



Secondary Community Handbook 2013-14

WELCOME TO GEMS AMERICAN ACADEMY – ABU DHABI

INTRODUCTION LETTER: DAN KELLER, SUPERINTENDENT/CEO

July 2013

Dear GAA Learning Community,

Welcome to the 2013-2014 school year. Whether you are a parent, a student, or a staff member, we welcome you to our learning community.

Our vision at GEMS American Academy is: *Inspire, Educate, Lead, Innovate*

Our Mission is:

GEMS American Academy provides a rigorous academic program to our international learning community. As a selective international school, our mission is to inspire, educate, lead and innovate. In our GAA learning community we....

- **Inspire** through a well-balanced educational experience that celebrates cultural diversity.
- **Educate** through high academic standards, global values and unique approaches to learning.
- **Lead** through cutting edge learning tools, environments and experiences.
- **Innovate** through creativity, inquiry and a common desire for a better future.

We strive to inspire, educate, lead and innovate within a culture of kindness that promotes success for all.

We have developed this community handbook to help us reach this mission and vision. We hope it is a valuable source of information for all members of our learning community. If you have suggestions for improvement, please let us know.

We look forward to a very successful 2013-2014 school year. Have a great year!

Sincerely,

Dan Keller

Head of School & CEO

INTRODUCTION LETTER: DR TIM FRYER, SECONDARY VP

July 2013

A very warm welcome to GEMS American Academy Secondary School!

We are growing rapidly this year adding Grade 11 for the first time and Grade 12 in 2014-15.

Our diverse and internationally-minded student, parent and teacher populations provide a culturally-rich and exciting learning environment for our whole community.

We offer challenging and robust academic and activities programs that allow students to develop their talents and skills, as well as experiencing personal, social and emotional growth.

Alongside an American High School Diploma, the planned introduction of the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme will ensure that students graduating from GAA can pursue a successful pathway to University and beyond.

Wishing you a wonderful school year!

Tim Fryer
Vice Principal

t.fryer_gaa@gemsedu.com

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GEMS CORE EDUCATIONAL VALUES

World Citizenship

Our students learn about the world and the people in it, developing an awareness of different cultures and countries. By exploring the world, they become socially, culturally, economically and environmentally aware and learn about their responsibilities as world citizens. They learn to adopt a global perspective and understand how they can make a difference in the global community.



Universal Values

Our students develop the values, principles and ethics that are respected, admired and accepted in all cultures around the world. Students learn healthy social attitudes and a spirit of humanity, providing them with the ethical foundation and solid social skills to guide them through life.

Leadership Qualities

Our students practice leadership and build the skills of collaboration and communication. Our academic program builds self-confidence through exploration, experimentation, problem-solving and decision-making. Students learn to work well both independently and with others developing a pre-disposition for action.



Forward Thinking

Our students apply their imagination and creativity when viewing circumstances and offering solutions. Students develop proficiency in the use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) as a powerful learning and communication tool.

IB LEARNER PROFILE

At GAA – Abu Dhabi the IB student strives to be:

The aim of all IB programs is to develop internationally minded people who, recognizing their common humanity and shared guardianship of the planet help to create a better and more peaceful world.

Inquirers:

They develop their natural curiosity. They acquire the skills necessary to conduct inquiry and research and show independence in learning. They actively enjoy learning and this love of learning will be sustained throughout their lives.

Knowledgeable:

They explore concepts, ideas and issues that have local and global significance. In so doing, they acquire in-depth knowledge and develop understanding across a broad and balanced range of disciplines.

Thinkers:

They exercise initiative in applying thinking skills critically and creatively to recognize and approach complex problems, and make reasoned, ethical decisions.

Communicators:

They understand and express ideas and information confidently and creatively in more than one language and in a variety of modes of communication. They work effectively and willingly in collaboration with others.

Principled:

They act with integrity and honesty, with a strong sense of fairness, justice and respect for the dignity of the individual, groups and communities. They take responsibility for their own actions and the consequences that accompany them.

Open-minded:

They understand and appreciate their own cultures and personal histories, and are open to the perspectives, values and traditions of other individuals and communities. They are accustomed to seeking and evaluating a range of points of view, and are willing to grow from the experience.

Caring:

They show empathy, compassion and respect towards the needs and feelings of others. They have a personal commitment to service, and act to make a positive difference to the lives of others and to the environment.

Risk-takers/Courageous:

They approach unfamiliar situations and uncertainty with courage and forethought, and have the independence of spirit to explore new roles, ideas and strategies. They are brave and articulate in defending their beliefs.

Balanced:

They understand the importance of intellectual, physical and emotional balance to achieve personal well-being for themselves and others.

Reflective:

They give thoughtful consideration to their own learning and experience. They are able to assess and understand their strengths and limitations in order to support their learning and personal development.

