جيمس مدرستنا الثانوية الإنجليزية، دبي
GEMS Our Own English High School, Dubai

ACCESSIBILITY AND ALTERNATIVE CURRICULUM POLICY

1. Introduction

GEMS OOD is an inclusive school that welcomes applications from students with diverse SEND needs. Our daily operations reflect a strong commitment to inclusivity, embraced by all stakeholders that provides a caring, inclusive and safe environment for all our students and staff. We follow a whole-school approach to supporting Students of Determination, ensuring they learn and thrive in a safe, supportive, engaging, and appropriately challenging, shared learning environment. This policy reflects OOD's unwavering commitment to equity, universal access, and inclusive culture, ensuring that every learner—regardless of ability—can participate fully in school life and achieve personal excellence.

Inclusion Vision: To remove any barriers that restrict the achievements and educational experience of Students of Determination.

2. Aim

- Ensure equal access to education by removing physical, instructional, and emotional barriers.
- Promote inclusive teaching to enhance learning and well-being.
- Provide alternative curriculum pathways for meaningful, individualized learning.
- Improve physical and digital accessibility through assistive technology.
- Foster independence, self-advocacy, and life skills.
- Align with UAE inclusive education regulations.
- Celebrate individual milestones and achievements

3. Scope

This plan applies to all students, staff, parents and visitors to GEMS OOD. The accessibility plan of GEMS OOD is divided into 5 domains.

4. Accessibility domains

➢ Physical Accessibility

The school ensures that all facilities are **safe, accessible, and inclusive** for individuals with diverse mobility, sensory, and cognitive needs. All entryways, corridors, and classrooms are **wheelchair accessible**, with **ramps, elevators, and accessible restrooms**. In emergencies, staff follow the **PEEP protocol** and use **evacuation chairs** located on each floor. Classrooms are **ergonomically designed**, and **designated parking** is available near the main entrance for those with limited mobility.

➢ Curriculum Accessibility

The school, affiliated to the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE), New Delhi, follows inclusive practices that support diverse learning styles and abilities. All teachers are

trained in Universal Design for Learning (UDL) to deliver personalized, differentiated instruction promoting independence, confidence, and academic success.

Students receive individualized plans based on their needs. As per CBSE guidelines, students of Grades 1–8 may receive exemptions or modifications in up to two subjects, while those with severe disabilities follow a modified curriculum. Level 3 students receive support from a Learning Support Assistant (LSA) and may pursue functional mathematics or ASDAN courses. In Grades 9–10, students can opt for skill-based subjects (e.g., Painting, Computer Applications) as alternatives. For Grades 11–12, subject selection is flexible and interest-based.

Exam provisions such as extra time, scribes, reading support, calculators, and distraction-free spaces are provided per CBSE norms.

Alternative Curriculum Pathways

Students may be considered for alternative/vocational pathways if:

- They present with persistent barriers to accessing mainstream curriculum.
- They require a smaller class environment or specialized teaching methods.
- They demonstrate functional strengths (e.g., vocational/practical skills).
- They are at risk of underachievement or disengagement.
- They require support due to diagnosed condition or emerging needs.

Approach/ Model used: Assess–Plan–Do–Review (APDR)

- Assess: Establish baseline profile.
- Plan: Set learning goals and success criteria.
- Do: Implement strategies and assign responsibility.
- Review: Evaluate impact with student and parent voice.

➢ **Pastoral care Accessibility**

GEMS OOD fosters a caring environment that supports every student's well-being and growth. Our pastoral care system ensures students feel respected, heard, and supported to thrive academically and personally. Key supporting policies include Inclusion, Wellbeing, Child Safeguarding, Counselling, Admission, and Health & Safety policies.

The Counselling and Guidance Department provides personalized emotional support to address students' emotional and developmental needs, ensuring a safe and caring space where they feel heard and guided through personal and academic challenges. The Inclusion Team works with students, parents, and teachers to design and review individualized support plans that meet each student's learning, behavioral, social, and communication needs. The pastoral team ensures the safety and well-being of all students through early identification and response to safeguarding concerns, with all cases documented via *Guard*, our internal reporting system.

➢ **Information Accessibility**

OOD provides students, parents, staff, and visitors with the information they need. We recognize that clear and accessible communication is vital to fostering inclusion and engagement. We strive to foster an open, supportive, and inclusive communication framework

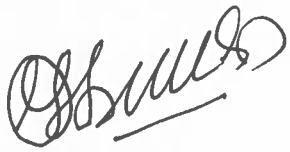
that strengthens collaboration between the school and families, enhancing student success and well-being.

- **Digital Accessibility**

Our school website and parent/student portals (Phoenix Classroom) are designed to be user-friendly and accessible to students with varied needs. Information is systematically organized with clear navigation menus, making it easy for students, parents, and staff to access important updates, resources, and announcements.

5. Monitoring and Evaluation

Findings from termly reviews of provision effectiveness will inform annual updates to the policy to ensure ongoing improvement and to address evolving needs, reinforcing our dedication to equity, diversity, and inclusion within the school community.



Dr. Sheeba Jojo
Principal