened to allow students to enter the building at 7:15 a.m. Students are able to go directly to their classrooms in preparation for the first lesson which will start promptly at 7:30 for all students. Parents may not enter the learning areas in the morning and are requested to say good-bye to their children at the glass doors before entering the Elementary Wing of the school.

5.2 Dismissal

Classes are dismissed at 2:15 p.m. on Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday. Students should be picked up promptly by their parents (or designee) or proceed directly to their bus. In order to avoid disrupting learning, parents and drivers may only pick up their students from their designated dismissal area after using the School Dismissal Manager App to show that they are in the building to pick up their student. Students will not be released to parents during the dismissal transition. Each grade level will provide further dismissal details to parents.

Students who are not met within 15 minutes of dismissal time will report to the designated area for late pick up students to wait for their ride.

If a child is involved in an after-school activity, the student should be met promptly at the completion of the activity. Parents will be contacted if late pick-up from after-school activities becomes habitual. In the case of repeated late pick up from ASA, students may be suspended from participation in ASA.

5.3 Changes in Dismissal/ Transportation

Please send a note to the teacher or make changes in the School Dismissal Manager App by noon if your child is going home in a way that differs from their usual routine. Students should make arrangements to go home with another student the day before and inform the school of the change in plans. If any change in transportation plan occurs during the school day, please inform the teacher, school receptionist, and bus monitor (if applicable) by noon. Any changes requested after noon cannot be honored and students will go home per their usual route.

6.0 Student Services

6.1 Library

6.1.1 Expectations

- Students must be respectful of other students by using quiet voices.
- Food and drinks are not allowed in the library.
- Students are expected to return their books on time and in good condition.

6.1.2 Guidelines

1) All students are welcome to come to the library to use the resources and borrow books.
2) Students in Grades 1st to 5th can check out two books for two weeks. Renewals may be requested prior to the book's due date; however, if another student or faculty member has requested an item, it must be returned.

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3) Books and other items should be returned or renewed by the due date. Reminder notices will be sent on a regular basis for long-overdue materials. Materials that are long overdue will be considered lost and after several reminders, an invoice will be issued.
4) Report cards and transfer certificates will not be issued until all books and fines are cleared. Students who withdraw early must return library materials so their clearance form can be signed.
5) If damage makes a book unusable, the cost of the book plus a processing fee will be charged and the student will not be allowed to check out any more library materials until the amount has been paid. Damaged books remain the property of the school and will not be returned to the student.
6) A lost book should be reported as soon as possible to the librarian so a replacement can be ordered. The cost of the book plus a processing fee will be charged.
7) Parents are welcome to use and enjoy the library. Please see library staff to register.

6.2 English Language Learners

We are fully committed to the academic achievement of all English language learners who attend the school. Language acquisition is a collaborative social process that takes place through meaningful interaction. Language learning is most effective when it takes place in the mainstream classroom where the content of the curriculum is the vehicle for acquiring English. The main objective of our school for English Language Learners is for students to attain a level of proficiency in the English language that will enable them to function successfully in all their classes.

6.3 Student Support

We are committed to differentiated instruction to attend to the individual needs of our students. Learning support is available for qualifying students starting in KG2, and is designed to assist students in achieving grade-level equivalencies in the mainstream classroom.

6.4 Lost and Found

Lost and found items are kept in the designated lost and found area. Watches, jewelry, and glasses are usually kept at Security or Reception for the first week. Students and parents are encouraged to check the lost and found frequently. Any unclaimed items will be donated to charity at the end of the school year.

6.5 After School Activities

We believe our after-school activities program plays an integral role in our ability to positively impact students' academic, social, and emotional development by providing an array of opportunities for growth and learning outside of the regular school day and curriculum. After-school activities are offered in two separate sessions, one session during each of the two semesters. School-sponsored activities that are *planned and led by GAAQ faculty and staff* and offered *free of charge*. School-hosted activities that are *planned and led by outside professionals* and usually come with an *additional charge*. If a child is not present at school for the last two periods of the day, the student will not be allowed to participate in the After School Activity that day.

