

GAAQ Language Policy

The purpose of this Language Policy is to articulate our beliefs about the place of language in the education we offer and the responsibilities which arise from these beliefs. The policy is designed to underpin our instructional practice. We believe this policy impacts and, therefore, applies to all constituents at GAAQ. GAAQ's language policy is rooted in our identity, vision and values and our definitions of learning.

Identity:

GEMS American Academy Qatar offers our multicultural student body a rigorous American curriculum from Pre-Kindergarten through Grade 12. In addition to U.S. common core standards-based academics that culminate with the Advanced Placement program, we also provide a robust extra-curricular program to support the development of the whole child.

Our school, which is located in Al Wakra, Qatar, is a state-of-the-art center of inspirational learning that enables students to make decisions independently, solve problems effectively and interact positively with tolerance.

We firmly believe that education is about overall student development and, as a GEMS international school community, we promote growth through learning, global citizenship, the pursuit of excellence, and leadership through innovation.

Vision and values:

At GAAQ, we have developed our core values and learning principles to empower students to attain their goals and to become successful citizens of our global community.

Our Core Values are:

Respect - Innovation - Leadership - Purpose - Tenacity

Our Learning Principles are:

1. Developing healthy connections
2. Goals first
3. Authentic assessment and constructive feedback
4. Effective use of time
5. Nurturing independence and inquiry

Definition Learning:

Learning is acquiring new knowledge, skills and behaviors.

How learning happens:

Learning occurs by reflecting, adapting, internalizing and making global connections through successes and failures.

Why?

At GAAQ, we hope these learning opportunities provide our students with the tenacity and innovation to find their purpose and become respectful and empathetic leaders who apply their learning and become successful lifelong learners in this ever-changing world.

Philosophy Statement

GAAQ is part of the larger GEMS network which believes that every child deserves a quality education and believes in the dignity and worth of every person. Therefore, all cultures and languages are valued at GAAQ. GAAQ's vision, values, and learning principles were inclusively developed by the whole learning community and are the foundation for this language policy.

Our vision is:

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Our Beliefs and Practices about Language Teaching and Learning

We believe that language is fundamental to learning, permeates the entire curriculum, and is crucial to all learning. We strive to maintain a high standard for the explicit teaching of languages in our teaching practices, curriculum documents, and professionalism as educators. We believe that every teacher is a language teacher and the teaching of language(s) is a shared responsibility across the School. We strive to create a school-wide culture of caring and respect for the linguistic and cultural identities of all GAAQ constituents.

At GAAQ, students learn languages, learn about languages and learn through languages. We believe that learning a language is part of forming our own identities and cognitive and cultural development. Therefore, mother tongue language development is crucial for maintaining cultural identity and emotional stability. Acquisition of more than one language enriches personal growth and helps facilitate international understanding.

English as the Principal Language of Instruction

English is the principal language of instruction at GAAQ. While multilingualism and mother-tongue are highly valued, English is our primary language of communication and instruction and we are committed to providing a high standard of communicating, teaching and learning in English.

Curriculum

GAAQ offers our multicultural student body a rigorous American curriculum from Pre-Kindergarten through Grade 12. Our curriculum is aligned to U.S. common core standards and culminates with the Advanced Placement program.

Goals of this Language Policy

- develop students' use of language, appreciation of language and awareness of the nature of language.
- develop students' ability to think critically and communicate effectively in a complex, global society.
- incorporate differentiation for student's learning needs and styles
- promote students' awareness of individual, local, national and world issues in the written curriculum
- connect the three major language strands: oral language, visual language, written
- present a multitude of opportunities for students to gain exposure to a variety of languages

Conditions and practices which need to be in the place for successful language teaching and learning at GAAQ.

Resources:

- GAAQ's library, classroom and media resources support language learning
- Home – school connection is supported with appropriate resources to encourage language development
- Various visual and resource aids required for specific vocabulary teaching and learning
- Special programs (ELL, learning support, Arabic, etc.) have appropriate resources
- Adequate resources for every classroom as an independent entity
- Mother-tongue resources
- Host country resources; language, maps and cultures
- Additional language(s)

Practices

- plan collaboratively, share classroom experiences and involve new teachers (valuing prior knowledge)
- ensure GAAQ's language program is horizontally and vertically aligned - involving the whole school community
- demonstrate a commitment to transdisciplinary (multi-disciplinary) learning
- align to Common Core State Standards

- incorporate differentiation for student's learning needs and styles during collaborative planning and reflection
- promote students' awareness of individual, local, national and world issues in the written curriculum
- connect intrinsically the three major language strands: oral language, visual language, written
- plan integral language assessments (taking into account the needs of the children)
- present a multitude of opportunities for students to gain an exposure to a variety of languages
- include explicit language learning objectives
- plan frequently as per schedule; horizontally & vertically
- collaborate regularly with support services to ensure a strong ELL, SST and support program connection
- monitor and review language documents as part of the cyclic review of program