

Curriculum Policy



Al Mawakeb School

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1. Introduction

The curriculum we offer to students shall target the three main focal points of our school's mission and vision: sustainable development, innovation, and inclusive education. The primary values underlying this policy are balance, rigor, coherence, vertical integration, interdisciplinary connection, appropriateness, focus, and relevance. It shall also ensure that our students will be:

- empowered with outstanding skills and competencies.
- proactive contributors to a constantly-changing world.
- successful candidates in their future careers.
- active makers of change in achieving the UAE National Agenda 2021 Parameters.

2. Rationale

This policy is developed so that we are able to create a curriculum that is relevant, focused, and balanced, addressing the age-appropriate levels of learning for each student. It also serves as guidance for all teachers and staff to have a unified approach in the curriculum planning and implementation in compliance with the statutory requirements of KHDA and US curriculum schools.

3. Aims and Objectives

The aims of our school curriculum are:

- To provide a broad and balanced curriculum that promotes the spiritual, moral, mental, cultural, and physical development of all learners at the school.
- To provide, through the curriculum design, appropriate education to each learner's age and stage of development to prepare them for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life.
- To develop a high level of numeracy, literacy and practical skills to enable students to become confident and effective lifelong learners.
- To develop an understanding of personal, social, health and citizenship issues and an awareness of the opportunities, responsibilities, experiences and challenges to future life.
- To develop an appreciation of culture through exposure to art, music, and social studies.
- To enable learners to develop their intellect including their emotional development.
- To enable learners to be passionate about what they believe in and to develop their own thinking.
- To help learners understand the importance of truth and fairness, so that they grow up committed to equal opportunities for all.

- To develop sporting and physical skills which give life-long benefits such as health, fitness, self-esteem, the experience of team participation and leadership, and a balanced attitude to competition.
- To develop intellectual and study skills and habits on which learners will be able to draw in higher education and in the workplace.
- To assist all learners to develop their full potential by striving to cater for their different strengths, abilities and interests.

4. Principles

The school upholds the following principles for its curriculum:

- Education is a lifelong process that can be best achieved through a comprehensive, balanced, progressive and coherent curriculum.
- Curriculum is at the core of the teaching and learning process, which provides holistic learning opportunities for all students.
- The curriculum has specific characteristics that will enable students to acquire and enhance the knowledge, skills, and values that they can use for their personal, physical, mental, social, moral, psychological, and emotional development.
- The depth of the curriculum enables students to stimulate enthusiasm to explore and seek deeper learning and understanding.
- The breadth of the curriculum enables students to extend and link interrelated facts, concepts, and ideas into a meaningful whole.
- The balance and relevance of the curriculum allow students to progress and achieve success within their maximum potential.
- The curriculum is modified to cater for the needs of different groups of students.
- An effective curriculum is characterized by progression, continuity, and coherence in terms of aims, content knowledge, teaching, and assessments within and across the curriculum.
- An ideal curriculum is a curriculum that fosters innovation, inclusion, sustainable development, and holistic education.

5. Values

Our school curriculum is underpinned by the values that we hold dear to our school.

- We value our **environment**. We teach students to care for the world by reducing, reusing and recycling. We subscribe to UAE Vision 2021 National Agenda quality indicator “**Sustainable Environment and Infrastructure**” which focus on “improving the quality of air, preserving water resources, increasing the contribution of clean energy and implementing green growth plans.”

- We value the **UAE culture**. We enable students to understand the UAE cultural heritage, social and cultural background.
- We value **uniqueness of children**. Our curriculum promotes respecting the views of other individuals, people of all cultures and people of other religions.
- We value **learning for learning**. We encourage students to find out and explore meanings by training them to have their own ideas. We aim to enable each student to be successful, creative and critical thinker. We provide them with equal opportunities to choose ways to do things and make links.
- We value **enjoyment and motivation**. Our pedagogies are carefully selected to ensure that learners are involved, concentrated, and enjoying achieving what they set out to do. We value the spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development of students as well as their intellectual and physical growth.

