

Taaleem: Inclusion and Student Support Policy

Aims and Implementation:

Taaleem aims to provide all students with the opportunity to achieve their best academically, emotionally and socially through:

- Providing high quality learning to enable the acquisition of skills, knowledge and concepts relevant to their future;
- Promoting an ethos of care, mutual respect and support, where effort is valued and success celebrated;
- Enabling students to become active, responsible and caring members of the school and wider international community.

All leaders and teachers work towards these aims by:

- Promoting high quality learning opportunities by planning lessons that enable students to achieve their highest potential;
- Providing high quality curriculum design that meets the individualised learning needs of each student;
- Providing high quality learning environments that develop learning skills and engage students as innovators, inquirers, critical thinkers and owners of their learning;
- Promoting an effective partnership that supports parents/carers and the wider community as partners in the students' learning experiences;
- Promoting the Taaleem Core Values:
 - Pioneering – Challenge the norm. Visionary, Authentic, Aspirational, Focused.
 - Professional – Attract and retain the best people. Insightful, Diverse, Distinctive, Excellence, Creative.
 - Nurturing – Put students first. Inclusive, Holistic, Respectful, Compassionate, Communicative.
 - Spirited – Have a passion for life. Courageous, Determined, Engaging, Adaptable.

A. Inclusion Policy Introduction

“Ensuring that individuals with special needs and disabilities have equal access to a quality inclusive education is a priority for all members of society and requires that government authorities unite in our efforts to utilize our resources to meet the educational needs of individuals with special needs¹.”

- The UAE is *“committed to become an inclusive, barrier-free society that promotes, protects and ensures the success of people with disabilities and special educational needs.²”*
- Successful inclusion should result in every student feeling safe, confident and happy at school. Successful inclusion should see every student making the best progress towards achieving their potential and enjoying their time at school - be

¹ Hameed Mohammed Al Qatamy, Minister of Education. Schools for All. Page 7

² KHDA 7 Years on.. Inspecting for School Improvement: A Collaborative Journey 2008 – 2015 Key

that in lessons, during their play or lunchtimes or when involved in any of our school excursions and extra-curricular activities.

- Successful inclusion promotes the students' beliefs in themselves as a learner and valued member of our school community.
- Successful inclusive provision in Taaleem schools is seen as the responsibility of the whole school community, permeating all aspects of school life and applicable to all our students.

B. Meeting Diverse Needs

In Taaleem Schools we recognize that in order to achieve aims we must actively seek to recognize and meet the very diverse needs of our students by:

- Monitoring the achievement and well-being of all our students and the quality/nature of the learning opportunities they are offered.
- Tracking each student's academic, social and emotional progress and using the resulting knowledge to plan provision for the individual or groups of students.
- Correctly identifying and then seeking to overcome potential barriers to students' learning or their full participation in school life.
- Developing and deploying our resources to best reflect the various levels of need experienced by students.
- Taking care to ensure that vulnerable students, including those with identified additional or Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) are appropriately supported.
- Sharing any concerns we may have regarding a student with their parents or carers and then seeking to work together with them, for the good of the student.
- Liaising closely with professionals from other students' services or external agencies involved in the care and support of students.
- Ensuring that schools have access to appropriately qualified and experienced staff.
- Providing teaching and non-teaching staff with the support and training they need in order that their work promotes the best outcomes for each student.

C. Potentially Vulnerable Groups

There are a number of identified groups of students and families for whom this policy is particularly pertinent:

- Students with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND).
- Students whose home language is not English (EAL).

- Students who are Gifted and Talented (G&T).
- Students who might be subject to abuse or harassment, for whatever reason.
- Students who are young carers.
- Students whose family are in crisis or under great stress.
- Students at risk of significant harm.
- Students with poor attendance and/or punctuality.
- Students who are at risk of disaffection and exclusion from school.
- Students who have a temporary high-level need.