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Note: Seasonal adjustments to this schedule may happen due to the observance of Ramadan and our shortened hours of operation during that time.

7.0 Home-School Communication and Parent Support

7.1 Newsletter

Communication between parents and school is a high priority at GAAQ. Parents receive notices about school events on Thursdays throughout the year via classroom, grade level, and school-wide e-newsletters.

7.2 Back to School Night

Early in the school year, we hold a Back to School Night to introduce parents to classroom expectations, school policies and procedures, and the grade level's curriculum.

7.3 Celebrations/ Birthday Parties

We do not permit Birthday Parties or celebrations in school. For students who would like to share their birthday with classmates, they can bring in individual treats such as donuts, cupcakes, brownies, or gift bags to distribute at the end of the school day. We do not allow any decorations or parents into the classroom. Any student having an outside birthday party and wishing to pass out invitations at school must hand out invitations to all students in the classroom.

7.4 Visitor Guidelines

Throughout the year, we invite parents to join classrooms and grade levels for various performances, sharing of learning, and end of unit celebrations. Visitors attending any of these events are expected to adhere to our visitor guidelines:

- Visitors should only take pictures of their own children
- There should be no video recording or photos of other children taken
- Visitors should comply with reasonable staff and security requests
- Visitors should treat themselves, others, and their surroundings with respect by speaking and acting in a socially responsible manner.
- Visitors should make school appointments in advance in a manner that would be expected when scheduling meetings with any other working professionals

7.5 Extended Parent Absences

Students should always have proper home supervision by a parent. If an occasion arises when you will be out of Doha/Qatar and your child will not be under your direct supervision, please send a written notice to the school advising as to the name and contact information for the person who will have guardianship responsibilities for your child.

7.6 Field Trips

We believe that field trips provide students with important shared social experiences in which they encounter and explore new things in authentic settings. Field trips give our students hands-on and minds-on learning opportunities that will appeal to a variety of learning styles and needs. Your child's teacher will provide information about upcoming field trips. Parents may not

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drop off or pick students up from the field trip location. Students must start and end the field trip from school, with staff. Payments for field trips must be made in advance, by the required date, using only the school approved payment platform. Students will not be allowed to attend the field trip if they have not paid in advance.

7.7 Homework

Students in lower school are not assigned homework for a grade. All students are expected to read for at least twenty minutes each night. Occasionally, a teacher may provide students with extra practice in academic areas for growth or preparation for a test. Teachers may also provide students tasks to complete at home for a project.

7.8 Parent-Teacher Conferences

Parent-Teacher conferences to discuss student progress are held twice a year. Conferences may also be scheduled by request throughout the school year. If you would like to request a meeting, please contact the teacher to schedule it in advance. To ensure a productive conversation, please do not discuss student progress without prior contact, or during pick-up and drop-off times.

GAAQ Upper School (Grade 6-12): Information, Policies, and Procedures

1.0 General Information

1.1 Schedule Layout

Times	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday Times	Thursday
7:30 - 8:25	1	7	5	3	7:30 – 8:10	1
8:25 - 9:20	2	8	6	4	8:10 - 8:50	2
9:20 - 10:15	3	1	7	5	8:50 – 9:30	3
10:15 - 10:50	MS Advisory HS Lunch	MS Advisory HS Lunch	MS Advisory HS Lunch	MS Advisory HS Lunch	9:30 - 10:10	4
10:50 - 11:45	4	2	8	6	10:10- 10:50	MS Block 5 HS Lunch
11:45 - 12:25	MS Lunch HS Advisory	MS Lunch HS Advisory	MS Lunch HS Advisory	MS Lunch HS Advisory	10:50 - 11:30	MS Lunch HS Block 5
12:25 - 13:20	5	3	1	7	11:30 - 12:10	6
13:20 - 14:15	6	4	2	8	12:10 - 12:50	7

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					12:50 - 13:30	8

Please note that on Thursdays, students are dismissed at 13:30 for teacher professional development meetings to take place.

