



POL/INCLUSION :

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Approved By:	Sydney Atkins Principal

1. Introduction

GEMS Modern Academy is an IB Continuum School with English as the language of instruction. It also offers the CISCE curriculum from Grade 6 to Grade 12. In line with the mission of the school, students are nurtured and encouraged to achieve their ultimate potential, by creating an all-inclusive, student- focused learning environment and providing opportunities for enrichment in the fields of academics, sports and fine arts.

At GEMS Modern Academy, we offer a comprehensive range of support services to help students overcome challenges and maximize their fullest potential. Our approach goes beyond academics to promote the holistic development of every learner, supporting their emotional, social, and physical well-being. We are committed to creating a neuro-affirming environment that embraces the diverse needs of all students, ensuring a positive, enriching, and empowering school experience for everyone.

2. Purpose

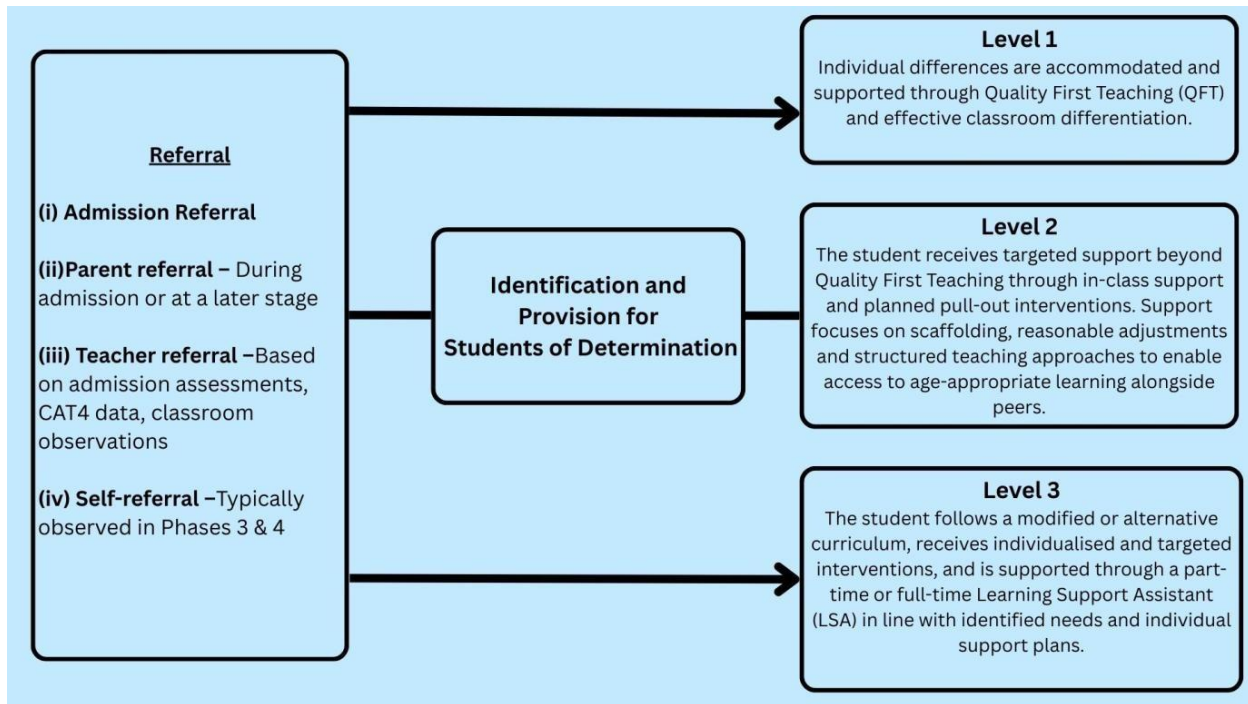
To ensure that every student is empowered to work towards their full potential in an environment where they are supported, nurtured, and equipped to thrive both academically and personally.