6. KHDA Compliance

Our curriculum is aligned to the curriculum frameworks and state standards from Massachusetts¹ (U.S. curriculum). Our Social Studies, Arabic Language, and Islamic Education² curricula, however, are adopted as is from the UAE Ministry of Education.

- In English Language Arts, the scope and sequence is progressive to empower the students' reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills in different genres, disciplines, and situations. Non-English speakers participate in a specialized program based on ELDP (English Language Development Program) practices to address the specific language needs.
- In Mathematics, courses are designed based on an accelerated pathway leading to calculus³. This includes a decision of the student's pathway in grade 6 and compacting the curriculum in middle school in order to complete calculus by grade 12.

Grade 6 → Acceleration Decision Point

Grade 7 → Grade 7 and Part of Grade 8

Grade 8 → Part of Grade 8 and Algebra I

Grade 9 → Geometry

Grade 10 → Algebra II

Grade 11 → Pre-Calculus

Grade 12 → Calculus

¹ KHDA and NEASC: KHDA requirements, p.12

² KHDA and NEASC: KHDA requirements, p.12

³ Massachusetts Curriculum Framework, *Making Decisions about High School Course Sequences and Algebra 1 in Grade 8*, p. 167, published in 2017.

- Science curriculum is based on Science and Technology/Engineering curriculum framework published in 2016. Science classes include lab sessions where students apply what has been learned in class.
- Social Studies curriculum is associated with the values of leadership and the accomplishments of the Founders of UAE. This will ensure that UAE’s culture, heritage, and national identity are discussed to increase the students’ awareness and appreciation about the country’s values and traditions.
- French Language is offered as a third language for KG1 through G12.
- Physical Education curriculum is offered from KG1 to G12 students and shall include a diverse set of learning opportunities to help students develop their movement and motor skills. Physical Education for high school students is provided as electives and will depend on the students’ choice.

Elective courses are provided and spread over the four years of the high school phase (Grades 9, 10, 11, and 12) and are in compliance with KHDA requirements stated for American Authorized Schools.⁴

Subject	Units or credits Each full unit or credit is considered as a subject studied throughout the academic year for at least three 50 minute periods per week (except for Islamic Education)
English	4
Science	3
Math	3
World Language	2
Social Studies	2
Physical Education	2
Visual/ Performing Art	0.5
Electives	5.5
Arabic	4
For Arab Nationals - Mandatory These units can replace a combination of credits or units from the elective and world language components	
Islamic Education	2
For Muslim Students - Mandatory These units can replace a combination of credits or units from the elective and world language components	
*A credit or a unit is 120 classroom hours of instructions	

Our curriculum is enriched with values based on respect, equality, challenge, and curiosity. Our curriculum is structured to cater for the needs of different groups of students. A range of extra-curricular activities is provided to enable

⁴ KHDA and NEASC: KHDA requirements, p. 15

learners to achieve their optimum potential. Our Extra-curricular activities (ECA) program helps learners develop and become responsible citizens, improve their communication skills, boost their confidence and respect, and promote their critical thinking skills as they begin to address global issues.

Our curriculum materials are reviewed regularly to ensure a comprehensive implementation of curriculum frameworks including regular updates from MA. All students have the opportunity to learn and to make progress, including students with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), English language development needs, and those who are gifted and talented.

English⁵ is the language of instruction in the school. However, it is the school's prerogative to use Arabic⁶, or mixed approach in Social Studies, Arabic Education and Islamic Education. Students for whom the language of instruction is an additional language are given additional support, curriculum modifications and accommodations in regular/mainstream classes, depending on their language ability levels, through our English language development program (ELDP).