2.0 Course and Graduation Requirements

2.1 Middle School Course Requirements

The following requirements are needed for students in Grade 6, Grade 7, and Grade 8 each year. Full details of the course offerings and requirements can be found in the GAAQ Course Catalogue.

- All students must have classes in English, Math, Social Studies, and Science.
- All students must have a foreign Language (Arabic, Arabic Non-Native, Spanish, or French).
- All Arabic nationality passport holders are required to take Arabic each year.
- All students registered as Muslims must take Islamic Education each year. Muslim students from non-Arabic countries must take Non-Native Islamic.
- All students must take Qatar History. Arabic nationality students must take Qatar History in Arabic Language; other students must take it in English.
- Students will be mandated into Study Skills class if their MAP Score is below the 40th percentile in MAP Reading or MAP Mathematics.

2.2 High School Graduation Requirements

The following graduation requirements are needed for students in their 4 year High School career (Grades 9, 10, 11, and 12). Full details of the course offerings and requirements can be found in the GAAQ Course Catalogue.

Course	Requirements
English	4 Credits
Math	4 Credits
Social Studies	4 Credits
Science	4 Credits
Global Language*	2 Credits
Physical Education/Health	1 Credits
Fine Arts	2 Credits
Student choice	3 Credits

* Two consecutive years in the same Global language

Other essential notes regarding graduation requirements:

- All Arabic nationality passport holders are required to take Arabic each year.
- All students registered as Muslims must take Islamic Education each year. Muslim students from non-Arabic countries must take Non-Native Islamic.
- Grade 9 students must take Qatar History. Arabic nationality students must take Qatar History in Arabic Language; other students must take it in English.
- They are expected to complete (pass) 24 courses over their four years of high school.

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The subjects listed in the preceding table must be completed to earn a Graduation Diploma from GAAQ. Each year's performance will be reviewed to ensure that all students will eventually meet graduation requirements. Students entering GAAQ after 9th grade will have their transcripts evaluated and may receive exemptions to GAAQ's course requirements based on their previous school's curriculum.

2.3 Ministry of Education (MOE) Graduation Requirements

The requirements apply to all students (Grades 9, 10, 11, and 12).
These requirements focus on the following that must be on record before graduation. Students must pass at least one of the following options:

External Exam	Accredited Success Criteria	Number of Subjects Required to be Passed
SAT1	400 points for English language (minimum) and 400 points for mathematics (minimum)	Passing the SAT1 is equivalent to passing two subjects
AP	2 points (minimum) 5 points (maximum)	Success in two different subjects is required
ACT1	18 points (minimum) 36 points (maximum)	Passing the ACT1 test is equivalent to passing two subjects

*Students can Super Score on the SAT-1

- Students who are Muslim must pass Grades 10, 11, and 12 Islamic Studies based on Ministerial Decision No. 11, 2021.
- Students from the 22 Arab nations are required to take Arabic and must pass Grades 10, 11, and 12 Arabic, as per Ministerial Decision No. 11, 2021.
- For your information, equivalency diplomas are calculated as 75% cumulative grade point average and 25% scores on external exams listed above (SAT, ACT, or AP). GAAQ will follow all other requirements to create the transcripts and letters (Arabic, Islamic, and Standardized Test Certification) for equivalency.

2.4 Service Hours

All high school students (Grades 9-12) at GAAQ will be required to complete 10 hours of community service per academic year attended at GAAQ as a graduation requirement. For example, a student who completes Grades 10,11, and 12 is required to have 30 hours completed. This requirement helps young people develop new skills while encouraging them to create an awareness and understanding of civic responsibility as they play a role in contributing to and strengthening their communities.

All high school students are encouraged to continue to accumulate community involvement hours during the summer. You will need documentation, such as a certificate or letter from the

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organization or individual you volunteer with outside of the school, to register these volunteer hours.

