Teaching and Learning Policy 2026–2027

GEMS Winchester School Fujairah · Providing world class British education and experiences for all

Policy version 2026–2027 · Next review due July 2027

Name of policy	WSF Teaching and Learning Policy
Approved by	Principal
Date approved	August 2026
Date of review	July 2027
Replacing policy	Teaching and Learning Policy 25-26

Statement of Intent

> **At GEMS Winchester School Fujairah, we believe that learning is the process by which students acquire knowledge, apply understanding, develop skills, and build the attitudes required to thrive in the modern world. Teaching and Learning are at the heart of our mission: to provide every learner with a high-quality, inclusive, and future-focused education.**

This policy reflects our commitment to consistently excellent instructional practice, aligned to our shared framework of Teach Like a GEM (TLAG).

Our aim is for all lessons to be stimulating, purposeful, and rooted in evidence-informed pedagogy. We expect all staff to model high expectations, support and challenge all learners, and cultivate the habits of lifelong learning through responsive, engaging classroom practice.

WSF Vision for Teaching and Learning

At WSF, we strive to:

- Embed TLAG lesson essentials consistently across all phases (Phase 1: KG1–KG2, Phase 2: Grades 1–5, Phase 3: Grades 6–10 and Phase 4: Grades 11–12)
- Foster confident, curious learners who reflect, question, and connect ideas across disciplines
- Ensure learning is inclusive, well-adapted, and responsive to student needs, including EAL and SoD
- Deliver a curriculum that promotes deep knowledge, high challenge, and meaningful application

This vision aligns with the WSF School Development Plan, GEMS core values, and the wider goals of UAE national frameworks (MOE).

TLAG: Our Whole-School Framework

Since 2025–2026, Teach Like a GEM (TLAG) has been the expected pedagogical framework used in all lessons. TLAG defines what great teaching looks like and offers consistent strategies across classrooms.

The 6 TLAG Lesson Essentials

Every lesson must show clear evidence of the following:

1 **Do Now** – Retrieval-based starter to activate prior knowledge

2 **Learning Outcomes** – Clear, measurable, and aligned to curriculum goals

3. **To Know (Knowledge Components)** – Specific declarative knowledge students must acquire
4. **I Do, We Do, You Do** – Structured gradual release of responsibility
5. **Affirmative Checking** – Frequent checks for understanding, for example through mini whiteboards and hinge questions, and correction of misconceptions
6. **Exit Ticket** – Final task to assess understanding and inform next steps

These strategies are directly quality assured through the WSF QA Cycle and supported through ongoing TLAG Practice Clinics, weekly instructional coaching, and formative drop-ins.

Expectations for Effective Teaching

All WSF teachers must:

- Plan and deliver lessons using codified TLAG strategies, following agreed terminology and sequence to ensure instructional consistency.
- Clearly communicate Learning Outcomes and Knowledge Components in student-friendly language.
- Use data (CAT4, GL, NGRT, formative) to group students and to adapt teaching responsively, ensuring appropriate challenge and support for all learners, including EAL, SoD and G&T.
- Embed verbal feedback and affirmative checking throughout the lesson, using Exit Tickets, hinge questions and frequent checks for understanding to inform instruction and address misconceptions.
- Use the I Do, We Do, You Do model to scaffold thinking and promote independence, supported by high-quality modelling and guided practice.
- Promote academic language and oracy through structured TLAG routines such as Turn and Talk and Think-Pair-Share, supported by talking stems in the curriculum maps, and use questioning routines such as Cold Call to check understanding and extend thinking.
- Promote reading across all subjects as the Golden Thread of school improvement.
- Give feedback in line with the WSF Marking and Feedback Policy.
- Reinforce the school's Be A GEM expectations by creating purposeful, respectful, and inclusive learning environments.
- Participate fully in professional development, practice clinics, and coaching linked to TLAG focus areas, engaging with StepLab to reflect and refine practice.

Student Expectations

Learners at WSF are expected to:

- Take responsibility for their learning and engage actively in every lesson.
- Demonstrate Be A GEM behaviours consistently across the school day, following shared routines such as "Ready to Learn" in lessons, "Quickly and Quietly" during transitions, and "Kind and Courteous" during social times.
- Use feedback to improve and reflect regularly on their progress and understanding.
- Collaborate respectfully, supporting the learning of others while maintaining high personal expectations.
- Follow the Read Like a GEM framework to develop reading fluency, comprehension, and vocabulary—reading regularly and purposefully both in and out of lessons.