OVERVIEW OF GAA ABU DHABI

MISSION STATEMENT

Our Mission is:

GEMS American Academy provides a rigorous academic program to our international learning community. As a selective international school, our mission is to inspire, educate, lead and innovate. In our GAA learning community we....

- **Inspire** through a well-balanced educational experience that celebrates cultural diversity.
- **Educate** through high academic standards, global values and unique approaches to learning.
- **Lead** through cutting edge learning tools, environments and experiences.
- **Innovate** through creativity, inquiry and a common desire for a better future.

We strive to inspire, educate, lead and innovate within a culture of kindness that promotes success for all.

GAA ABU DHABI: STATEMENT OF PHILOSOPHY

GAA promotes high standards of scholarship, citizenship and responsibility within a supportive international community. We undertake a student-centered approach to teaching and learning. We rely heavily for our success on teamwork and collaboration among students, teachers and parents. Our goal is for our students to develop, and commit to, the understandings, skills and dispositions of citizenship, leadership, creativity and sustainability.

We offer:

- an American-based curriculum for students aged 3 to 17 within an international context

The success of our program is based on:

- teamwork, collaboration and the broad participation of our community.
- the pool of diverse ideas, experiences and values which our community offers.
- a thorough awareness of educational 'best practices' throughout the world.
- continuous learning and professional development.

We provide:

- each student with the opportunity and support to reach their full potential.
- a kind environment, built on mutual respect and dignified treatment, that encourages self-confidence and the embracing of others whose ideas and experiences differ.

We believe that:

- each student is a unique individual with equal potential to make a positive contribution to our school community.
- it is important to instill an enthusiasm for life-long learning in each student along with the skills and dispositions necessary to prepare them for the challenges and changes which will be faced in their future.

- our students must develop the skills and understandings that will enable them to become responsible, contributing citizens of the global community.
- learning and the GAA experience are improved when parents are actively engaged in the learning of their children.

We support our philosophy through:

- high standards of achievement and performance;
- a developmental, student-centered approach to teaching;
- a comprehensive and varied curriculum aimed at the acquisition of transferable skills and enduring understandings;
- the development of independent learning skills and self-reflection in the learning process;
- constructive feedback for learning;
- nurturing a strong sense of self-esteem, personal integrity and a respectful, caring attitude toward others;
- developing an understanding of, appreciation for and willingness to accept people whose ideas and experiences differ from our own;
- facing problems within a framework of fairness and shared values;
- nurturing a sense of responsibility for our environment.

INTRODUCTION TO THE SECONDARY SCHOOL

Our Secondary School provides a responsive and nurturing environment. This program addresses the unique needs of adolescents and young adults aiming to make learning worthwhile and rewarding. Students learn to take initiative, to think and act with intelligence, to express ideas and feelings in a socially acceptable manner and to accept responsibility for their actions and the consequences of them. We promote honesty and integrity together with developing citizenship and leadership skills.

The Secondary program is based on US and International aims – with a focus on deep understandings and transferrable skills. The core academic program intends to build skills and understandings around literacy, numeracy, creativity and sustainability. This core is supplemented by instruction in Art, Music, Information Technology, World Languages and Physical Education.

THE SCHOOL DAY

SCHOOL HOURS

Grades 6 - 11	7:45 am	-	2:55 pm
After School Activities	3:00 pm	-	5:00 pm

ATTENDANCE

The school day for all grades commences at 7:45am. Dismissal time is 2:55pm. The hours for after school activities vary. Most activities start at 3:00pm and finish at 4:00pm. Some activities conducted off-campus may finish later than this. The school cannot supervise students before 7:30am or after 3:05pm. We request that students are under parental supervision while on school premises before and after these times.

LATE ARRIVAL/EARLY PICK-UP

Students must report to the Secondary Office if they arrive after 7.45 am, where they will be issued with a late-slip to gain entry to class. Parents must phone or email the Secondary Secretary (Mrs. Lynne Brown, l.brown_gaa@gemsedu.com) if their child is going to be late. Three unexcused lates to any class will result in a one-hour after school detention.

Likewise, parents must notify the Secretary by phone or email if their child is going to be absent or needs to leave school early.

Attendance and student participation in learning activities is important; therefore parents are urged to schedule medical, dental and other appointments after school hours or during vacations. Good attendance is essential if the student is to be successful and faculty can best help students learn when students meet this expectation. Failure to be in attendance 90% of scheduled classes at High school may result in loss of academic credit (this includes excused and unexcused absences). Students who have more than 5 absences per class per semester will be placed on attendance probation. Excused absences include school sponsored field trips and illness. If a student is sick, he/she should access Edmodo to see what was assigned. It is the student's responsibility to complete all work he/she has missed.

Planned Absence other than School Holiday

There are times when an absence is unavoidable. In such cases, the parent is responsible for contacting the school. Assignments and examinations often cannot be given in advance and will have to be completed upon the student's return. These absences are included in the 90% attendance policy

Unexcused Absence from Class

If a student skips a class, his/her parents will be informed, the student will meet with the Dean of Students who will take appropriate action.