3. Scope

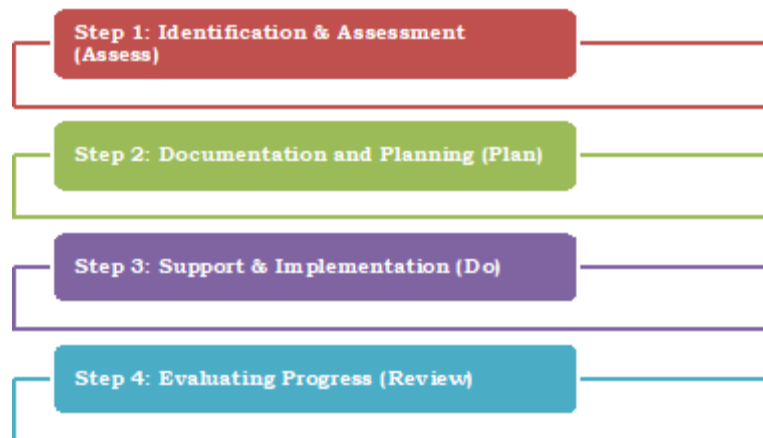
- 3.1. Support and enhance the learning experience of every student by fostering a safe, nurturing, and stimulating environment where every child is valued, and no one is left behind.
- 3.2. Empower students to become active, responsible, and compassionate members of both the school and the wider community.
- 3.3. Identify and remove barriers to learning through the provision of high-quality education, tailored support, and personalized care.
- 3.4. Ensure compliance with Federal Law No. 29/2006 on the Rights of People with Disabilities and Law No. (2) of 2014 regarding the Protection of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in the Emirate of Dubai.
- 3.5. Promote awareness and understanding among all stakeholders regarding the diverse needs of students of determination, encouraging a culture of empathy, respect, and inclusion.
- 3.6. To identify barriers to learning early and implement appropriate, targeted support that meets each student's individual learning needs.
- 3.7. To facilitate access to the curriculum through differentiated planning by classroom teachers, the Inclusion Department, and support staff, as needed.
- 3.8. To offer a bespoke curriculum tailored to individual needs for students with significant cognitive delays, including exploring external curriculum options when appropriate.
- 3.9. To design and implement modified curricula for students with learning challenges, ensuring improved accessibility and engagement with learning content.
- 3.10. To work collaboratively with teachers and parents in setting, reviewing, and monitoring goals outlined in Individualized Education Plans (IEPs), Behaviour Intervention Plans (BIPs), and Learning Support Plans (LSPs).
- 3.11. To promote independence by equipping students with age- and ability-appropriate skills in literacy, numeracy, social independence, resilience, and confidence.
- 3.12. To foster strong, collaborative partnerships among all stakeholders, teachers, support staff, parents, and students—to holistically support each student's academic and emotional well-being.
- 3.13. To ensure student voice is actively included in the planning and decision-making processes that impact their learning journey.
- 3.14. To maintain an open-door policy that encourages communication and support for students, parents, and staff.
- 3.15. To collaborate with external agencies, where appropriate, to enhance support and provision for students of determination.