D. Promoting and Supporting Inclusion

1. Taaleem School Executive Board:
 - a) The SEB is comprised of the Chief Executive Officer (CEO), the Chief Financial Officer (CFO), the Director of Education and Performance, the Head of IT, Director of Communications and Director of Operations.
 - b) The School Executive Board (SEB) at Taaleem is responsible for ensuring that all Taaleem Schools provide outstanding school Leadership and Management practices that promote achievement of personalized educational outcomes for all students.
 - c) The Director of Education and Performance supports Senior Leadership Teams to deliver the vision, mission, strategic priorities and values of Taaleem. The Director of Education and Performance is also responsible for monitoring the performance of students and staff across all Taaleem Schools in accordance with agreed policies, procedures and school action plans through the Principal.
2. Senior Leadership Teams (SLT):
 - a) Responsibility for making schools truly inclusive lies with the Principal and senior leaders of the school.
 - b) The SLT is responsible for promoting inclusion through all policies, systems and practices that support the individual needs of learners and all groups of students.
3. Personalizing the Curriculum:
 - a) School leaders and teachers are responsible for ensuring that the curriculum and lesson planning is personalized to match the needs of all groups of students who attend the school.
 - b) Schools currently use bespoke versions of recognized national and international curriculums to support the staff, at all levels, in planning the curriculum.

- c) Schools have long term Curriculum Maps which are used by grade-level or year teams and individual class teachers and subject specialists to plan appropriate, differentiated activities for all students. This would include staff ensuring appropriate cross-curricular links are made and develop learning to match individual rather than age expected needs.
 - d) School leaders also ensure that the principles of inclusion are applied to all activities with which students engage in at school or on educational visits; this includes the variety of ECAs that are offered and break and lunchtime activities.
 - e) All members of school communities are expected and encouraged to adopt behaviours which support the school's inclusive ethos.
4. Head of Student Support:
- a) Each school has a Head of Student Support who is a member of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT). The Head of Student Support takes the leading role in coordinating support and provision, particularly regarding students and families in the aforementioned groups.
 - b) In partnership with Heads of Schools and the Principal, the Head of Student Support monitors, advises, evaluates and plans for the development of inclusive practice and provision across the school which lead to optimizing student outcomes by monitoring and tracking progress of SEND and EAL students.
5. Class Teachers/Subject Specialists:
- a) Class teachers and Subject Specialists are responsible for managing and creating an inclusive classroom environment.
 - b) Students receive differentiated instruction according to needs. Student support groups are run by support personnel throughout the school.
 - c) Teachers have overall responsibility for the planning and delivery of lessons to their class. Teachers seek to provide students with learning opportunities that allow all students to access the subject taught, encounter appropriate challenge and promote progress. This differentiation is evidenced in their lesson plans, though individual students may have targets particular to their own specific needs in certain areas or aspects of the curriculum. Additional or different provision and its outcomes are recorded by the teacher as part of the student's individual educational plan (IEP) or student passport (SP). Parents/carers are informed by their child's teacher or specialist teacher of any additional or different provision being made for their child.
 - d) Teachers take the lead role in monitoring the attainment, learning, behaviour and wellbeing of students in their class. This information is recorded and students' progress and attainment and needs are discussed and further planning is undertaken by way of regular student performance reviews.
 - e) Class and subject teachers have a pivotal role to play in achieving positive and supportive relationships with and between students. These are central to successful liaison with parents/carers and colleagues.

6. SEND Learning Assistant:
 - a) Learning Assistants (LAs) work with individual or groups of students during lessons and break or lunch times to support students' learning and promote their wellbeing. The work of an LA is directed by the teacher during lessons and supported by the Head of Student Support.
 - b) Advice and training for specific work or duties may also come from an outside specialist, for example - a Speech and Language Therapist or they may be directed by other teaching staff within the school, for example the Head of Student Support.
 - c) To address very specific needs, students may be withdrawn for short periods during class times to work individually. Alternatively some work may occur alongside others within a small group, when the need is common to all.
 - d) In order to best utilize their support for students' learning, the deployment of SEND Learning Assistants within the school is strategically managed by the Head of Student Support in consultation with other members of the Senior Leadership Team.