SCHEDULE

GAA Secondary School follows a rotating eight day schedule with 8 x 40 minute periods per day. Many subjects prefer "doubles" of 80 minute blocks and these will be shown on your child's individual schedules. Passing time of 5 minutes is provided between lessons.

2013-2014 Secondary School Timetable

Start	Stop	Time		Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Day 6	Day 7	Day 8
7:45	7:50	0:05	Attendance								
7:50	8:30	0:40	Period 1	A	I	G	O	E	M	C	K
8:30	8:35	0:05	pass/break								
8:35	9:15	0:40	Period 2	B	J	H	P	F	N	D	L
9:15	9:20	0:05	Pass								
9:20	9:40	0:20	Homeroom/Sunday assembly								
9:40	9:45	0:05	Pass								
9:45	10:25	0:40	Period 3	C	K	A	I	G	O	E	M
10:25	10:30	0:05	Pass/break								
10:30	11:10	0:40	Period 4	D	L	B	J	H	P	F	N
11:10	11:15	0:05	Pass								
11:15	11:55	0:40	Period 5	E	M	C	K	A	I	G	O
11:55	12:00	0:05	Pass/break								
12:00	12:40	0:40	Period 6	F	N	D	L	B	J	H	P
12:40	12:45	0:05	Pass								
12:45	13:05	0:20	A: Lunch B: Recess								
13:05	13:25	0:20	A: Recess B: Lunch								
13:25	13:30	0:05	Pass								
13:30	14:10	0:40	Period 7	G	O	E	M	C	K	A	I
14:10	14:15	0:05	Pass/break								
14:15	14:55	0:40	Period 8	H	P	F	N	D	L	B	J
14:55	15:00	0:05	Dismissal								

HOME TRANSPORTATION

If a student is not using his or her regular home transportation then the homeroom teacher must be informed. If this involves using the school bus, the parent must call transportation to ensure there is space on the bus (please see page 23 for additional information).

HOMEROOM

Homerooms are organized into a mixture of Grades 6, 7 and 8 students and Grades 9, 10 and 11 students according to the four Houses: Lions, Panthers, Pumas and Tigers. There are 24 homerooms in 2013-14. Homeroom serves as a “home base” for students and allows for some time to check in with each student, to address any questions or concerns a student may have and to provide a place for students to obtain school information and announcements. There will be House competitions throughout the year as a means of drawing the school together in a spirit of healthy and positive competition.

LUNCH

Students have the option of bringing lunch from home or purchasing a school meal. The ordering of food from outside establishments is not permitted. We encourage students to eat healthy foods. Menus for each month are posted on the school website. Water is provided for all students, and students are required to bring their own refillable water bottles. Students should bring a healthy snack from home to eat during the morning break. Any food sent to school should be low in sugar and not contain any nuts or nut products. Carbonated and energy drinks are not to be brought to school.

RECESS

Students have scheduled recess times at lunch and depending on scheduled use by PE classes, the soccer pitch and/or tennis courts may be available for play during recess times. All students are expected to play safely and fairly and to be respectful of each other and of any equipment being used.

ASSEMBLIES

Assemblies take place every Sunday during homeroom time in the Auditorium. The purpose is for announcements, student recognition and student performances.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES

In a school such as GAA, the faculty and staff attempt to provide students with many opportunities to develop their particular interests and abilities. This association with students who share the same interests allows for camaraderie that fosters an increased sense of purpose and a feeling of belonging outside of the classroom. Athletics, school government, class organizations and special interest clubs provide hands-on opportunities for students to learn and participate in leadership skills.

All clubs and organizations are expected to participate in a service project each year. Clubs and organizations also sponsor social events at which students develop acceptable social behavior and manners. Student pride and school spirit promote good citizenship that carries over to future community involvement and citizen participation. Students are encouraged to participate in a variety of after school activities and advisors attempt to minimize scheduling conflicts.

EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

The school offers a wide range of activities outside school hours. These range from soccer to newspaper; basketball to origami and many others. Some activities are very popular while others are more selective. The programs offered vary seasonally, as well as from year to year, depending

on supply and demand. A few of the more specialized clubs require a fee but most are provided within the school framework at no extra charge.

The success of each activity depends very much on the enthusiasm and commitment of the student and their parents. Students are encouraged to attend at least one activity per term.

STUDENT AMBASSADORS

Secondary School Ambassadors are a team of students who help to welcome new students while developing their own leadership skills. The nomination process to become an ambassador begins when teachers nominate students who show potential leadership skills and have shown a concern for others. Selected students from the nominations are invited to apply by filling out a short written application. Students are chosen to be a Student Ambassador based on teacher recommendations, the short answer application, and (when needed) an interview. Throughout the year the ambassadors lead other students in community building activities. They lead transition activities for the incoming Grade 6 classes as well as being buddied up with new students entering GAA throughout the year to help ensure they have a smooth transition into our school. The ambassadors represent our student body at school events and address parents during some Middle School initiatives for parents. Also, in addition to representing the Middle School, the ambassadors participate in activities which explore aspects of leadership to help them develop their own leadership styles.