4. Policy Statements

Graduated Response – Identification and Support Pathway



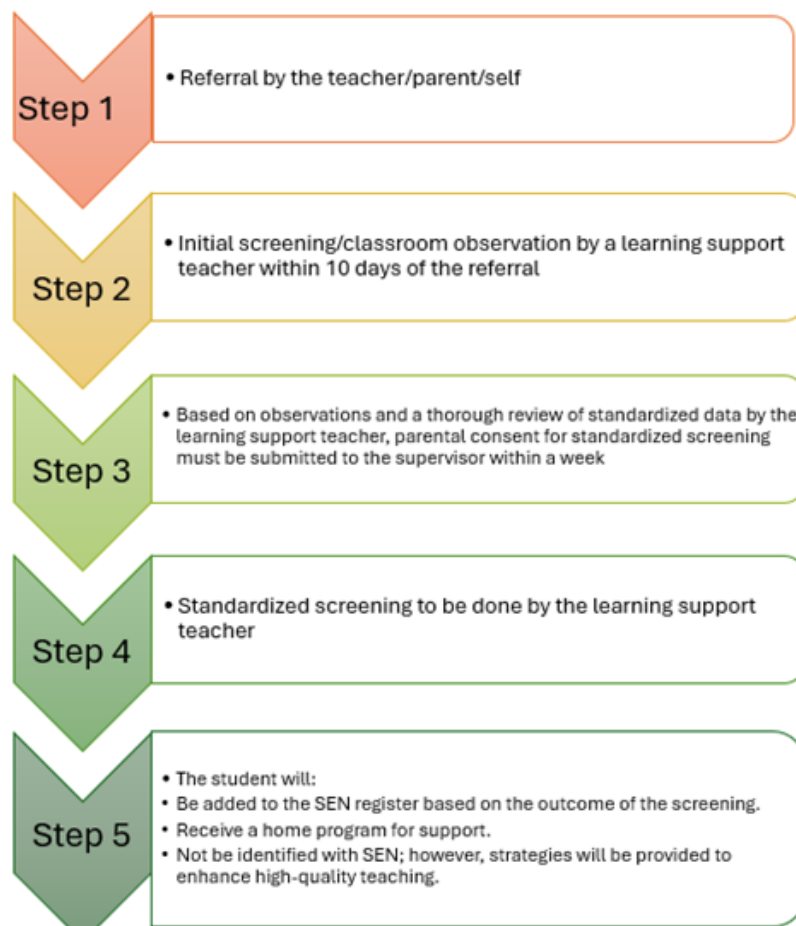
Inclusion Support Process



4.1. Step 1: Identification and Assessment (Assess)

4.1.1. Referral Sources: Students may be referred to by teachers, supervisors, or parents.

- 4.1.2. Screening Criteria: Students who score below 85 in the CAT4 assessment or consistently underperforming in academic tests are further screened using standardized screening tools.
- 4.1.3. New admissions: All new students (Grades 1–12) take the CAT4 assessment during the admission process. Those scoring below 85 in at least two batteries are flagged for further screening. The Inclusion Team may conduct informal or standardized assessments and meet with parents to design an early intervention plan, even before the student begins formal schooling. The school follows the **Social Model of Disability**, which means that admission is not dependent on a formal medical or psychological diagnosis which is in liaison with Directives and Guidelines for Inclusive Education for students with special needs are admitted, provided the school has the capacity to support them. Previous school records are reviewed, where available, to better understand the student's learning profile and needs.
- 4.1.4. Referral process (Illustration below):
- A referral form is completed by the teacher in consultation with the supervisor. The form is easily accessible and linked to Special Educators' email signatures.
 - Classroom observation is conducted within 10 working days of the referral submission.
 - Strategies may be suggested immediately, or further screening may be initiated.
 - Parental consent is obtained before administering any standardized screening tools.
 - Students also initiate self-referrals, especially in senior school.





- 4.2. **Step 2: Documentation and Planning (Plan)**
- 4.2.1. A support plan (IEP, LSP, IAP, or BIP) is developed in collaboration with the teacher and parents within six weeks of identification.
- 4.2.2. The plan is shared with relevant teachers and members of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT).
- 4.3. **Step 3: Support & Implementation (Do)** : GEMS Modern Academy is committed to providing a supportive and inclusive learning environment for students with diverse learning needs. The following provisions will be implemented based on individual requirements and professional recommendations:
- 4.3.1. The Inclusion Team conducts orientation sessions for teachers and peers to build awareness and understanding of students' needs.
- 4.3.2. **Peer & Mentor Support:**
- Buddy systems may be established in class for social and academic integration.
 - Senior students (via TSIP/CAS) may serve as peer mentors for students with learning challenges.
- 4.3.3. **In-Class support**
- Teachers may provide small group instruction to reinforce key concepts.
 - Parent or alumni volunteers may assist under the supervision of the Learning Support Team.
 - Learning Support Assistants (LSAs) may provide individualized, or part-time in-class support based on the recommendations of Special Educators or Counsellors. Learning Support (LSAs) may be assigned to students under the following conditions:
 - If the student of determination has a formal diagnosis which indicates complex needs and/ or a high level of behaviour management concerns.
 - If the student of determination does not have a formal diagnosis yet but the nature of behaviour concerns is sufficiently intense to require the support of a LSA.
 - Academic or Behaviour management techniques suggested by the school team, do not effectively address the needs of the student of determination.
 - Structured support will be provided to gradually develop students' independent learning skills.
- 4.3.4. **Curriculum and Assessment Modifications Policy**
- Modifications to the curriculum and assessments will be implemented as needed to support individual learning needs.