7. School Counsellor:
 - a) The School counsellor (SC) has a key role in promoting and supporting inclusive practice at the school.
 - b) The SC undertakes a variety of tasks which include:
 - i. Observing and engaging with any students who may be vulnerable, liaising with teachers or senior staff regarding any concerns.
 - ii. Being the point of contact and supporting all students including new students as required.
 - iii. Helping to devise ways of best supporting the students he/she works with.
 - iv. Observing the wellbeing of students within social settings and spending time within classes or in conference working with individual students.
 - v. Working alongside staff and students to promote positive relationships for all students throughout the school day; including break and lunchtimes.
 - vi. Undertaking individual or group work with students whose behaviour gives us cause for concern.
 - vii. The SC advises other support staff on the running of groups aimed at developing students' social skills.
 - viii. Taking a supporting role in working alongside family and external support agencies.

8. School Nurses:
 - a) The school nurse has a key role in promoting and supporting inclusive practice at the school.
 - b) The nurse undertakes a variety of tasks which include:
 - i. Keeping health records
 - ii. Informing SLT of medical conditions which impact on learning
 - iii. Promoting healthy lifestyles

- iv. Ensuring students are sun safe
 - v. Ensuring the Health and Safety of all students.
9. Individual Learning Support Assistants (ILSA):
1:1 support staff for students who require a greater degree of support to access the curriculum. See ILSA Policy/Parent Contract.
10. The Student Support Team:
SEND and EAL is led by the Head of Student Support and may consist of SEND and EAL Teachers, Counsellors and support staff.

E. Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

1. What are special educational needs and disabilities? (SEND)
- a) 'A child or young person has special educational needs if he or she has a learning difficulty or disability which calls for special educational provision to be made for him or her.'
 - b) A child of compulsory school age or a young person has a learning difficulty or disability if he or she:
 - i. has an identified developmental delay
 - ii. has a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of others of the same age, or
 - iii. has a disability which prevents or hinders him or her from making use of facilities of a kind generally provided for others of the same age in mainstream schools or mainstream post-16 institutions.
 - c) A child under compulsory school age has a learning difficulty or disability if he or she is likely to be within subsection (2) when of compulsory school age (or would be likely, if no special educational provision were made).
 - d) A child or young person does not have a learning difficulty or disability solely because the language of instruction is different from the language which is or has been spoken at home.
2. What is a disability?
- *"The term persons with disabilities is used to apply to all persons with disabilities including those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which, in interaction with various attitudinal and environmental barriers, hinders their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others³".*
 - *"Although the term disability is often associated with physical problems, it is also used to refer to educational problems as well as problems of social adjustment⁴."*
3. Identification of Special Educational Needs and Disabilities:
In accordance with KHDA and ADEC, Taaleem is:

³ United Nations

⁴ Ministry of Education. Schools for All. Page 60

“Committed to become an inclusive, barrier-free society that promotes, protects, and ensures the success of people with disabilities and special educational needs⁵”.

- a) Identification of SEND may have occurred prior to a student’s enrolment at school. If this is the case parents will provide the relevant documentation as per the KHDA Parent Contract. The Head of Student Support will review and determine the appropriate provision to ensure inclusion at a Taaleem school.
- b) When a concern is evident a referral will be made to the Head of Student Support who will then liaise with the teacher and parents/carers to ensure all are aware and can plan the best way forward together. This may involve the teacher adapting certain aspects of their classroom practice or requesting that the parent/carer seek external medical advice. Should standard provision not suffice to overcome the concern and a significant and/or persistent difficulty remains apparent, the student will be deemed as having Special Education Needs and Disabilities. (SEND)
- c) Upon identification of such difficulties the school will seek to put in place additional educational provision and/or resources, which may require additional costs. This may be long or short-term dependent upon the nature of the special need and the progress made by the student.
‘Being identified with a special education need and disability could mean that students require specialist support, specific curriculum modification or individualised planning to ensure they make the expected levels of progress given their starting points.’ KHDA 4.1