2.5 Course Changes

Once course selections are made, course changes are discouraged. Changes are rare and only under exceptional circumstances. A grace period for students to change a potential course during the first week of school is allowed. After this period, changes are made on a case-by-case basis. If a student has been moved to a new course due to an extenuating circumstance, they must complete any work missed in the new course.

3.0 Assessment Policy

3.1 Incomplete Assignments

Students who do not complete or turn in work that is deemed unsatisfactory will not receive credit for their assignment. Consistent incomplete assignments will impact students' Grade Point Average (GPA).

3.2 Absence Policy for Assessments

If a student is absent, they must follow the school's attendance policy. Once the absence is excused, the student will be allowed to make up the exam on their return. If a student is absent, they are responsible for any missed assignments or assessments. The student should contact the teacher and classmates to get notes and assignments from classes missed. With excused absences, the student should be ready to take the assessment once they return. Unexcused absences may result in an award of zero on any assessments or assignments missed.

Absences excused due to extenuating circumstances may result in the exam being marked as N/A or rescheduled. Please refer to the attendance policy to see how you can apply for an excused absence due to extenuating circumstances.

3.3 Late Policy for Assessments

If a student submits work later, we follow the following Late Policy: 10% deduction for every day it's late, if accepted between 5 days and 10 days, it is reduced by 50% and graded, after 10 days, it is given a 0% (not graded). No feedback will be provided by the teacher for any assignment or assessment given after 5 days.

3.4 Grading System for Assessments

The purpose of a grading system is to communicate student understanding and performance. Faculty members assess student academic and non-academic performance by assigning the following grades:

Letter Grade	Numerical Equivalent	GPA	Descriptor
A	90-100	4.0	Excellent

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B	80-89	3.0	Very Good
C	70-79	2.0	Good
D	60-69	1.0	Pass
F	0 - 59	0	Fail

3.5 Appealing an Assessment Grade

Students have five working days to appeal a grade on any assessment or assignment awarded by the teacher. To appeal, students must email the teacher, set up a meeting, and discuss the issue. If the teacher does not agree to the appeal, the student can set up a meeting with the department head to discuss the matter further. The Department Head will have the final decision on the grade.

3.6 Credit Allocation and Requirements

Applicable to High school students only (and Grade 8 Algebra I students).

- Credits for classes are earned at the end of the year. All classes are full-year credits.
- Students must complete the Semester 1 and Semester 2 Final exam or equivalent to earn credit in their class. Grade 12 students may be exempt from Semester 2 exams if they hold an A grade after May 1st of every year. This is down to teacher discretion and subject to change. Grade 12 students who have more than 15 total absences do not qualify for this exemption.
- Any student who withdraws from a course during the semester will not earn credit for the dropped class.
- Students who miss a total of 36 classes of any class (Absence Excused and Unexcused both counted) will result in a F grade of 50%. This can result in retention or recovering the credit in the following year.
- All credits for courses are unweighted for GPA.

3.7 Report Cards

Report cards are issued four times a year, at the end of each quarter. GPAs are calculated by semester, with the Q1 and Q3 reports serving as checkpoints. Students have 30 calendar days to appeal grades on any Report Card distributed from the date of distribution. The administration will review this in collaboration with the teacher.

Any 59%, 69%,79% and 89% in the final year score column will be rounded up at the end of the year on Final Year Report Cards. Quarter 1, Semester 1, and Quarter 3 report cards will not be rounded. Report cards will not be distributed if student accounts are not in good standing, if school property has not been returned, or if there are excessive absences.

Students cannot receive a report card before the end of the reporting period; students must

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complete the whole academic period to receive a report card.

3.8 Academic Probation

Students who are failing any subject or have multiple D's may be placed on Academic Probation. Students who are on Academic Probation will be identified after the semester one report card. After Quarter 1, or at the end of any subsequent quarter, students may be placed on Academic Warning. Please see the retention and promotion policy below.