- b. For students intending to undertake E-assessments in the MYP or ICSE Board exams, the school typically does not recommend curriculum modifications beyond Grade 7
 - c. Students on alternative curricula will continue to receive appropriate modifications, with an emphasis on developing functional and life skills as outlined in their individualized learning plans.
 - d. All provisions and modifications are subject to regular review, guided by the students' progress and professional recommendations.
- 4.3.5. **Specialized Support Sessions:** Special Educators may provide push-in or pull-out support, with a maximum of three sessions per week, depending on student needs and available resources.
- 4.4. **Policy on assessment and Educational Support:** Where a student demonstrates persistent learning barriers despite targeted intervention, the school may recommend a formal psychoeducational or specialist assessment to clarify the nature and extent of the student's needs.
- Referrals for assessment may:
- a. Be initiated by the school in consultation with parents, or
 - b. Be recommended to parents where further diagnostic clarity is required to inform provision planning.

Learning support services are not dependent on a formal diagnosis. Support may be provided based on observed needs, professional judgement and evidence gathered through classroom monitoring and intervention review. However, from Grade 6 onwards, formal assessment documentation is required for the implementation of curriculum-related concessions and examination access arrangements in line with KHDA and examination boards regulations.

Formal assessment findings are used to guide:

- a. Individualized Education Plans (EIPs),
 - b. Targeted intervention planning,
 - c. Reasonable adjustments, and
 - d. Examination accommodations where applicable
- 4.5. **Concessions and Assessment Accommodations**
- Assessment-related concessions may be requested following formal assessment findings and in line with:
- a. International Baccalaureate Organization
 - b. Council for the Indian School Certificate Examinations
 - c. KHDA and Ministry of Education requirements

Accommodations are granted based on documented need and professional recommendations. These may include:





- 4.5.1. Extended Time – Typically 25% additional time (15 minutes per hour). In exceptional cases, up to 50% may be granted where supported by formal documentation.
- 4.5.2. Assistive Technology – Use of computers for written tasks; calculators where permitted; alternative input devices as required.
- 4.5.3. Reader Support – A designated reader may read assessment instructions and questions verbatim, without interpretation.
- 4.5.4. Amanuensis (Scribe) – Where significant motor or writing difficulties exist, a trained scribe may be provided in line with examination board regulations.
- 4.5.5. Language Exemptions – Exemptions from additional language requirements may be considered from Grade 8 onwards, subject to formal documentation and regulatory approval.

All concessions are reviewed periodically to ensure they remain appropriate and proportionate to need.

4.6. **Educational Support and Curriculum Access**

The school is committed to ensuring that all Students of Determination access learning within the common learning environment through a graduated model of support.

Students are first supported through Quality First Teaching (QFT) and scaffolded instruction. Where barriers persist, additional targeted support may be implemented.

4.6.1. **Modified Curriculum**

A modified curriculum may be implemented for students who require adjustments much beyond scaffolded instruction to access learning objectives. Modifications are:

- a. Individualized and documented within an IEP,
- b. Designed to reduce barriers while maintaining meaningful engagement,
- c. Delivered through a structured, tiered approach,
- d. Reviewed regularly with the aim of promoting increasing independence where appropriate.

The intention of curriculum modification is to enable measurable academic progress while supporting readiness for future assessment pathways.

Modifications may be applied after:





- a. Evaluation of current level of functioning against grade-level curriculum standards.
- b. Availability of a formal diagnosis indicating delayed cognitive functioning.
- c. Parental consent for modifications.

4.6.2. **Alternative Curriculum Pathways**

For students with significant cognitive or complex needs, an Alternative Curriculum Pathway may be provided within the inclusive classroom setting. Alternative pathways:

- a. Prioritise functional, life and adaptive skills where appropriate,
- b. Maintain social inclusion within the common learning environment,
- c. Support holistic development (academic, social, emotional and independence skills),
- d. Are formally documented and reviewed in partnership with parents and specialists.