- Behaviour, Social, Emotional Behaviour: Behaviour that presents a barrier to learning; emotional problems such as depression, eating disorders; attention deficit disorder or attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (AD/ADHD); oppositional defiant disorder (ODD); conduct disorder (CD); childhood psychoses and syndromes such as Tourette’s.
- Sensory: Visual impairment is when a person has sight loss that cannot be fully corrected using glasses or contact lenses. Hearing impairment, deafness, or hearing loss refers to the inability to hear things, either totally or partially.
- Physical Disability: Disabilities arising from conditions such as congenital deformities, spina bifida and/or hydrocephalus, muscular dystrophy, cerebral palsy, brittle bones, haemophilia, cystic fibrosis or severe accidental injury. It is important to state that there is no necessary direct correlation between the degree of physical disability and the inability to cope with the school curriculum, apart from the elements involving physical activity. Students with severe physical disability may have minimal special educational needs, while those with minimal physical disability may have serious learning needs.

⁵ KHDA 7 Years on. Inspecting for School Improvement: A Collaborative Journey 2008 – 2015 Key Findings. Page 19

- **Medical Conditions or Health Related Disability:** Medical conditions that may lead to an associated “special need.” These conditions may be temporary but are more likely to be on-going and include such illness as asthma, diabetes and allergies.
- **Speech and Language Disorders:** This does not include students with additional language needs. Expressive language disorder – problems using oral language or talking. Students’ understanding of language is likely to exceed their ability to communicate with the spoken word. Receptive language disorder – problems understanding oral language or in listening. Global language disorder – difficulties with both receptive and expressive language. Global language disorders affect both the understanding and use of language.
- **Communication and Interaction:** Autistic Spectrum Disorders (ASDs) are neurological disorders that are characterised by difficulties with social communication, social interaction, social imagination and flexible thinking. Asperger’s Syndrome is thought to fall within the spectrum of autism, but with enough distinct features to warrant its own label. It is characterised by subtle impairments in three areas of development. There is no clinically significant delay in cognitive development or in language acquisition. However, students with Asperger’s syndrome often have communication difficulties.
- **General Learning Difficulties:**
 - I. Learning difficulties 1: Below average general intellectual functioning often reflected in a slow rate of maturation, reduced learning capacity and inadequate social adjustment.
 - II. Learning difficulties 2: Significant learning difficulties which have a major effect on participation in the mainstream curriculum, without support.
 - III. **Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulty (PMLD):** Complex learning needs resulting in severely impaired functioning in respect of a basic awareness of themselves, the people and the world around them. They may include physical disabilities or a sensory impairment. A high level of support is likely to be required.
 - IV. **Assessed Syndrome A:** Syndrome usually refers to a medical condition where the underlying genetic cause has been identified, and the collection of symptoms is genetically related. Examples of syndromes include: Downs Syndrome, Stickler Syndrome and Williams Syndrome.
- **Specific Learning Difficulties:**
 - I. **Dyslexia- reading:** Dyslexia is a specific difficulty with learning to read fluently and with accurate comprehension despite normal or above average intelligence. This includes difficulty with phonological awareness, phonological decoding, processing speed, orthographic coding, auditory short term-memory and language skills/verbal comprehension.
 - II. **Dyspraxia – fine and gross motor skills:** Dyspraxia goes by many names developmental coordination difficulties (DCD), motor learning difficulties. Developmental dyspraxia is best described as an immaturity in the way the brain processes information. This immaturity results in messages not being

properly or fully transmitted and is associated with perception, language and thought, resulting in challenges with planning what to do and how to do it.