STUDENT COUNCIL

The Secondary School Student Council is dedicated to providing leadership opportunities for students, providing services to the school and community and making the lives of students more enjoyable. The organization serves as a link between students and teachers, organizes social activities and assists the greater school community in various events and activities throughout the year. Students from grades 6-11 are eligible to serve on the Student Council. It is considered a privilege to be selected, and students involved with the student Council are leaders who demonstrate the qualities of exceptional and successful students.

FIELD TRIPS

Students may be asked to participate in educational field trips during the year. Teachers will always request parental permission for their children to take part in such events well in advance.

SCHOOL UNIFORMS REGULATION

DRESS CODE: SECONDARY

COMPULSORY UNIFORM FOR ALL STUDENTS

2013-2014 School Year

DAILY SCHOOL UNIFORM						
Grade	Gender	Tops	Bottoms	Tie	Shoes	Belt
Grades 6 to 11	Boys	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Boys BLUE OXFORD SHIRT SHORT SLEEVE w/ LOGO 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NAVY STRIPE TROUSER FOR BOYS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> STRIPE TIE 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> BLACK LEATHER DRESS SHOES SOCKS- SOLID BLACK, BLUE OR WHITE 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> BLACK LEATHER BELT
	Girls	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Girls BLUE OXFORD SHIRT SHORT SLEEVE w/ LOGO 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NAVY STRIPE TROUSER TAILORED FOR GIRLS, OR NAVY STRIPE SKORTS FOR GIRLS, OR NAVY SKIRT FOR GIRLS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> STRIPE TIE, OR STRIPE GIRLS BOW TIE 		

ACCESSORIES

ACCESSORIES	
REQUIRED	OPTIONAL
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> P.E. BAG with GAA logo BASEBALL CAP with GAA logo Navy Swim Cap (for students with long hair) If students wear sweater over uniform shirt: V – NECK SWEATER WITH LOGO (for Boys) or CARDIGAN SWEATER WITH LOGO (for Girls) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> GAA SWIMMING COSTUME / TRUNK GAA BACK PACK If girls wear LEGGINGS/STOCKINGS/PANTYHOSE/TIGHTS FOR SKORTS OR SKIRTS FOR GIRLS instead of socks, color must be SOLID NAVY BLUE or BLACK.

P.E. UNIFORM GRADES 6 To 11

PHYSICAL EDUCATION UNIFORM				
Grade	When to wear	Tops	Bottoms	Shoes
Grades 6 to 11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students will wear regular school uniform to school every day. At the beginning of PE class, they will change into this PE uniform. At the end of class, they will change back into regular school uniform. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SKY BLUE POLO Shirt with GAA logo 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NAVY MICRO SHORTS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> QUALITY ATHLETIC SHOES (NOT UNIFORM) WHITE SPORT SOCKS

GAA may not require uniforms whilst participating in after or out of school activities or on designated special dress days. However, students should be properly dressed in a manner that is not offensive to our host country. The following rules will apply:

- No tight clothes.
- No spaghetti strap shirts.
- No exposed mid-riff.
- No offensive logos or expressions on clothing.

The Secondary Administration may require a student to return home for the purpose of changing clothing. Our policy is:

Wear clothing that is respectful to one's self as well as to others.

Personal Presentation:

During school hours and while in school uniform the following rules apply:

- No excessive make up is allowed.
- Students with pierced ears may wear one pair of studs or tiny hoop earrings.
- Except for tasteful natural color highlights, students are not allowed to dye their hair.
- No visible body piercing.
- Non-regulation outerwear may not be worn in school; it should be kept in lockers

CURRICULUM

OVERVIEW

In GAA, courses in grades 6-12 are in three different categories:

1. GAA Core Courses
2. ADEC Required Courses
3. GAA Elective Courses

Each student's program is made up of a combination of these different categories of courses.

Abu Dhabi Education Council (ADEC) requirements vary depending upon a child's nationality and religion. Our school uses information provided by parents during the school registration process. Requirements for Arabic Language, Islamic Studies and UAE Social Studies courses vary according to each student's registered nationality and religion. In order to comply with ADEC regulations, every student has specific course requirements according to one of the following four categories:

- Group 1 – Arab Muslim
- Group 2 – Arab Non-Muslim
- Group 3 – Non-Arab Muslim
- Group 4 – Non-Arab Non-Muslim

HOMEWORK

Students will receive regular but manageable amounts of homework which will be given in class and/or posted on Edmodo. Students will also be provided with an agenda in which they can record their homework.