Teaching Assistant (TA) Expectations

Teaching Assistants support learning by:

- Scaffolding tasks based on teacher direction and student needs
- Supporting EAL and SoD learners with Widgit visuals, sentence starters, and manipulatives
- Providing verbal feedback and modelling independent work routines
- Planning with the class teacher and the inclusion team so that support is matched to each student's needs
- Promoting independence, not dependency

The WSF QA and Coaching Framework

Teaching quality is supported and developed through the WSF Teaching & Learning QA Cycle, which includes:

- Formal Observations using the WSF T&L Rubric (aligned to MOE and TLAG expectations)
- Joint observations by senior and middle leaders to moderate judgements
- Learning Walks, Book Reviews, Planning Scrutiny and intervention reviews
- Student Voice interviews
- Weekly Drop-Ins logged in StepLab
- TLAG Practice Clinics (weekly CPD sessions with deliberate rehearsal)
- Instructional Coaching aligned to TLAG priorities and staff needs
- Frequent observations, timely feedback and targeted mentoring for new staff

Evidence is aligned to the UAE Teacher Standards. Findings from QA are used to refine PD priorities, coaching plans, and instructional focus across the school.

Planning Expectations

All planning at WSF must:

- Be aligned to the curriculum maps and schemes of work
- Include TLAG-aligned Learning Outcomes and To Know statements
- Identify and apply adaptive strategies for EAL, SoD and G&T learners
- Include You Do tasks planned in Expected, Working Above and Greater Depth tiers, with scaffolds where needed
- Demonstrate responsive, annotated thinking based on in-class evidence
- Be owned by the teacher and updated in real time to reflect pupil needs

Inclusive and Adaptive Practice

WSF embraces an inclusive ethos. Adaptive teaching is a non-negotiable:

- All lessons must show how teachers are meeting the needs of EAL, SoD, and G&T learners
- Teachers move students, including those identified as G&T, on to Greater Depth tasks sooner, based on in-class evidence
- Widgit visuals, pre-teaching of vocabulary, and scaffolds (e.g., sentence frames, manipulatives) must be embedded where appropriate
- Tasks are challenging and inclusive; support is provided through scaffolding, not simplification

Learning Environment

Classrooms at WSF should:

- Display Learning Outcomes and knowledge-rich visuals relevant to current units
- Display the Be A GEM expectations prominently, supporting the whole-school culture of excellence, kindness, and responsibility
- Embed Be A GEM visuals that remind students of how to behave, learn, and contribute as part of the school community
- Include TLAG displays and visuals that promote memory and metacognition
- Be calm, purposeful, and organised to maximise time on task
- Showcase student work with high expectations for quality and presentation

Professional Development and PG&E

All staff are expected to engage in:

- Weekly TLAG Practice Clinics
- Coaching cycles with clear goals set via StepLab
- Observational learning (e.g., peer visits, collaborative planning)
- CPD aligned to personal development goals and the school's SDP
- Formal PG&E processes via BlueSky to track goals and outcomes

Monitoring, Evaluation and Improvement

The impact of teaching is evaluated through:

- The QA Cycle, which triangulates evidence from observation, planning, books, student voice, and data
- Department self-evaluations and improvement planning
- Leadership line management meetings
- Coaching and PG&E reviews
- Termly parent surveys and feedback loops

All QA outcomes are summarised in a RAG-rated report to drive targeted improvement.

Performance Improvement Plans (PIPs)

- Teachers identified as underperforming — despite support through coaching, drop-ins, and QA — will be placed on a Performance Improvement Plan (PIP).
- A PIP provides a structured and time-bound programme focused on improving specific areas of teaching and learning.
- The plan includes clearly defined targets, prescribed action steps, additional support such as mentoring or modelling, and regular check-ins with the line manager or member of SLT.
- PIPs will be co-developed by the teacher and their line manager and monitored closely over the review period.
- The purpose is to provide every opportunity for growth and improvement, in line with WSF expectations.
- If there is insufficient improvement during the PIP, the case may be escalated in line with HR policy and GEMS contractual procedures.

Alignment to Frameworks

This policy is aligned with:

- TLAG as the instructional framework for all lessons
- MOE Inspection Framework expectations and the UAE Teacher Standards
- The WSF Marking and Feedback Policy
- Internal WSF QA and School Development Plan 2026–27
- GEMS Education standards for excellence

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