- III. Dyscalculia: Dyscalculia is a specific learning difficulty that affects the ability to acquire arithmetical skills. Learners with dyscalculia may have difficulty understanding simple number concepts, lack an intuitive grasp of numbers and have problems learning number facts and procedures.
- IV. Dysgraphia – writing/spelling. Dysgraphia is a specific learning difficulty that affects written expression. Dysgraphia can appear as difficulties with spelling, poor handwriting and trouble putting thoughts on paper.
- V. Dysgraphia can be a language-based and/or non-language-based disorder. (KHDA 4.1 2015-16)

d) Taaleem uses a 'graduated response' to identify and remove barriers to learning in order to put effective special education and disability provision in place (see below).

4. 'Graduated response' provided by the school is as follows:

- Universal – All students will benefit from:
 - i. High quality learning through the provision of high quality teaching; both formal and informal.
 - ii. Formal learning and teaching that is differentiated to need and enables almost all students to make outstanding progress.
 - iii. Ongoing and timely assessments which inform any further provision needed.
 - Targeted Support – some students may benefit from:
 - i. Small-group intervention for students that may be expected to 'catch up' with their peers as a result of the intervention.
 - ii. Interventions and progress is monitored by the Head of Student Support in consultation with other school staff. If a student has not made the required progress then the appropriate referral will be made to outside professional support (see below).
5. Specialist Support outside the school's provision – students will benefit:
- Specific targeted intervention for individuals. These students may have specific and/or exceptional needs that require the support from outside professionals. The school will provide appropriate advice and recommendations into any educational plans for the student. Additional costs for specialist support will be met by the parents.
 - The specialists most commonly involved in supporting students are:
 - Health Care Agencies (including GP, Psychiatrists and Mental Health Specialists)
 - Therapy Services (Occupational Therapy, Speech and Language, etc.)
 - Educational Psychologists

➤ Services for the Hearing or Visually Impaired

6. Before making a referral:
 - Before making a referral to a specialized service the school consults with parents or carers. An exception to this practice occurs when the school has information that indicates that a student may be at risk of harm (see Safe-guarding and Child Protection Policy).
 - The school then takes instruction from the Child Protection Officer on how to proceed.
7. Individual Learning Support Assistant (see ILSA policy):
 - In a minority of cases and only when a student presents with needs which are so 'exceptional' as to necessitate a very high level of additional support, the school will make recommendation for a 1:1 support (ILSA) which is funded directly by the parent.
 - Subject to termly review, the support is monitored by the school on behalf of the parent to ensure the level of support meets the needs of the student.
 - Parents/carers and the student (as appropriate) are invited to an annual review meeting to discuss the student's progress and the support, which they receive. The Head of Student Support and class/subject teacher where appropriate will attend this meeting and we invite all professionals involved in supporting the student.

F. The School Student Support Register

- Students who are identified by the school as being, SEND, EAL and Gifted and Talented are entered on to the student support school register within our student management system.
- The register will be reviewed formally twice a year at the time of student target setting during which an evaluation of whether the student is reaching his or her full potential will be made.
- Progress will be monitored closely to ensure that students have a full range of opportunities to grow and develop their potential. Therefore, SEND provision will be flexible and adapt to the needs of different groups of students to remove barriers to learning and maximise the potential of individual students.

G. English as an Additional Language

1. Definition and Rationale:
 - The term EAL (English as an Additional Language) is used to refer to students whose main language at home is other than English.
 - EAL students, from complete beginners to those with considerable fluency, will have varying degrees of difficulty in accessing the full curriculum and in achieving their potential. Research has shown that those new to English will acquire conversational fluency in two years, but may need a minimum of five years to achieve competence in academic English.

