

# Teaching and Learning Policy



*Al Mawakeb School*

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## **1. Introduction**

Our plans and actions as educators are inspired by our goal towards a continuous pursuit of excellence in providing high-quality education. We have the drive to develop students' potential by honing their innate talents to become innovative and creative. We are also committed to providing them with a wide range of learning opportunities to enhance their critical thinking, problem-solving, and research skills. Through these approaches, we believe that we will be able to develop students that are career-oriented and globally-competitive towards sustainable development.

The main focus of our teaching and learning policy are the students; thus, promoting a student-centered learning environment. Our teachers are up-to-date with the use of effective teaching strategies, including the use of technology tools. Furthermore, the students will not only be exposed to academics, but also to extra-curricular activities which enable them to become well-rounded or holistic individuals.

## **2. Rationale**

Teaching and learning is a lifelong process and this justifies why we aim to develop lifelong learners. This policy has been created to ensure that students are provided with all opportunities to become passionate towards learning, independent but collaborative, and to possess the 21<sup>st</sup> century skills required to pursue their chosen careers in the future. Furthermore, each student is unique, has his/her individual potential and needs to become successful in life. Due to this fact, the teaching and learning of students in our school does not only aim to educate students collectively as one group in general, but is also designed to meet the needs of individual learners and different groups of students, including those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), English language development needs (ELD) and the gifted and talented (GT).

## **3. Aims and Objectives**

The aim of this policy is to guide teachers and staff in meeting the school's mission and vision in providing high-quality education. The goal of this policy is to increase awareness on the school's commitment in developing students' creativity, innovation, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills through challenging tasks and activities.

## **4. Principles**

The school upholds the following principles of teaching and learning:

- Teaching and learning is a continuous lifelong process that goes beyond school walls.
- Students' creativity, innovation and problem-solving skills can be nurtured when effective and challenging learning opportunities are provided.
- Students are born with distinctive talents and individual needs so their needs must be addressed independently.
- Teachers are facilitators of learning while students are at the center of the learning environment.
- Learning is more effective when connected to other disciplines and subject areas.
- Learning is irrelevant unless it is linked to real life experiences and applications.
- Assessments, either formative or summative, are at the central part of the student learning.
- The learning environment shall be conducive, engaging, challenging, and goal-driven.
- Students take responsibility for their own learning.
- Effective teaching results in well-rounded, holistic individuals.

## 5. Values

Teaching and learning becomes effective because we value the following:

- **Engagement:** Students are the main focus of the teaching and learning in our school. We provide students with challenging and engaging learning opportunities in order to discover learning. We involve students in different activities that will enable them to maximize their full potential in solving problems related to real-life situations.
- **Passion towards learning:** Building the students' passion towards learning is very essential for us since this enables students to acknowledge the importance of learning and develop their eagerness to continue learning.
- **Individual Differences:** We are all unique in our own special way, and so are our students. We value the individual differences of students, including their special talents, skills, learning styles, multiple intelligences, cultures, nationalities, religion, and interests.
- **Emirati Culture and Islamic Values:** We value and respect the Emirati cultures and Islamic values by integrating them in different subject areas and disciplines. We also promote the cultural heritage and traditions of the UAE through a variety of learning opportunities provided in co-curricular and extra-curricular activities.

- **Family, Society, and the Environment:** We develop students to become more conscientious of themselves, their family, society and the environment around them. Students are future contributors for sustainable development. In this light, we aim to build a strong foundation for their future life by instilling in them core values.

## **6. Policy Statement**

### **6.1 Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment**

There shall be a clear and consistent alignment among the school's curriculum, instruction, and assessment. This implies that the teaching instruction shall be well-aligned with the curriculum standards; the effectiveness of the instruction shall be measured through assessment; and the assessment results shall be used to inform and improve the curriculum and instruction.

### **6.2 Inclusion**

All students shall have equal opportunities to participate in the activities inside the classroom. Teachers shall use differentiated instruction and tiered assignments based on diverse needs of different groups of students. Each student's attainment and progress shall also be analyzed and monitored and teachers shall use the assessment information to improve and revise their teaching to meet the students' individual needs.

### **6.3 Teaching Methods**

A variety of teaching methods shall be implemented to ensure that students develop their critical thinking, problem-solving, innovation and independent learning skills needed to continuous progress.

