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Curriculum Policy



Al Mawakeb School

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1. Introduction

The curriculum we offer reflects our schools' Vision, Mission, and commitment to personal development and academic excellence. Its structure and content cater for the cultural and social sensitivities of the diverse population of our schools. It is language-rich, student-centered, skills-driven, outcomes-focused, and intended to promote intellectual curiosity, critical thinking, creativity, innovation, independent thinking, self-directed and lifelong learning.

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

2. Rationale

This policy is developed so that we are able to create a curriculum that is relevant, focused, balanced, and 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 moral, mental, cultural, spiritual, 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 fine arts 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 which learners will be able to use 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 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, while focusing on the wellbeing of students.

5. Values

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

- We value the **culture of the UAE**. 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 Massachusetts¹ (U.S. curriculum) state standards. Our Social Studies, Arabic Language, and Islamic Education² curricula, however, are adopted 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
- 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.

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.

- 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. It includes history, civics, geography, sociology, economics, and information literacy.
- French Language is offered as a third language for Pre-KG through G12.
- Physical Education curriculum is offered from Pre-KG 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.
- Art program allows students to develop their knowledge of the elements of art (line, shape, form, texture, space, colour, and value) and some principles of design (movement, proportion, and contrast)

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

	Years	Credits
		AMS
English	4 Years	4
Arabic	4 Years	4
Sciences – General Science, Biology, Chemistry, Physics	4 Years	4
Math – Algebra, Geometry, Pre-Calculus, Calculus or Trigonometry	4 Years	4
Social Studies & Moral Education	4 Years	2
Islamic Education (Required for Muslims)	4 Years	2
French	4 Years	2
Physical Education	4 Years	2
Visual / Performing Arts	1 Year	0.5
Electives	4 Years	3.5
Total		28

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 learners to achieve their optimum potential. Our Extracurricular Activities (ECA) program helps learners develop and become responsible citizens,

⁴ KHDA and NEASC: KHDA requirements, p. 15

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 the state of Massachusetts. All students have the opportunity to learn and to make progress, including students of determination, English language learners, 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 a mixed approach in 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 the 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 the progression of learning outcomes, instructional plans, and assessment types. The curriculum mapping ensures clear alignment between the 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 of determination 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 schools, Professional Learning Communities (PLCs), department meetings, conferences, seminars, observations, webinars, and workshops.

⁵ KHDA and NEASC: KHDA requirements, p.12

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

To ensure a 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 the curriculum and are treated fairly regardless of social, personal or academic background. Our curriculum promotes the 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 and the Dubai Inclusive Education Policy Framework (2017). The curriculum is modified based on individual identified requirements to cater for the students of determination. 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.

9. Enhancement, Enterprise and Innovation

A diverse set of learning opportunities are provided to promote enterprise, innovation, entrepreneurship, creativity, and local as well as global awareness. Problem-based, inquiry-based and project-based learning

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

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 an 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/Director of Learning

The role of the curriculum coordinator is to:

- Coach and lead subject coordinators to effectively implement and monitor all aspects of the curriculum.
- Collaborate with other staff in designing a comprehensive K-12 curriculum that includes academic standards, intervention classes, tutorial classes, activities, projects, and others.
- Guide the implementation of the designed curriculum.
- 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.
- Work with the Heads of Sections and other staff to ensure that the school has high-quality, in-service professional development.
- 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

⁸ KHDA and NEASC: KHDA requirements, p.12

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 framework for the respective 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 the local and international levels.
- 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 and learning process.
- Collaborate with Heads of Sections to achieve the premise of the curriculum.
- Communicate regularly with Heads 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 students' 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 PreK-G12, making available new texts, teaching materials, journals, and research findings.

12.3 Teacher

The role of the teacher is to:

- Master profound knowledge of subject matter, the curriculum, and education-related papers.
- Follow all the guidelines and plans set in the curriculum documents.
- Use their professional knowledge and understanding of students, curriculum, teaching practices, and classroom management strategies to promote the learning and achievement of their students.
- Participate in the process of curriculum review.
- 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.
- Engage in ongoing professional learning and apply it to improve their teaching practices.

13. Monitoring and Review

The Curriculum Coordinator/~~Director of Learning~~ 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/Director of Learning 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. Curriculum Modification for Distance Learning:

The school shall create, when needed, a system that fully prepares teachers to continue their standards-based curriculum during distance learning on schedule and support them to do that.

14.1 Curriculum modification:

- The course structure in DL shall be common among subjects and shall allow for students to access all of the critical elements required for student success and well-being during this transitional time.
- Learning objectives in the form of I Can statements (adapted from the live classroom setting) shall be prominently placed on each teacher's Learn Online page in order to keep students aware of the criteria for success.
- We shall incorporate reflections on the I Can statements in order to gather information about student understanding.
- We shall mandate the use of prerecorded lessons (presentations) to accommodate those students who cannot attend the live sessions and those who would like to revisit the information at their leisure. Recorded presentations shall be abbreviated and the pace slowed in order to accommodate the students as we recognize the challenges associated with distance learning.
- Curriculum driven activities which are engaging, and fun shall be built into the live lessons as well as the prerecorded sessions. Live session chats with students and teacher feedback shall be mandated and monitored by the curriculum team.
- Critical thinking opportunities shall be incorporated into the weekly discussion board to engage students beyond the content delivered in class.
- We shall mandate an increase in formative assessment in order to inspire student engagement and to provide more information about how the students will be learning in this new environment. Naturally, there will be an increase in digital resources to both engage students and to assess students to inform instruction (quizziz, kahoot, publisher resources etc.).
- All assessments and assignments in the core subject areas shall be based on a common schedule and shall be reduced to 1 assignment

(completed during the live session with the support of the teacher) and 1 assessment (which takes 10 min or less) per week.

- The curriculum team shall frequently adjust and update the curriculum scope and sequence for this spring. Overall, the pace shall be slow to re-prioritize the standards.
- Weekly updates from teachers on the curriculum pacing shall be mandated and as the situation continues to evolve, we shall remain flexible in addressing the needs of the students, teachers and community.
- Because everything is digital, teachers will be better able to share resources with students.
- Teachers will be able to share differentiated resources more regularly and flexibly because they just need to be uploaded instead of having to worry about printing logistics.

15. 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

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

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=MVyhsp10SIgC&pg=PA22&source=gbs_toc_r&cad=3#v=onepage&q=CURRICULUM&f=false

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

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

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 learning¹⁸”

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)

¹⁷UAE 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

Revision History:

Revision	Date	Description of changes	Requested By
0	20/06/2017	Initial Release	CAO
1	19/01/2019	General review, added feedback of Curriculum Coordinator and Director of Learning.	School Principal
2	01/10/2020	Included a section titled "Curriculum modification for Distance Learning"	E&C
3	24/10/2022	General review and editing	School Principal