7. Organization of the Curriculum

We plan our constructive alignment of curriculum mapping in several phases. Mapping indicates the broad objectives, skills and links between subjects. We adopted the curriculum overviews as outlined in the UAE Ministry of Education curriculum and Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education curriculum. Scope and sequence documents are authored to show the pace of objectives and to ensure breath and balance. Yearly plans and unit plans are created, usually over the summer, to include the details of the work to be covered with progression of learning outcomes, instructional plans and assessment types. The curriculum mapping ensures clear alignment between intended curriculum, implemented curriculum and attained curriculum.

The timetable is organized on the basis of seven periods (50 minutes each). The students are taught within their class. Some students are withdrawn for small group support. Students with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) are provided with extra support as appropriate and within the resources available to the school.

A variety of teaching strategies are used to deliver the content and maximize the use of available resources. To ensure the effective delivery of the curriculum, teachers attend regular in-service training in any of AMSI

⁵ KHDA and NEASC: KHDA requirements, p.12

⁶ DSIB School Inspection Supplement 2016-17, p. 12

schools, department meetings, conferences, seminars, observations, webinars and workshops.

To ensure coherent, broad and balanced curriculum, we organize educational activities in field work outside the classroom. Fieldwork and other visits outside school, such as theatre and industrial visits, are organized when they are beneficial to the student learning.

The curriculum is complemented by career education, guidance counseling, and ICT to all students throughout their school experience.

8. Inclusion

We have an open admission; our school is not a selective school. We value the diversity of individuals within the school. All students have equal access to curriculum and are treated fairly regardless of social, personal or academic background. Our curriculum promotes enjoyment of learning through debate, creativity, purpose, and relevance. We motivate students to develop their powers of imagination, inventiveness, and critical thinking.

Our school offers inclusive education in compliance with Federal Law No. 29/2006 as specified in the UAE MOE-General Rules for the Provision of Special Education Programs and Services (Public & Private Schools)⁷. The curriculum is modified based on individual identified requirements to cater for the students with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). The Learning Support Team (LST) in the school plays a key role in identifying particular needs of students through screening and ongoing monitoring, putting in place strategies, and reviewing their progress regularly.

Our curriculum shall be flexible to adjust to suit the needs of different groups of students. In order to cater for the diverse needs of the different groups of students, differentiation will be used in all phases and grade levels. Our teachers participate in modifying the curriculum by utilizing the information gathered from the diagnostic, formative, and summative assessments. Differentiation techniques shall be adopted to provide tiered assignments to match the different ability levels, distinct needs and learning styles of all students. The diverse educational needs of all students shall be accommodated to enable them to attain and exceed the school's curriculum expectations.

⁷ UAE MoE (SFA) General Rules for the Provision of Special Education Programs and Services (Public & Private Schools)

9. Enhancement, Enterprise and Innovation

A diverse set of learning opportunities are provided to promote enterprise, innovation, entrepreneurship, creativity, local as well as global awareness. Problem-based, inquiry-based and project-based learning approaches shall be applied to meet the learning targets and to establish collaboration among different groups of students.

10. Cross-Curricular Links

Cross-curricular links are present in our curriculum through interdisciplinary approach, subject area integration, and real-life connections. Our curriculum design enables students to relate concepts within and across disciplines, utilize the learned concepts to generate new ideas, and apply the acquired knowledge to resolve real-world problems. This also includes the integration of Social Studies and Islamic Education with other subjects and tying them to the monthly themes of the school's activities and events to ensure connections with Emirati culture and UAE society.

11. Extra-Curricular Activities

Extra-curricular activities (ECA) are provided in all phases of the school as per KHDA requirements⁸. Thus, ECAs are planned to ensure that the objectives of activities are aligned with the curriculum standards and the school's vision and mission. Such activities are also interactive, hands-on, challenging, innovative, inclusive, applicable to real-life, and shall promote cultural awareness and national identity.

12. Roles and Responsibilities

12.1 Curriculum Coordinator

The role of the curriculum coordinator is to:

- Coach and lead subject coordinators to effectively implement and monitor all aspects of the curriculum.
- Collaborate the design and guide the implementation of a comprehensive K-12 curriculum that includes academic standards, intervention classes, tutorial classes, activities, projects and others.
- Coach teachers in the effective implementation of the school program, curriculum and learning strategies, and monitor and observe teachers on their use of these strategies.
- Assist and advise in the development of the curriculum elements such as assessment, relevant resources, lesson plans and others.
- Work with the head of section and other staff to ensure that the school has high-quality, in-service professional development.