- Creative Learning
- Inquiry-Based Learning (IBL)
- Differentiated Teaching Instruction
- Integrating Technology
- Student-Centred Learning
- Assessment for Learning
- Cross-curricular Connections
- Hands-on Approach

All these active learning approaches shall be executed also in the teaching and learning environment to promote interdisciplinary teaching.

#### **6.4 Teacher's Subject Knowledge**

The teaching loads of our teachers shall be in accordance to their subject of specialization. They shall have the mastery of the subject matter in order to facilitate the student learning with the use of appropriate teaching methods and strategies in an effective and efficient way.

They shall use open-ended questions and tasks to challenge their critical thinking. The teachers shall also monitor and facilitate students' learning through the use of effective feedback and formative assessments.

#### **6.5 Professional Development of Teachers**

Teachers shall be provided with professional development opportunities through Continuing Professional Development (CPD). The CPD shall focus on the KHDA's requirements and the latest trends in education. This is to ensure that all teachers are updated with the most recent and most effective teaching strategies and approaches that they can eventually apply in their daily teaching inside the classroom.

#### **6.6 Mentoring Program**

The Principal, Vice Principal, Curriculum Coordinator, Head of Section, and the Subject Coordinators shall be responsible for managing and monitoring teachers' performance. They shall provide instructional support to teachers so that all of them are performing based on the standards of the school in terms of teaching and learning. They shall ensure that there is an alignment between the curriculum, teaching instruction, and assessment. They shall also provide support to teachers through various procedures such as classroom observations, department meetings, email reminders, or one-on-one conferences. CPD focus shall be school-wide themes as well as individualized areas in need for development.

Mentoring also shall occur between teachers. There shall be a collaborative system between teachers so that the teachers are fully guided by the instructional strategies, policies, procedures and culture of the school.

#### **6.7 The Teaching and Learning Environment**

The following are the expectations in teaching and learning environment:

- It shall be student-centered.
- It shall meet the needs of different groups of students including students of determination and the gifted and talented.
- It shall be well-managed and conducive for learning.

- It shall involve students in engaging and challenging learning opportunities.
- Teachers and students shall be motivated and active in the learning process.
- Teachers and students shall use a wide-range of resources with easy access to various ICT tools.
- Students shall be innovative, goal-oriented and self-driven.
- Learning opportunities shall have cross-curricular links and real-world connections.
- Bulletin boards and other displays shall highlight students' areas of interest in learning.
- The content should follow the scope and sequence for the department and the resources should support the content.

The learning experiences of students shall include the following:

- **Phase 1 (KG1 to KG2):** Role-play, songs, dance, online and interactive games, cooperative learning, use of concrete models, manipulatives, read-aloud, guided reading, simple science investigations, physical games and sports, theater presentations, use of imagination/creativity, etc.
- **Phase 2 (Grade 1 to 5):** Collaborative activities, independent tasks, making simple inquiries, simple problem-solving, simple investigatory projects, hands-on activities, experiential learning, role-play, think-pair-share, project-making, physical games and sports, presentations, experimentation, etc.
- **Phase 3 (Grade 6 to 8):** Use of ICT, brainstorming, experimentations, hands-on activities, problem-solving, athletic and non-athletic physical activities, think-pair-share, small group discussions, peer tutoring, making compositions, making inferences, etc.
- **Phase 4 (Grade 9 to 12):** Debates, Socratic seminar, research work, composing stories, creating mini-films and blogs, using multimedia, artistic presentations, using graphing software, designing, sports competitions, drama, generating conclusions, etc.

The following strategies shall be practiced in the teaching and learning environment:

- Shape the learning environment that will support student engagement.

- Encourage students to create a personal improvement plan (PIP) or a learning contract that includes their responsibility on active participation in class activities.
- Use interactive activities such as think-pair-share, four corners, inside/outside circle, and jigsaw.
- Use effective feedback prompts to facilitate the student thinking and motivate them to participate in discussions.
- Provide opportunities for reflection to enable students to learn from their mistakes to improve and to increase enthusiasm to collaborate with their peers.