ASSESSMENT

ASSESSMENT PHILOSOPHY

GAA assessment beliefs and practices provide a positive, continuous and supportive mechanism that promotes and improves student learning and achievement, guides instruction and practice and evaluates both program and instructional effectiveness.

GRADING PROCEDURES

Semester examinations are taken by all students in Grades 9 through 11. Time is set aside at the end of the first and second semester for semester examinations or appropriate summary assessments. A special exam schedule with lengthened exam periods is created for these exams. Students will take no more than two exams per day. First semester exams will cover all the material taught in the first semester; second semester examinations at the end of the year will cover all second semester material and may cover concepts, topics and information from the entire year's work. The final course grade will be calculated as S1 + S2 divided by 2.

Semester grades are determined using the following formula:

- First semester work = 80%
- First semester examination = 20%
- First semester grade = 100%
- Second semester work = 80%
- Second semester examination = 20%
- Second Semester grade = 100%

GRADING SYSTEMS 6-12 & GRADE POINT AVERAGE SCALE 9-12

Letter grades (A to F) are awarded for all courses.

A standard 4.0 grading scale conversion is used to convert letter grades to a grade point average. The following grading scale shows the letter grade and grade point average (GPA) equivalent; as well as the percentage on a 100 scale.

Grades	Grades 6-12			
Description	Grades	GPA	GAA % range	Academic Standing
Exceptional expectation	A+	4.3	97-100	Strong academic performance. Promising candidate for IB Diploma Program.
	A	4.0	94-96	
Exceeding expectation	A-	3.7	90-93	
	B+	3.5	87-89	
	B	3.0	84-86	
At expectation	B-	2.7	80-83	
	C+	2.5	76-79	
	C	2.0	71-75	
Below but approaching expectation (with promotion)	C-	1.7	66-70	Academic probation - at risk of not graduating
	D+	1.3	61-65	
Below but approaching expectation (without promotion)	D	1.0	56-60	Not satisfactory. Possible no credit for courses. Possible non-graduation from high school.
	D-	0.7	50-55	
Below expectation	F	0.0	0-49	

REPORT CARDS

At the end of each semester a full report card will be sent home. We encourage parents to contact teachers if they have questions or concerns about student progress.

STANDARDIZED TESTS

Two times each year, in the fall and spring, students in Grades 1-10 sit the MAP (Measure of Academic Progress) test. This is an adaptive standardized comprehensive test that measures a student's abilities and achievements in Language Arts, Mathematics and Science. This test is given to students in a growing number of international schools around the world. Scores are reported to the parents and will eventually become part of the student's school records.

SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENT PROMOTION POLICY

Students shall be promoted from one grade level to the next and from one academic year to another. However, the promotion of a student from one grade level to the next in the Secondary school can be affected as below:

Academic:

Courses are whole-year and are graded on the A-F scale. Should a student gain an F, he/she will be permitted to retake a final major assessment (final examination in the case of Grades 9-12) in the final week of the school year in order to raise their final grade. If they still have a grade F, and require credit in that subject, they may retrieve credit by attending an approved summer school program or by taking an accredited on-line course. GAA will determine if the course has been passed satisfactorily and if the final grade is amended. Any F grades will remain on the student's transcript. Any student gaining three or more F grades will be required to repeat the entire grade level.

Attendance:

Article 48 of the Bilo of Private Education Law (ADEC, 2001) states that students shall be expelled for the following non-disciplinary reason: "If the student is absent from school for no reason or for unacceptable reason for 20 consecutive days or 25 non-consecutive days." Article 47 states: "The absence days by an acceptable excuse shall not be calculated from the total absences which lead to ban the student from an examination or expel him/her from the school."

GAA attendance policy requires students to be in attendance for 90% of the Academic School year, and Article 59 of the ADEC Regulations of Private Schools 2013 states that: "At the beginning of the school year, the school shall send its attendance policy to the guardians as approved by the Council upon license issuance. The policy shall clarify the procedures for dealing with the student's absence to ensure that attendance data be accurately registered." Article 60 states: "The school shall follow up students unjustified absences and deal with them immediately. The school shall also cooperate with guardians to handle excessive and continued absence of students, and lay down the mechanisms necessary to improve attendance rates..."

Behavior:

The Secondary Handbook contains the GAA behavior expectations and consequences.

CODE OF CONDUCT - SCHOOL BEHAVIOR

We believe that a positive academic and social climate is necessary for student learning. We also believe that responsibility for establishing this climate is shared by each student, faculty member and parent. We value having students follow reasonable rules and it is important for students to understand their purpose. Part of the learning process involves making decisions and sometimes making mistakes. However, we expect that students will learn from their mistakes and demonstrate growth. Our code of behavior is reflected in the following statements:

**RESPECT YOURSELF
 RESPECT OTHERS
 RESPECT YOUR SCHOOL**

At GAA a proactive and collaborative approach is used to solve discipline issues. Students, parents, teachers and administrators are committed to working together to maintain high standards of behavior. Students are expected to abide by school rules and procedures whenever they are at school, including after-school and evening activities, and on weekends.