4.6.3. **Additional Accommodations and Adjustments:** Further individualized adjustments may include:

- a. Enlarged print, alternative fonts or adapted worksheets,
- b. Simplified language or clarified assessment instructions,
- c. Reduced written output requirements,
- d. Provision of printed noted or structured templates,
- e. Reduced emphasis on spelling and presentation where the primary assessment focus is content and understanding.

All adjustments are implemented to ensure equitable access without compromising the integrity of assessment standards..

4.7. **Gifted and Talented Provision**

Students identified as gifted and talented may receive differentiated and enriched learning experiences within the classroom and through additional opportunities designed to extend challenge, creativity, critical thinking and leadership.

Provisions may include:

- a. Curriculum extension and enrichment
- b. Inquiry-based projects
- c. Flexible grouping
- d. Leadership opportunities
- e. Participation in competitions, performances and specialized programmes
- f. Student-led initiatives and independent research opportunities

Identification of gifted and talented learners may be informed by teacher observations, assessment data, student portfolios, performance indicators and parent input.

4.8. **Policy on Arabic Language / Second Language Exemption:**



Applications for exemption from Arabic and / or second language study are submitted to the Knowledge and Human Development Authority (KHDA) through the official portal and must comply with current regulatory requirements.

Application for exemption will only be considered under these circumstances:

- 4.8.1. A recent psycho-educational assessment report (within the last 2 years) is shared with the school and clearly indicates exemption from second language and/ or Arabic.
- 4.8.2. The student of determination fails to secure a passing grade in the second language and/ or Arabic for 3 consecutive terms.
Or
- 4.8.3. A student of determination is unable to demonstrate progress from basic to intermediate level even after 3 consecutive terms.

To initiate an Arabic exemption application, the following documentation must be submitted in full:

- 4.8.4. School Letter (Signed by the Principal) – a formal school letter outlining the rationale for the exemption request, including:
 - a. Evidence of identified need
 - b. Summary of interventions provided
 - c. Educational justification for exemption
 - d. Confirmation of parental consent
- 4.8.5. Latest School Report
 - a. Most recent report card reflecting attainment levels across all subjects
 - b. School-based assessment report from the Arabic Department
- 4.8.6. Medical /Specialist Report – a valid and comprehensive assessment report (e.g., psychoeducational, psychological, speech and language, or other relevant specialist documentation) confirming the nature of the student's identified needs.
- 4.8.7. Student Profile and Individual Education Plan (IEP)
 - a. A summary of the students' social and emotional profile
 - b. Current Individual Education Plan (IEP), including documented targets and support strategies
- 4.8.8. Standardized Assessment Data – most recent CAT4 and/or MAP assessment results (teacher version), where applicable.

All required documents must be submitted in full for the application to be reviewed and processed by the school and subsequently forwarded to KHDA. Final approval of exemptions remains at the discretion of KHDA and, where applicable, the Ministry of Education.

4.9. **Step 4: Evaluating Progress (Review)**

The progress of Students of Determination is reviewed through a structured and ongoing monitoring process appropriate to the level of support provided.



- 4.9.1. Level 1 and Level 2 Support - Students receiving Level 1 and Level 2 support are monitored through continuous review of classroom performance, skill-based tracking tools and standard formative and summative assessments conducted throughout and at the end of each academic term. Progress data is analyzed to determine the effectiveness of interventions and to inform any necessary adjustments to support provision.
- 4.9.2. Level 2 Support and Alternative Curriculum Pathways - Students receiving Level 3 support, including those following a modified or alternate curriculum pathway, are evaluated primarily against the individualized targets outlined in their IEP's. Progress is measured in relation to personalized goals, developmental milestones and agreed intervention outcome, with regular review meetings held in partnership with parents and relevant specialists.

Provision levels may be adjusted following review where evidence indicated increased independence, sustained progress or the need for intensified support.

4.10. **Graduated Weaning-Off Support:**

The school implements a Graduated Response Model, through which provision is continuously reviewed and adjusted in line with a student's evolving needs. Support levels are flexible and may be increased, reduced or withdrawn based on sustained evidence of progress and independence. Students receiving academic and/or behavioural intervention are reviewed on an ongoing basis through structured monitoring processes.