3.9 Upper School Promotion/Retention/Non-Continuance

GAAQ seeks to make decisions about promotion and retention that are in the best interest of each student. Therefore, promotion and retention are based on a holistic view of the student and include some factors, such as academic achievement, grade point average, successfully passing all courses, academic levels (external tests, ie, PSAT, MAP), social & emotional maturity, attendance in school, and executive functioning skills. Assessment of promotion or retention on these factors will be made by the administration team on a case-by-case basis. If retention is a possibility, conversations with families will begin after a concern has been identified and a pattern of low academic performance has been established.
Parents have open, unlimited, and live access to their student's grades on Alma (www.gaaq.getalma.com).

General guidelines for retention decisions:

- Students may not fail more than three courses throughout their tenure at GAAQ. For example, any high school student who fails three or more courses (core or elective) in 1 year or combined in multiple years will be required to repeat their current grade level. Examples include failing three courses in 10th grade or failing two courses in 9th grade and one course in 10th grade. Repeating their current grade level will allow them to demonstrate their understanding and mastery of content and skills to universities. It is in their best interest to repeat the year to prepare for success in future high school grades and beyond.
- Students failing to meet GAAQ's academic expectations may be required to leave at any time during the academic year as deemed appropriate by the Principal, in consultation with the Head of School.
- GAAQ does not have a credit recovery process for courses that students fail.
- GAAQ reserves the right to promote or retain students based on what it believes is in the best interest of the student, which will allow them to achieve future academic success.

3.10 Conditional Enrolment Requirements

Newly enrolled students and or academic probation students may be required to sign a conditional enrolment agreement with specific criteria to maintain placement at the school.

3.11 Transcripts

Applicable to High School students only. GAAQ provides 4-year transcripts when students graduate with our High school diploma. Transcripts include grades and credits earned from previous schools.

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Departing or Late Arriving Students' Transcripts:
The following are guidelines for the transcript and credit allocation (Subject to change)

- Students who join before Semester 1 ends must complete at least a full quarter of a course and the final exams to earn credit.
- Students who join after Semester 1 ends will receive half credits for the year.
- Students who join after Quarter 3 will receive quarter credit.
- Students who depart before the end of Quarter 1 will not receive credit for any course.
- Students who depart before the end of Semester 1 will receive a transcript with the quarter 1 grade and quarter credits earned.
- Students who depart after Semester 1 but before Quarter 3 finishes will receive a transcript with half the credits earned.
- Students who depart before the end of semester 2 but after Quarter 3 will receive a transcript with three quarter credits earned.
- Students who depart after completing Semester 1 and Semester 2 will receive a transcript with full credits earned.

Types of Transcripts:

- **Official Transcript-** signed and stamped by Registrar; sent directly to the university only
- **Unofficial Transcript-** a complimentary copy of unofficial transcripts is provided to students and parents for personal records and self-reporting
- **Grade 9-11 Transcript** includes courses, credits, and grades for school years completed at GAAQ or other schools up to the end of Grade 11.
- **The Mid-year/Interim Transcript** includes courses, credits, and grades for school years completed at GAAQ up to the end of semester 1 of senior year. It will be available on or around January 26.
- **The Final Transcript** includes courses, credits, and grades for school years completed at GAAQ and successful graduation. Available at the end of the Academic year.

Processing of Transcript Requests: You must allow 10 school days (excluding holidays and breaks) for the processing of official documents. If you are unsure of your application deadlines, you risk your documents not reaching the university in time. Failure to submit official document requests ahead of a deadline with ample processing time (10 school days) or leaving out information such as a university admissions email address or application identification number could result in delay. If the University/College requests transcripts through mail directly from the school, the parents need to pay a shipping fee.

Language Waiver Letter: Can be provided if the university requests it and you have completed 4 years at GEMS American Academy.

- Must provide proof (email) that the university is requesting documentation.
- The request will not be processed without the following information
- Application or Student Identification Number

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- Destination email address

4.0 Upper School Behavioral Policy

A favorable academic and social climate is necessary for student learning. Responsibility for establishing this climate is shared by each student, faculty member, and parent. We value having students follow reasonable rules and believe it is essential for students to understand their purpose. Part of the learning process involves making decisions and sometimes making mistakes; however, we expect that students will learn from their errors and demonstrate growth.