## **7. Roles and Responsibilities**

### **7.1 Principal**

The role of the Principal is to:

- supervise the teaching and learning process of the school.
- evaluate instruction and ensure the provision for teachers as they work to improve their instructional techniques.
- ensure that the teaching and learning process is consistent and aligned with expectations throughout the school.
- ensure a safe, positive, and orderly environment to promote effective teaching and learning in accordance with the school's mission and vision.
- occasionally visit classes and observe instruction.

### **7.2 Vice Principal**

- conduct classroom observations to evaluate the teacher's performance and to monitor students' interactions and activities.
- conduct professional development training to teachers to improve the teaching and learning strategies, assessment types as well as the requirements of the assigned school programs and events.
- liaise with all coordinators, Heads of Sections and teachers regarding the procedures for monitoring and evaluation for effective teaching.
- ensure a safe, positive, and orderly environment to promote effective teaching and learning in accordance with the school's mission and vision.

### **7.3 Curriculum Coordinator:**

The role of the Curriculum Coordinator is to:

- train teachers in the effective implementation of the school program, curriculum and teaching and learning strategies, and monitor and assess teachers on their effectiveness.
- collaborate with the Subject Coordinators to ensure that the teaching and learning process leads to the implementation of the integrated curriculum using the thematic, interdisciplinary, and trans-disciplinary approaches of integration
- collaborate with other school staff in identifying appropriate learning resources and keeping them accessible and up-to-date
- support the on-going implementation of the school's assessment program, including collection and analysis of student achievement data
- work with the Head of Section and other staff to ensure that the school has a high-quality in service professional development
- conduct classroom observations to provide feedback and support to teachers to improve teaching strategies and learning skills
- Evaluate and develop protocols for curricular frameworks

#### **7.4 Subject Coordinator**

The role of the Subject Coordinator is to:

- collaborate with the Curriculum Coordinator and Head of Section regarding matters related to student attainment and progress.
- facilitate in the development of all curriculum related documents, to ensure unity and continuity of the curriculum implementation.
- conduct classroom observations on a regular basis to ensure that the lesson plan of the subject is well-implemented.
- monitor the grade books and assessment records of teachers.
- evaluate the overall performance of teachers under his/her subject area and submit the report to the Principal.
- Ensure that resources are available per respective department.

#### **7.5 Head of Section**

The role of the HoS is to:

- provide managerial and academic leadership within his section.
- support the Subject Coordinator in the teaching and learning process.
- manage and lead the operations of his/her section by working collaboratively with his/her staff in an effective and efficient way
- participate in the resource planning of the school.
- conduct training sessions to his/her staff within his/her section.
- ensure a positive student attitude towards learning in and out of class.



## **7.6 Teachers**

The role of a teacher with the students is to:

- act as a facilitator of learning.
- develop the students' critical thinking, and problem-solving skills through engaging and challenging activities and using questioning techniques that stimulates their inquiry and creativity.
- Plan and implement lessons and learning opportunities that are age-appropriate, inquiry-based, innovative, challenging, and interesting.
- use effective feedback and formative assessments before, during, and after the lesson.
- set clear and challenging learning outcomes for all students.
- provide support for different groups of students through differentiation and independent tasks.
- develop effective teaching strategies to enhance the 21<sup>st</sup> century skills of students.

The role of a teacher with the school is to:

- attend and participate in the CPD to further develop their teaching and learning skills.
- provide assessment (internal and external) data to monitor attainment and progress.
- evaluate student outputs, quizzes, or projects and use the results to improve instruction and assessments.
- prepare and submit required departmental documents to the Subject (lesson plans, grade books, unit plans, teacher preparation notebook, portfolio).
- participate in the school improvement planning involving teaching and learning.
- plan and organize curriculum related activities and programs.
- involve in the planning, monitoring and implementing of extra-curricular activities such as field trips, club activities, community service, sports events, etc.
- be responsible for creating an environment conducive for learning.

The role of a teacher with parents is to:

- provide information to parents about their child's progress, attainment and attitudes towards learning.
- recognize students' achievements to parents whether in academics or in non-academics performances.

- Make recommendations to parents about how to support their child's progress at home.
- Share learning opportunities and resources to support improvement.