⁸ KHDA and NEASC: KHDA requirements, p.12

- Support the on-going implementation of the school's assessment program, including: collecting and analyzing of student achievement data; leading teachers and staff in the analysis of student performance on formative and summative assessments in order to adjust curriculum and instruction to meet student needs; and coordinating and administering of assessments, including applied standard exams and school summative and formative assessments.
- Record all comments from teachers about the curriculum, analyze the data and integrate it into the program wherever applicable during the annual review.
- Recommend and deploy all best practices according to the latest trends wherever applicable in the curriculum.

12.2 Subject Coordinator

The role of the subject coordinator is to:

- Review the curriculum frameworks (MA) for the subject.
- Ensure that there is full coverage of curriculum overviews according to the pace outlined in the scope and sequence.
- Monitor teacher preparation and lesson implementation.
- Provide a strategic improvement plan for the subject.
- Support and offer advice to teachers on issues related to the subject.
- Stay up to date with international developments in their subject at both local and international level.
- Recommend efficient resources to support the delivery of content standards for the subject.
- Plan for improvement in teaching pedagogies, learning styles and assessment tools.
- Apply research and data to improve the content, sequence, and outcomes of the teaching-learning process.
- Work with the appropriate staff to develop, maintain and revise curriculum documents based on systematic review and analysis.
- Ensure the use of technology in the teaching-learning process.
- Collaborate with head of section to achieve the premise of the curriculum.
- Communicate regularly with head of sections, teachers and staff to share the instructional plans.
- Plan, implement and evaluate instructional programs with teachers, including learning objectives, instructional strategies, and assessment techniques.
- Involve teachers in evaluating and selecting instructional materials to meet student learning needs.

- Obtain and use evaluative findings (including student achievement data) to examine curriculum and instruction program effectiveness.
- Observe teacher performance to ensure effectiveness in curriculum implementation.
- Coordinate resources/textbook selections for the program for grades K-12, making available new texts, teaching materials, journals, and research findings.

12.3 Teacher

The role of the teacher is to:

- Demonstrate commitment to the well-being and development of all students.
- Be dedicated in their efforts to teach and support student learning and achievement.
- Teach all students equitably and with respect.
- Provide an environment for learning that encourages students to be problem solvers, decisions makers, lifelong learners, and contributing members of a changing society.
- Master profound knowledge of subject matter, the curriculum, and education-related papers.
- Identify variety of effective teaching and assessment practices.
- Use a variety of effective classroom management strategies and techniques.
- Determine how students learn and the factors that influence learning and achievement.
- Use their professional knowledge and understanding of students, curriculum, teaching practices, and classroom management strategies to promote the learning and achievement of their students.
- Communicate effectively with students, parents, and colleagues.
- Conduct ongoing assessment of students' progress, evaluate their achievement, and report results to students and parents regularly.
- Adapt and refine their teaching practices through continuous learning and reflection, using a variety of sources and resources.
- Use appropriate technology in their teaching practice and related professional responsibilities.
- Collaborate with other teachers and school colleagues to create and sustain learning communities in their classrooms and in their schools.
- Work with other professionals, parents, and researchers of the community to enhance student learning, student achievement, and school programs.

- Engage in ongoing professional learning and apply it to improve their teaching practices.

13. Monitoring and Review

The senior leadership team (SLT) monitors the progression, continuity and effectiveness of the curriculum. The curriculum coordinator and subject coordinators are responsible for monitoring the way the school curriculum is implemented. The curriculum coordinator liaises with subject coordinators to monitor the teaching of these subjects. The teacher is responsible for the day to day implementation of the curriculum. Subject coordinators monitor planning and ensure that all classes are taught the full requirements of the curriculum. All stakeholders are involved in the process of selecting resources, storing and managing them.