4.1 Detention/Suspension/Expulsion

Disregarding school rules may result in consequences as deemed fit by the upper school team. Standard consequences are detention, suspension, and/or expulsion. All infractions are referred to the office and recorded.

- **Detention** may occur during break, lunch, or after school hours. The teacher and/or administrator will hold detention in a designated location. Parents will be notified when after-school detentions are assigned. Upon accumulating three (3) detentions, the student will be brought to an administrator to determine further corrective steps or consequences. If deemed appropriate by the administration, students may face a suspension.
- **Suspensions** will be either in school or out of school and may vary in length. The student will have the opportunity to make up assignment marks during the suspension period by completing work assigned during their absence from class.
- **Expulsion from School** is a last resort reserved for serious and/or repeated infractions and will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis.

4.2 Behavioral Contracts

- **Behavior Probation Contracts** will be given to students who are failing to adhere to the behavior policies of the school.
- **Final Behavior Probation Contracts** will be given to students who have not fulfilled or have not been successful in their behavior probation contracts. Students may be placed on this contract due to gross or flagrant violations of school guidelines throughout the school year.
- **Stay Away Contracts** will be issued when students are asked to refrain from interacting with each other due to unresolved issues. This contract is made in agreement with all parties involved to ensure a safe learning environment.
- **Discontinuation of Enrollment** is for students who have not fulfilled or have not been successful in their final behavior probation contract. They will be given this contract stating that they will not be returning the next academic year due to behavioral issues. Students may be placed on this contract due to gross or flagrant violations of school guidelines throughout the school year.

4.3 Behavioral Matrix

Please note that the foregoing chart is intended as a reference and does not supersede any policy contained within this handbook. The Upper School administration team will decide upon

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any violation and consequence thereof and, when appropriate, the Head of School.

- Important: All discipline guidelines are enforceable during school trips.
- Note: Any behavior or activity that takes place outside the school campus that is illegal or brings disrepute to GAAQ may result in disciplinary action.
- The following levels of violation identify infractions and potential disciplinary procedures. These are merely guidelines, as it is not possible to develop a completely comprehensive list of student behaviors and consequences.

Behavior Levels and Possible Consequences:

Level 1: Minor Offenses	**Level 1: Possible Consequences**
• Disrupting hallway, class, and/or school functions • Neglecting to obtain the requested parent signatures • Interfering with others' learning • Unexcused tardies • Dress code violations • Inappropriate use of electronic devices • Littering or chewing gum • Mobile phone use • Misbehavior as determined by teachers and/or school administration	• Warning • Lunch detention • Confiscation of a device by a teacher • Dress Code Violations will result in students being sent home. Students cannot enter class if they are not in the correct attire. • Meeting with the division VP

Level 2: Escalated Offenses	**Level 2: Possible Consequences**
• Inappropriate use of language • Possession of items that are deemed unacceptable in school • Rough play with other students • Academic dishonesty (e.g., cheating and/or plagiarism) • Violation of Acceptable Use of Technology Policy (AUTP) • Any action(s) considered to be disrespectful to others • Operating a personal business without prior school authorization	• Detention (one to three days) • Confiscation of unacceptable items • Parent conference • Loss of appropriate privileges • Letter home • No grade for assessment/assignment (academic dishonesty) • Discipline Guidelines for Violation of Academic Honesty • In-school suspension • Behavior Probation Contract • After school detention • Meeting with the division principal and VP

Level 3: Significant Offenses	**Level 3: Possible Consequences**
• Direct defiance of faculty or staff • Deliberate damage to the property of others/Vandalism • Compromising safety for self and/or others • Leaving campus without authorization • Bullying (Cyber, Verbal, Physical, and Emotional) • Skipping class (Over 10 minutes) • Physically/verbally threatening comments or gestures. • Inappropriate displays of affection or culturally offensive displays • Fighting	• School suspension for three days • Parent conference • Payment for Damage • Letter home • Loss of co-curricular activities participation (e.g., sports, after-school activities, rehearsals, clubs, field trips, etc.) • Final Behavior Probation Contract • Meeting with the division principal and parents