- a) Therefore our main aim is for all EAL students to become confident in speaking, listening, reading and writing to enable them to access the curriculum and communicate effectively with their peers and other adults.
 - b) The provision of this support seeks to promote equality of opportunity and to eliminate discrimination in the provision of education.
2. Identification and Assessment:
- a) Students who are EAL may be identified prior to admission or once admitted. If an EAL student's language skills (reading, writing, listening, speaking, comprehension) are causing concern then they may be assessed using the LAS Links assessment.
 - b) Specific progress and level attainment will be communicated regularly.
 - c) Progress is monitored by the Head of Student.
3. Provision for EAL students:
- a) The Head of Student Support oversees all new admissions and will liaise with class teachers and subject specialists if a new student has English as an additional language.
 - b) Teachers and other adults utilize good EAL practices and differentiated approaches within a lesson and throughout school life.
 - c) Specialist EAL teachers monitor and track the progress of students over time using LAS Links. Provision is targeted to support the development of language skills: reading, writing, listening and speaking.
4. Head of Student Support is responsible for:
- a) Monitoring EAL progress data
 - b) Supporting the adults leading EAL interventions.
 - c) Ensuring good EAL practices throughout the school.
 - d) Ensuring appropriate resources are available for staff and EAL students.
 - e) Reviewing and adapting the provision for EAL students based on attainment and progress data

H. Gifted and Talented

1. All Taaleem schools are committed in their mission to support the needs of all students so that they may realise their full potential.

a) The definitions of gifted and talented students as cited from The United Arab Emirates School Inspection Framework 2015-2016 are as follows (used in 2016-17):

b) Gifted and talented students take account of the 'Differentiation Model of Giftedness and Talent' and align with international best practice.

2. Gifted:

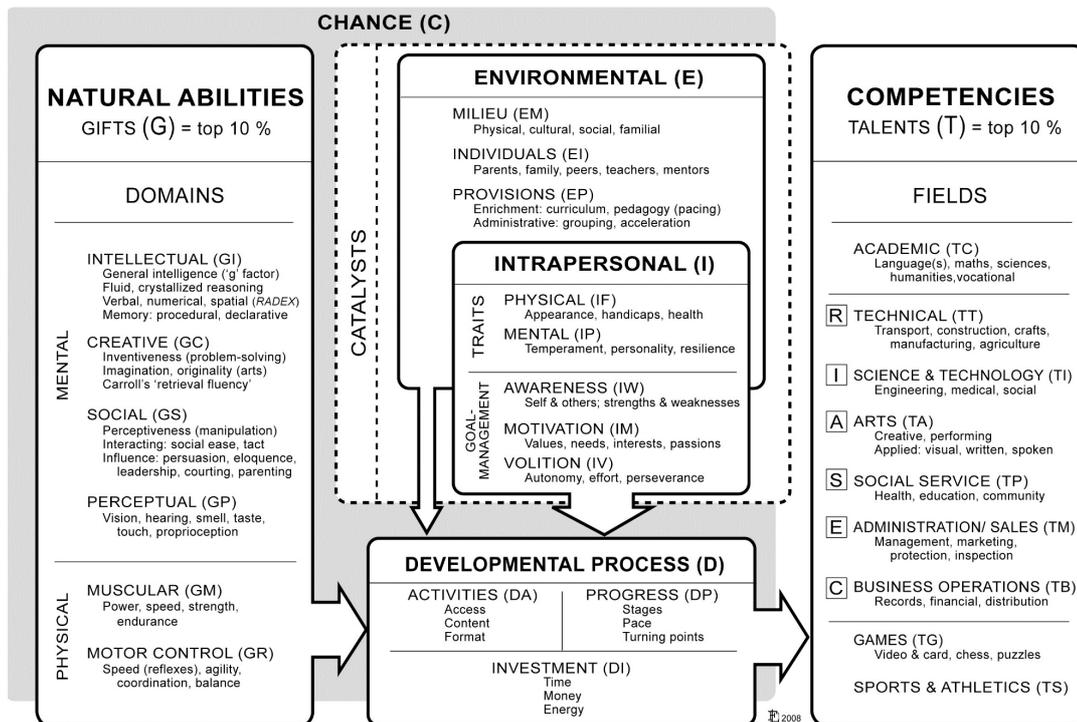
a) The term giftedness refers to 'a student who is in possession of untrained and spontaneously- expressed exceptional natural ability in one or more domains of human ability.'