### **7.7 Students**

The role of a student is to:

- participate actively in the class activity and discussion.
- take responsibility of his/her own learning.
- work collaboratively during group activities and projects.
- learn independently through research and individual tasks.
- demonstrate best skills and abilities through active participation and meaningful engagement.
- use self-reflections and self-evaluation to improve learning.
- work collaboratively with others and respect different cultures, nationalities and beliefs.
- participate in various extra-curricular activities and events such as field trips, school clubs, sports activities, community service, inter-school competitions, and others.

### **7.8 Parents/Guardians**

The role of the parents/guardians is to:

- encourage their child's interest in learning through home learning, co-curricular activities, extra-curricular activities, etc.
- communicate with teachers to support their child's attainment and progress.
- attend parent meetings to be involved in their child's progress and be aware of their learning goals.
- participate in school events to contribute to the improvement of the school by providing purposeful and meaningful feedback.

## **8. Monitoring Teaching and Learning**

The monitoring of the effectiveness of teaching and learning is strongly embedded in the School Improvement Plan (SIP). The academic team shall monitor the effectiveness of teaching and learning through the following:

- **Class Observations:** Senior leadership teams shall conduct classroom observations to ensure that the teachers use the appropriate teaching methods and strategies, engage students in a student-centered learning environment, involve students in challenging activities and open-ended

tasks, and use formative assessments and effective feedback to facilitate learning. After a class observation, the teacher will meet with the Subject Coordinator to provide feedback on strengths and areas for improvement.

- **Samples of Student Work:** Samples of students' work shall be evident in the assessment, activity sheets, student notebook and student portfolio. These documents shall give a clear picture of learning. It shall provide the senior leaders with information whether the assessments given are challenging and comprehensive.
- **Regular Monitoring of Teacher's Paraphernalia:** Teachers' documents such as lesson plans, period plans, teacher's preparation notebook and teacher portfolio shall be regularly monitored to ensure alignment of the lessons against the curriculum standards. It shall also provide evidences on the use of effective teaching methods and strategies, provision for students of determination and other groups of students, and the use of effective assessments.
- **Continuing Professional Development (CPD):** CPD shall help the teachers to grow personally and professionally. Focus of CPD shall be driven by the school improvement plan. The CPD shall have school-wide themes and focus and shall provide personal improvement plans for individual teachers.

### **Process of Monitoring**

**Stage 1:** Identify the areas to be monitored.

Develop a list of areas of teacher's activities that needs to be monitored like method of teaching, lesson planning, assessment designs, etc.

**Stage 2:** Identify and apply the appropriate strategies to be used to monitor the specific area.

Strategies include self-evaluation, peer evaluation, student evaluation, supervisor evaluation, analysis of submitted documents and materials, interviews, meetings, classroom observation, surveys, CPD, etc.

**Stage 3:** Collect and use the information from the evaluations

Collect and record the results of different evaluation strategies. Analyze the results and use them to improve the instructions and teaching habits

## 9. Definition of Terms

**Co-curricular Activities:** these are any school activities that are aligned with the curriculum standards

**Continuing Professional Development (CPD):** is a process conducted in a form of trainings or workshops in order to maintain and improve the professional knowledge and skills of teachers and other staffs

**Cooperative Learning:** it is a learning approach in which students are arranged in groups to accomplish a common task.

**Extra-curricular activities (ECA):** are any activities that are done beyond and outside the regular teaching classes that are used to support the student learning.

**Inclusion:** means providing equal learning opportunities to learners with individualized needs.

**Innovation:** to “innovate” means to create changes on something that has already been established, particularly on introducing new methods, ideas or products. “Innovation” is considered a shift to truly personalized and competency-based instruction, while concentrated on learning goals and outcomes.

**Inquiry-Based Learning (IBL):** it is based on asking probing questions and making inquiries.

**Interdisciplinary Teaching:** is a method of teaching with a combination of more than one academic, scientific, or artistic area of knowledge or disciplines.

**Mentoring:** it is a practice of providing guidance, assistance, and support to others.

**Student-Centered Learning (SCL):** it is a learning approach that shifts the focus of teaching from the teacher to the student. Its goal is to develop the students’ autonomy and independent learning by putting the responsibility of the learning process in the hands of the students.

## 10. Connected Documents Related to this Policy:

This policy is connected to the following documents:

- Curriculum Policy
- Assessment Policy
- SEND & Inclusion Policy
- Teaching and Learning Manual