- 4.10.1. Annual Review of Inclusion Register Placement – an annual formal review determined a student's continued placement on the Inclusion Register. A student may be considered for graduated reduction or withdrawal of structured support when:
- IEP/IAP/LSP targets are consistently achieved,
 - The student demonstrates sustained independence within the classroom,
 - Additional intervention is no longer required beyond Quality First Teaching (QFT) and reasonable adjustments.

The review process takes into consideration:

- Recommendations from the Inclusion Team
- Quantitative and qualitative assessment data
- Teacher observations and professional feedback
- Classroom engagement and learning behaviours
- Progress against IEP/IAP/LSP targets



- f. Parental input
- g. Student voice and reflections, where appropriate

4.10.2. Post-Withdrawal Monitoring – Following the formal reduction or withdrawal of structured support, the Inclusion Team will continue to monitor the student for a period of one academic year. Monitoring during this period ensures:

- a. Continued access to Quality First Teaching and reasonable adjustments,
- b. Early identification of any re-emerging barriers,
- c. Timely re-engagement of targeted support if required.

All records are securely maintained in accordance with school data protection and KHDA compliance requirements.

4.11. **Safeguarding for Students of Determination**

The school recognizes that Students of Determination may be at increased vulnerability to abuse, neglect, exploitation or social exclusion. Safeguarding their welfare is a shared responsibility across the entire school community.

The Head of Inclusion is a Level 3 Certified Safeguarding DDSL and is the point of contact for any safeguarding concerns related to students of determination.

All staff including teaching staff, learning support assistance, administrative personnel, transport staff and ancillary staff are required to always uphold the school's safeguarding procedures.

The school ensures:

- 4.11.1. Mandatory safeguarding training for all staff including specific awareness of the heightened vulnerability of Students of Determination.
- 4.11.2. Clear reporting procedures in line with the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.
- 4.11.3. Vigilance in recognizing signs and indicators of abuse, neglect, bullying or exploitation.
- 4.11.4. Prompt and appropriate referral to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) where concerns arise.
- 4.11.5. Reasonable adjustments to safeguarding procedures to ensure accessibility for students with communication or cognitive differences.

Safeguarding procedures for students of Determination operate within the framework of the school's overarching Child Protection Policy and in alignment with KHDA regulatory expectations.

Individual risk assessments are completed for students of determination who proceed on trips or take part in external events, trips and activities.

4.12. **Parent Communication and Collaboration:** The school recognises that effective partnership with parents is fundamental to inclusive education and positive student outcomes.

The Inclusion Team is committed to maintaining open, respectful and collaborative communication with parents to support informed decisionmaking and student well-being.

Engagement may take place through both formal and informal channels, including:

- 4.12.1. Scheduled Inclusion Team (Kaizen) review meetings
- 4.12.2. Parent–Teacher Conferences
- 4.12.3. Individual meetings arranged by prior appointment
- 4.12.4. Informal engagement opportunities (e.g., coffee mornings/evenings)
- 4.12.5. Structured progress updates (including PULSE calls, where applicable)

Communication is conducted respectfully and professionally, with the shared objective of supporting the academic, social and emotional development of each student.

5. Responsibilities

5.1. **Principal and Senior Leadership Team (SLT)**

The Principal, Vice Principals, the Director of Student Welfare (Line Manager) and members of the Senior Leadership Team are responsible for overseeing the implementation and monitoring of Learning Support provisions across the school. They ensure that inclusive practices are embedded in school-wide policies and day-to-day operations.

5.2. **Inclusion Governor**

The Inclusion Governor is a member of the Local Advisory Board. As per GEMS Governor expectations, their role includes understanding and upholding the school's and GEMS Education's vision and values; monitoring, advising, and supporting the school on matters of strategy and policy; helping to oversee the school's standards and performance; and providing guidance and support to the school and the principal through informed and constructive counsel.

5.3. **Phase Leaders – SEN**

The school has four Phase Leaders who work collaboratively with class teachers and the SENCO to ensure effective and consistent delivery of targeted interventions within their respective phases. They support the operational planning and execution of inclusion strategies at the classroom level.