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Level 4: Major Offenses	Level 4: Possible Consequences
• Altering or tampering with school records • Attempted Coercion • Physical attack on faculty or staff • Theft • Smoking on school grounds or at school functions • Possession of weapons or dangerous objects (Illegal Substances) • Gross or flagrant violation of school guidelines, endangering the reputation of GEMS, the school, or other students	• Suspension from class and all school activities for at least three to five days • Possible dismissal from school • Exclusion • Discontinuation of enrollment • Meeting with the Head of School, the division principal, and parents

subject to change and updates throughout academic year

4.4 Reporting Disciplinary Incidents to Universities and Colleges

The Counseling Office supports students throughout their college application process. Questions concerning disciplinary history will be answered thoroughly and honestly should universities or colleges inquire.

4.5.1 Academic Dishonesty, Exam Violations, and Plagiarism

Academic Dishonesty: Schoolwork requires that students do their work. Students are expected to give credit to ideas, language, or thoughts that are not their own. To take ideas, writing, or thoughts from someone else and pass them off as one's own is plagiarism and is a violation of academic honesty. Plagiarism can occur with print or non-print sources, such as the Internet. Acts of academic dishonesty are a serious violation of the school community's trust, and students who commit academic dishonesty will face serious consequences and will be reported to the Principal immediately.

Test or exam violations: These encompass various actions that undermine the integrity of the testing process, such as copying, using unauthorized materials, sharing exam content, or employing AI to generate or answer questions.

Plagiarism in papers and assignments: includes actions like seeking improper assistance, using others' work without credit, or utilizing AI tools to generate content without acknowledgment. Examples of AI programs unsuitable for academic use include essay generators, text rewriting software, translation tools, math problem solvers, and content aggregators.

4.5.2 Discipline Guidelines for Violations

Incidents of Academic Dishonesty, Exam Violations, and Plagiarism are recorded and tracked throughout a student's time in Middle school and High School. Students will receive the following consequences for breaches of the Academic Honesty policy.

	Probable Consequences
First Breach	• Grade of 0 on the assignment • verbal and written contact with parents • incident documented in the student's file
Second Breach	• Grade of 0 on the assignment • verbal and written contact with parents • behavioral probation

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	• Official Academic Contract signed by student and parent • suspension of 1 to 3 days
Third Breach	• Grade of 0 on the assignment • In-person with parents and principals • suspension of 3 days • Withdrawal from school is recommended because the school may consider expulsion. (Discontinuation of enrolment) • Notification to universities or colleges, if applicable

Academic Collusion - Students whose work is submitted with or without their knowledge will receive a maximum of 50% for the assignment.

4.5.3 AI Policy

Guiding Statement: Teachers have the individual discretion and academic latitude to decide which of these options they may allow for the course and/or specific assignments. These teacher decisions should be clearly communicated to students.

Any work submitted through turnitin.com that is flagged as above 20% plagiarism or AI-created will be considered Academic Dishonesty.

Middle School AI/Plagiarism Guidelines	High School AI/Plagiarism Guidelines
0 - 19% = full grade	0 - 19% = full grade
20 - 49% = 50% of grade	20% and above = a grade of zero
50% and above = a grade of zero	

Option 1: Use Prohibited:

Students are not allowed to use advanced automated tools, such as artificial intelligence or machine learning tools (e.g., ChatGPT, Bard, or Dall-E 2), on this assignment. Each student is expected to complete each assignment without substantive assistance from others, including automated tools.