STUDENT RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The following table is a statement of responsibilities and rights. It is through mutual acceptance of responsibilities that rights exist. A right exists only to the extent that there is a responsibility on the part of others to respect that right.

STUDENT RIGHTS	STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES
EVERY STUDENT HAS A RIGHT to relevant education.	EVERY STUDENT HAS A RESPONSIBILITY to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ take materials to class ✓ complete and turn in assignments on time ✓ give every task their best effort
EVERY STUDENT HAS A RIGHT to be safe and secure in the school community.	EVERY STUDENT HAS A RESPONSIBILITY to respect the security of others and deal with conflict in an appropriate manner.
EVERY STUDENT HAS A RIGHT to expect reasonable and socially responsible behavior from others.	EVERY STUDENT HAS A RESPONSIBILITY to treat themselves and others with respect by speaking and acting in a socially responsible manner.
EVERY STUDENT HAS A RIGHT to a positive learning environment.	EVERY STUDENT HAS A RESPONSIBILITY to follow class rules by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ being seated by the time class starts. ✓ listening attentively. ✓ following directions. ✓ giving others an opportunity to learn.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ remaining in class until dismissed by the teacher. ✓ moving through the buildings in an orderly manner.
EVERY STUDENT HAS A RIGHT to be part of a school of which they can be proud.	EVERY STUDENT HAS A RESPONSIBILITY to take pride in their school by helping maintain the campus, the buildings and all materials and equipment.
EVERY STUDENT HAS A RIGHT to his/her good name.	EVERY STUDENT HAS A RESPONSIBILITY to respect the reputation of others.

BULLYING PREVENTION

What is bullying?

Bullying is the willful, conscious desire to hurt, threaten, frighten, intimidate or distress someone. Bullying can be:

<i>Physical</i>	pushing, kicking, hitting, pinching
<i>Verbal</i>	name calling, sarcasm, spreading rumors, persistent teasing
<i>Emotional</i>	excluding others, tormenting, ridiculing, humiliating
<i>Racist</i>	racial taunts or gestures
<i>Sexual</i>	unwanted physical contact or abusive comments

For Students

What should you do if you are bullied or you notice others bullying?

Bullying is wrong and you should report it. You have the right to be safe from attacks and harassment and nobody should expect you to be silent when you or others are being tormented or hurt. You should tell your parents about what is happening. Also tell the principal, a teacher, your counselor, the school nurse or any other trusted adult. Explain who is involved and what is happening. You may want to take some friends with you for support, especially if they have witnessed the incidents.

For Parents

If your child is a victim of bullying:

Encourage your child to talk to you about their school and social life. Watch your child for signs of distress. Listen to your child and take seriously any reports of bullying. Do not keep the bullying a secret. Contact the principal or the counselor immediately. Work with the school to develop strategies to support your child.

If your child is responsible for bullying:

Never ignore it.
 Make it clear that such behavior is unacceptable.
 Work with the school to develop strategies to change behavior.

DISCIPLINE GUIDELINES

Failure to abide by the rules and regulations in this handbook may result in detention, suspension or expulsion.

- **Detention** may be during school hours or after school hours. The teacher will require detention in his or her classroom or students may be assigned to detention in the Secondary office. Detentions referred to the Secondary school office are recorded. A parent is called after three detentions. This may result in Suspension.
- **Suspension** can be in or out of school and the student is responsible during the period of suspension for obtaining and completing the assignments given during the period of absence from classes.
- **Expulsion** may be the consequence for serious and/or repeated infractions.
- Any behavior or activity out of school that is illegal or brings disrepute to GAA may result in suspension or expulsion from school.

	Behaviors	Possible Consequences....
Level 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interfering with others' learning • Dress Code violation • Inappropriate behavior or use of language • Inappropriate display of affection • Littering • Chewing Gum 	<p>Student will receive a warning.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students will also be required to call home for correct clothing to be brought to school if in violation of the Dress Code.
Level 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chronic level 1 behaviors • Chronic late or absence from homeroom • Unexcused absence from class • Violation of technology appropriate use policy 	<p>Detention: 1 up to 3 days</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parent conference/contact • Loss of appropriate privileges • Letter Home
Level 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Repeat of Level 2 behavior • Direct defiance to faculty or staff request • Lying (Dishonest conduct) • Deliberate damage to property of others • Inappropriate language to faculty or staff • Leaving campus without authorization • Skipping school 	<p>In School suspension: 1 day</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parent contact/conference • Loss of extracurricular participation (sports, dances) • Letter home • Loss of class credit • Campus exclusion
Level 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Repeat of Level 3 behaviors • Theft • Physically threatening comments or gestures • Harassment • Smoking at school or school functions • Fighting 	<p>In School Suspension: 1-3 days</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loss of privileges • Loss of extracurricular privileges • Behavioral/Academic contract • Campus Exclusion