Intended curriculum is reviewed and amended according to modifications made by UAE, MOE and Massachusetts state standards. Implemented curriculum is reviewed continuously based on student performance in internal/external assessments, class observations, and feedback from stakeholders. All documents and resources are reviewed annually by curriculum coordinator and subject coordinators.

The purpose of this review is to ensure that:

- Curriculum overviews align to the curriculum frameworks by MA and MOE and meet the requirements for external examinations and school priorities.
- There is consistency of provision within the department.
- The individual needs of students are met.
- The department priorities are aligned with school improvement plan (SIP).

14. Definition of Terms

Attained curriculum: represents “what it is that students have learned and what they think about learning these subjects” (Math and Science)⁹. It is the “content actually learned by students.”¹⁰

Continuity: with respect to curriculum provision, the characteristic of uninterrupted and increasing challenges to students, as they grow older¹¹

⁹ Mullis, I. and Martin, M. (2013) TIMSS 2015 Assessment Frameworks., p. 4. Retrieved from http://timss.bc.edu/timss2015/downloads/T15_Frameworks_Full_Book.pdf

¹⁰ Marzano, R. (2003). What Works in Schools: Translating Research into Action, p. 23. Retrieved from https://books.google.ae/books?id=MVyhsp10SgC&pg=PA22&source=gbs_toc_r&cad=3#v=onepage&q=CURRICULUM&f=false

¹¹ UAE School Inspection Framework 2015-2016, p. 122

Curriculum: everything a school deliberately organizes for students to experience¹²

Elective: A non-required course a student can elect or choose to take from several options¹³

Implemented curriculum: represents “what is actually taught in classrooms, the characteristics of those teaching it, and how it is taught.¹⁴” It is the “content actually delivered by the teacher.¹⁵” It is the “content specified by the state, district, or school to be addressed in a particular course or at a particular grade level.¹⁶”

Inclusion: access, support for learning and equal opportunities for all students, regardless of age, gender, ethnicity, ability or background¹⁷

Intended curriculum: represents the “mathematics and science that students are expected to learn as defined in countries’ curriculum policies and publications and how the educational system should be organized to facilitate this learning.¹⁸”

Scope and Sequence: It is the map for the curriculum. Scope is defined as “a clearly stated set of K-12 learning objectives that reflects local, state, and national expectations. Sequence is the order in which those objectives are taught.” (Nichols, Shidaker, Johnson, & Singer, 2006)

15. Documents Related to this Policy:

The curriculum policy should be read in conjunction with other policies as detailed below:

- Teaching and Learning policy
- Assessment Policy
- Inclusion Policy

¹² UAE School Inspection Framework 2015-2016, p. 123

¹³ UAE School Inspection Framework 2015-2016, p. 123

¹⁴ Mullis, I. and Martin, M. (2013) TIMSS 2015 Assessment Frameworks., p. 4. Retrieved from http://timss.bc.edu/timss2015/downloads/T15_Frameworks_Full_Book.pdf

¹⁵ Marzano, R. (2003). What Works in Schools: Translating Research into Action, p. 23. Retrieved from https://books.google.ae/books?id=MVyhsp10SIgC&pg=PA22&source=gbs_toc_r&cad=3#v=onepage&q=CURRICULUM&f=false

¹⁶ Marzano, R. (2003). What Works in Schools: Translating Research into Action, p. 23. Retrieved from https://books.google.ae/books?id=MVyhsp10SIgC&pg=PA22&source=gbs_toc_r&cad=3#v=onepage&q=CURRICULUM&f=false

¹⁷ UAE School Inspection Framework 2015-2016, p. 124

¹⁸ Mullis, I. and Martin, M. (2013) TIMSS 2015 Assessment Frameworks., p. 4. Retrieved from http://timss.bc.edu/timss2015/downloads/T15_Frameworks_Full_Book.pdf