Option 2: Use Only with Prior Permission:

a. Students may use advanced automated tools (e.g., ChatGPT, Bard, or Dall-E 2) on this Assignment if they obtain prior permission from the teacher.
b. To request permission, students must submit a written request to the teacher, clearly stating The purpose and intended use of the AI tool for the assignment.
c. The teacher will evaluate each request and grant permission based on the nature of the Assignment and the student's justification for using the AI tool.
d. If permission is granted, the student can proceed to use the AI tool as specified in the approved request.
e. If permission is denied, the student must complete the assignment without substantive Assistance from others, including automated tools.

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Option 3. Use Only with Acknowledgement:

a. Students are allowed to use advanced automated tools (e.g., ChatGPT, Bard, or Dall-E 2) on the assignment, provided they properly document and credit their use.

b. When using an AI tool, students must include a citation in their assignment to acknowledge The use of the specific tool and its source.

c. For example, if ChatGPT-3 is utilized, the student should include a citation similar to: Chat-GPT-3. (YYYY, Month DD of query). 'Text of your query.' Generated using OpenAI. https://chat.openai.com/"

d. Similar citation conventions should be followed for material generated using other AI tools.

e. Failure to provide appropriate citations may result in grade penalties and/or academic Dishonesty violation.

Option 4. Use Freely Permitted with No Acknowledgement:

a. All students in the class are allowed to use advanced automated tools (e.g., ChatGPT, Bard, or Dall-E 2) on this assignment without the need for special documentation or citation.

b. Students are still expected to abide by all other course requirements and academic integrity Standards.

5.0 Valedictorian, Salutatorian, and Class Historian Criteria

The Valedictorian and Salutatorian are selected each year from the graduating class. There can be a Co-Valedictorian and Co-Salutatorian. Candidates must attend classes at GAAQ School from the beginning (September) of their grade 11 year to qualify. The panel for selection will be the Grade 12 Grade Lead, Athletics Director, NHS Committee Lead, Head of School, High School Assistant Principal, Upper School Principal, and High School Counsellor. In case of the absence of a panel member, a 12th-grade teacher may be asked to join in lieu.

Valedictorian Selection Criteria: The Valedictorian is based primarily on cumulative GPA, but the number of Advanced Placement classes is also considered at the midpoint of the 4th quarter of the senior year (April of Graduating year).

- Students with a 4.0 average are included in the list for discussion. If there is no student with a 4.0, it is the highest average student grade. This is the main criterion for selection.
- In this shortlist, we then look at APs and the rigor of course selection since freshman year. Students with more APs and higher scores in AP exams will be shortlisted.
- If the panel does not have a clear candidate, the principal will select three finalists, and the panel will be given time to vote.
- If the panel has a tied decision, a Co-Valedictorian can be made.

Salutatorian Selection Criteria: The Salutatorian is not based primarily on cumulative GPA or academics, but on overall success in the school.

- Students with a 3.6 average and above are included in the list for discussion.

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- The panel will review the shortlisted candidates, discussing their involvement in after-school activities, academic success, sports participation, character, and overall school involvement.
- Each panelist will select one student.
- If the panel does not have a clear candidate, the principal will select three finalists, and the panel will be given time to vote.
- If the panel has a tied decision, a Co-Salutatorian could be made.

Class Historian Selection Criteria: The Class Historian is a student who can represent the graduating class and the memories made at the school.

- The Student must not have any academic or behavioral concerns. The principal can exclude students based on any academic or behavioral concerns.
- The student must have attended elementary, middle, and high school at GAAQ to qualify.
- The students of the graduating class will then vote on the class historian.
- If a clear candidate is not identified, the principal will select three finalists, and the senior committee will be given time to vote and choose.

Quran Reader at Graduation Selection Criteria: The Quran reader is a student who is selected to have the privilege of reading from the Quran at the graduation ceremony.

- The Student must not have any academic or behavioral concerns. The principal can exclude students based on any academic or behavioral concerns.
- The selection panel will ask for a list of candidates from the Arabic department.
- Grade 12 students are the primary candidates, but if no candidates meet the criteria, other grade levels can be considered.
- The panel will review the shortlisted candidates, and each panelist will select one student.
- If the panel does not have a clear candidate, the principal will select three finalists, and the panel will be given time to vote.

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