Level 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Repeat of Level 4 Altering or tampering with school records 	<p>Suspension from school and all school activities for at least five days.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Possible expulsion. Possible suspension from school activities for the next season.
Level 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Repeat of Level 5 behaviors Physical attack on a faculty or staff Gross or flagrant violation of school guidelines that endangers the reputation of the school or other students Possession of weapons or dangerous objects 	Expulsion

SCHOOL RULES

- **LEAVING CAMPUS:** Students are to remain on campus at all times during the school day. If students must leave because of illness, the School Nurse will call the parents. Students will not be allowed to leave the campus gates without approval from the Secondary office.

- **DAMAGE TO SCHOOL PROPERTY:** School property is to be respected, used and enjoyed by all members of our community. Please treat property with respect and care. Students will face disciplinary consequences and will provide financial restitution for school property that is damaged.

- **TEXTBOOKS MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS AND OTHER RESOURCES:** Are provided to all students on a loan basis. Students are held responsible for books checked out by them and must pay for lost or damaged books. Students will also be charged for deliberate damage (including writing and graffiti) to books. Secondary School students supply their own notebooks, paper, pencils, pens and other school supplies. Lost text books should be reported to the Teacher Resource Center Clerk as soon as possible. The student will be charged the cost of the book plus shipping, processing and handling costs. Once a receipt for payment from the Accountant is handed to the Teacher Resource Center Clerk, the book will be replaced.

- **LOCKERS:** Each student has a locker assigned upon arrival at GAA. Each student must bring their own lock which must be used at all times. Students must ensure the safety of their personal belongings as GAA will take no responsibility for any valuables, money, mobile phones, games, etc. that are lost at school.

- **MOBILES:** Mobile phones distract from the learning environment and are not to be used during class time. Phones on display, and in use, during class will be confiscated and turned into the Dean of Students. GAA assumes no responsibility for replacing these items if brought to school. Tie in to BYOD and also address when/where/IF phones can be used at any time in the school day **OUTSIDE** of class

1st Offense: Kept until the end of the day.

2nd Offense: Kept until the end of the next school day.

3rd Offense: Kept for 5 school days and must be collected by a parent at the end of the bond period.

4th Offense: Kept in bond until the end of the semester and then will be collected by a parent. Honesty letter will be signed.

- BULLYING/FIGHTING/PHYSICAL AGGRESSION: Treat others with respect. GAA does not tolerate intimidation or bullying of any kind. Offenses may result in suspension or, if repeated, in expulsion.

- DISCRIMINATION: GAA does not tolerate discrimination. All students will be treated respectfully regardless of gender, ethnicity, abilities, etc. Likewise students are expected to treat all adults with respect.

- CANDY, CHEWING GUM AND CARBONATED DRINKS: Candy and carbonated drinks are not permitted in the cafeteria as per UAE Law. Chewing gum and energy drinks are not permitted in the school.

- POOL/GYMNASIUM SAFETY: Students are expected to abide by all pool and gym safety procedures explained by adults and supervisors.

- SUPERVISION BEFORE AND AFTER SCHOOL: Students are expected to leave the campus promptly upon completion of their scheduled classes and after school sponsored activities.

- VISITING STUDENTS: GAA students wishing to bring friends, relatives and/or family members to join them during a given school day MUST obtain permission from the Secondary office at least two (2) full days before the visit day.

- LITTERING: GAA is a clean, GREEN campus. Students found littering will be required to assist any cleanup duties resulting from their actions.

BUS REGULATIONS

Students using the school bus, either regularly or as a guest on special occasions must observe the following rules:

- Students are expected to demonstrate respect for the driver, the conductor and other passengers.
- Students must be seated with a buckled seatbelt at all times.
- Students are not permitted to shout or engage in horseplay or use disrespectful language at any time on the bus.
- Students are expected to keep the buses tidy and not dispose of rubbish on the bus.
- Students are not permitted to eat or drink on the bus.

Students may ride home with another child if there is enough room on the bus. Parents should check before noon with the Head of Transport to confirm that there is space. Both the driver and the classroom teacher must be notified in writing of any alteration to normal bus arrangements.

Bus Code Violation	Possible Consequences may include:
1 st Offense	Warning
2 nd Offense	1 day detention Note in file Parent contact and letter
3 rd Offense	3 days detention Removed from bus for up to 10 school days
4 th Offense	1 day in-school suspension Parent conference and student will be removed from the school bus system

DRUG AND ALCOHOL POLICY

The possession, use, sale or distribution of drugs or alcohol on school property, on school provided transportation or at school sponsored or chaperoned functions is prohibited.