5.4. **Inclusion Support Team:** The Inclusion Support Team comprises Learning Support Assistants, Teaching Assistants – SEN, Special Educators, and Counsellors. The team is tasked with the day-to-day execution of learning support provisions, including:

- 5.4.1. Conducting assessments to identify students' learning needs and sharing findings with parents and teachers.



- 5.4.2. Ensuring timely and appropriate intervention strategies both in-class and through withdrawal support.
- 5.4.3. Planning, developing, and evaluating learning support programs to address academic, behavioral, and socio-emotional needs.
- 5.4.4. Collaborating with staff and parents to implement learning goals effectively and consistently.
- 5.4.5. Reinforcing the school's inclusive ethos through awareness campaigns and sensitization initiatives.
- 5.4.6. Liaising with external agencies, as needed, to support students' individual learning requirements.
- 5.4.7. Contributing to the ongoing professional development of staff through training and resource sharing.
- 5.4.8. Coordinating with the Inclusion Council and PODS (Parents of Determined Students) to foster a culture of inclusion, where diversity is embraced, and every student is empowered to thrive.
- 5.5. **Additional Support Provided By:**
 - 5.5.1. Subject Teachers – through differentiated instruction and enhancement classes in their respective subject areas.
 - 5.5.2. Student Mentors – appointed by the SLT or Learning Support Team to provide peer-based academic or social support.
 - 5.5.3. Parent Volunteers – supporting under the guidance of the Learning Support Team to enrich classroom and extracurricular activities.
 - 5.5.4. Learning Support Assistants – offering individualized, part-time or hovering support based on student needs.
 - 5.5.5. External Therapists – External specialists such as speech, behavior, or occupational therapists may work with students who require and would benefit from these interventions within the school setting. While the school provides appropriate space and supervision for such sessions, parents are responsible for arranging and making direct payments to the therapy centers or consultants. Additionally, the school supports parents by offering guidance on accessing therapies and other relevant interventions outside of school, if needed.
 - 5.5.6. Inclusion representatives - Two parents of Students of Determination, who are also members of the Family of Modern (FOM), represent inclusion within the parent governing body. Their involvement ensures that the perspectives and needs of Students of Determination are acknowledged and supported at the school governance level.

6. Definitions

- 6.1. **Students of Determination:** Students of Determination are learners who experience one or more learning barriers and therefore require specific and targeted educational provision, reasonable adjustments and/or additional



support in order to access learning on an equitable basis within the common learning environment.

Identification of Students of Determination focuses on both a learner's strengths and needs, and support is planned to reduce or remove barriers to participation, engagement and progress so that students can learn, develop and contribute meaningfully alongside their peers.

A student is considered to have special educational needs when they experience significantly greater difficulty in learning than most students of the same age, and/or have a disability or specific learning need that affects their ability to access the curriculum, learning environments or facilities ordinarily available to their peers.

- 6.2. **Inclusion:** Inclusion is a continuous, school-wide process of expanding access, participation and achievement for all learners by identifying and removing barriers to learning. Through inclusive practice, all students learn, develop and contribute together within a culture of respect, belonging and high aspiration.
- 6.3. **Barriers to Learning:** Barriers to learning are understood as attitudes, beliefs, practices, or physical and technological obstacles; including the absence of appropriate support that led to the exclusion of a student or restrict their full and equal participation as a valued member of the common learning environment in mainstream schools and classrooms.
- 6.4. **Gifted and Talented Learners:** Gifted and Talented (G&T) learners are students who demonstrate exceptional potential or performance in one or more areas including academic ability, creativity, leadership, visual and performing arts, sports or other specialised domains.
GEMS Modern Academy recognises that these students may require differentiated provision, enrichment, extension, accelerated learning opportunities and personalised pathways in order to remain appropriately challenged and engaged within the common learning environment.
- 6.5. **Inclusion Support Team:** GEMS Modern Academy has a whole school community approach which is led by an Inclusion Support Team that includes the Principal and other members of the Senior Leadership Team, a dedicated Inclusion team, Phase leaders for Students of determination, an Inclusion Champion, an Inclusion Governor, Support Teachers, Learning Support Assistants, students and parents.