These domains will include:

- Intellectual
- Creative
- Social
- Physical abilities

(<http://gagnefrancoys.wix.com/dmgt-mddt#!dmgtenglish/cabg>)

The Differentiated Model of Giftedness and Talent (DMGT)



3. Talented:

a) The term talented refers to 'a student who has been able to transform their giftedness' into exceptional performance'. Talented students will always demonstrate exceptional levels of competence in the specific domains of human ability.

4. Identification:

a) To identify gifted and talented students more than one method may initially be used, including:

- Teacher, mentor or parent nominations
- Observation
- Screening checklists
- Student interest surveys, self-reports and student interviews

b) Support of a student's identification as gifted and talented, however, must also include scores on in-school standardized attainment tests or standardized assessments administered by Psychologists. Students identified as gifted and talented have scores that may be classified as 2 standard deviations above the mean, be in the 98th percentile, or are converted to a stanine score of 9.

c) In the domains where standardized testing is not applicable, external professional judgements must be acquired to support a student's nomination. This could include

specialist teachers in other Taaleem schools. Evidence is to be gathered by the student's teacher (video or audio recordings, pictures, etc.) and sent for verification by the second outside source.

5. Student Support Register:

- a) Students identified as gifted and talented will be placed on the Student Support Register.

6. Documentation:

- a) A Student Passport is created for gifted and talented students if deemed appropriate. Students write the Student Passport together with a member of the Student Support team and subject specific teachers if the gift and talent is one that is extended in school.

The Passport may set out adaptations such as:

- Differentiation
- Pace
- Assessment
- Groupings
- Work level
- Enrichment

7. Staff Responsibilities:

The SLT

- Ensures the policy is implemented within the boundaries outlined and is updated appropriately.
- Ensures resources are designated to continuing professional development for gifted education.
- Monitor the curriculum to meet the needs of the gifted and talented learners.

The Head of Student Support:

- Maintains the register.
- Monitors a student's progress and attainment with the support of school staff.
- Monitors the school's provision.
- Liaises with relevant staff and outside agencies.

Middle Managers/Leaders:

- Play a coordinating role in referral of students who are potentially gifted and or talented.
- Monitor the progress of gifted and or talented students.

Pastoral Teams:

- Discuss and regularly review the progress of gifted and or talented students.

Academic Staff:

- Differentiate their planning to incorporate the needs of the gifted and or talented students taking the student passport into account.

I. Teaching, Learning, Curriculum and Organization

- As appropriate, teachers will provide differentiated activities and a range of support and resources for gifted and talented students.
 - i. Ongoing assessment against year group objectives and International Benchmarks are maintained and used formatively to set new curriculum targets for individuals so that they can achieve at the highest level and always aim to make further progress. Students are involved in this process.
 - ii. In addition and especially at the end of phase, extension activities that are more demanding of their abilities or enrichment activities that provide new and different ways of working will be provided.
 - iii. Opportunities for Gifted and Talented students to work on various projects within the school and across the Taaleem group of schools.

J. Monitoring and Review

Taaleem, the Principal and Head of Student Support will monitor the effectiveness of this policy on a regular basis and, if necessary, makes recommendations for further improvements.

K. Effective date: September 2016

L. Review date: September 2017

Appendix

Support Services/ Websites/ Organisations

- Social Emotional Support: <http://sengifted.org>
- General Information for parents & education Professionals:
<http://www.hoagiesgifted.org>
- Useful Presentations/ general info./ discussions forums:
<http://www.davidsongifted.org/edguild/>