ACADEMIC HONESTY

Honesty in schoolwork requires that students do their own work. Students are expected to give credit to ideas, language or thoughts which are not their own. To take ideas, writing or thoughts from someone else and pass them off as one's own is **PLAGIARISM** and is a violation of academic honesty. This can occur with print or non-print sources, such as the internet. GAA regards acts of academic dishonesty as a serious violation of the community's trust. Students who commit academic dishonesty will face serious consequences. If the offense is repeated a student could be asked to leave the school. Any violation or suspicion of violation will be reported to the Superintendent immediately.

GEMS AMERICAN ACADEMY HONOR CODE

By accepting our offer of admission, all students agree, with parental support, to uphold and abide by the GAA Honor Code.

The program of studies at GAA offers a quality education that not only ensures knowledge but also cultivates the virtues of honor, courtesy and perseverance. Of these virtues honor is perhaps of greatest importance; it is personal integrity that will influence and finally determine many of our actions and beliefs. To help advance the development of such values, an Honor Code has been established for all Secondary students. This code applies to all classes and activities at GAA and exists to uphold and reinforce values that are central to the school's educational philosophy. Malpractice or cheating includes, but is not limited to, the following examples:

- **PLAGIARISM:** Submitting words or ideas that are not your own without acknowledging the original author. This includes copying another student's paper, report, lab book or assignment, in whole or in part, and submitting it as your own to a teacher or examiner. A

superficial change of wording, structure or conclusion is not sufficient to turn aside the charge of plagiarism.

- **COLLUSION:** Permitting another student to submit your paper, report, lab book or assignment, in whole or in part, as their own work either to a teacher or an outside examiner. This includes permitting another student to copy your work and failure to report that to either a teacher or an Administrator in the school. A superficial change of wording or structure or conclusion is not sufficient to turn aside the charge of collusion.
- **EXAMINATION MALPRACTICE:** Using cheat sheets or other prohibited items during either a class examination or an external examination; looking at another student's paper during either a class examination or an external examination; providing another student either at GAA or elsewhere with questions or answers from an examination you have taken and the other student has not; exchanging old or current exam papers, reports, notebooks, etc. without your teacher's express permission.
- **THEFT:** Stealing notes, notebooks, reports, lab books or other work from other students to use as your own or to transmit to any other user.
- **TECHNOLOGY MALPRACTICE:** Any misuse or abuse of technology including infractions of the school Technology Acceptable Use policy.

All students are responsible for understanding the Honor Code and what is expected of them. Violation of the Honor Code will be tracked over the school career at GAA. If there are any questions about what constitutes a breach of the Honor Code they should be brought to the teacher. An Honor Committee may be called to assess the consequences for a breach of the Honor Code. The Honor Committee consists of an Administrator, the student's Advisor and the student's choice of teacher.

Occurrence	Consequence
First Breach of Honor Code	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Repeat of assignment ✓ Letter to and contact with parents ✓ Incident documented in student's file ✓ Interview with Counselor
Second Breach of Honor Code	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Student referred to the office ✓ Letter to and contact with parents ✓ Placed on Behavioral Probation ✓ In-school Suspension between 1 and 5 days ✓ F on assignment
Third Breach of Honor Code	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Zero on assignment ✓ Letter to and contact with parents ✓ Suspension between 5 and 10 days ✓ Withdrawal from school recommended as school may move for expulsion

ACCEPTABLE TECHNOLOGY USE AGREEMENT

Access to the school network and the Internet is a privilege, not a right. Access is available only for educational and administrative purposes. GAA's technology resources are to be used in accordance with this Acceptable Use Policy and all users will be required to comply with its regulations. Non-compliance may result in loss of privilege and disciplinary action. The following guidelines are intended to help users understand appropriate use. The school may restrict, suspend or terminate any user's access to the school's computer systems upon violation of the AUP.

This policy applies to all technology at GAA, including the facilities in the Theater and the Gym, not just computers and equipment in IT labs.

BYOD (BRING YOUR OWN DEVICE)

GAA is moving forward with a Bring Your Own Device approach to the use of technology in the classroom in the 2013-14 school year.

ETHICAL CONDUCT

It is the responsibility of all users:

- to recognize and honor the intellectual property of others.
- to comply with legal restrictions regarding plagiarism and the use and citation of information resources.
- to restrict the use of GAA's technology resources to the mission of the school; the use of computer systems for personal use unrelated to the mission of the school or for private gain is prohibited.
- to help maintain the integrity of the school network and equipment; deliberate tampering, or experimentation is not allowed.

It is a violation to modify and/or copy any protected system files, system folders or control panel files without prior approval of the Network Administration or IT Coordinator.

EDUCATIONAL USE

Users are responsible for the ethical and appropriate use of their network accounts:

- School related files are the only files to be saved in your folder. Storing commercial software, music, games or hidden files to your folder is not permitted.
- Saving to the hard disk drive is granted only by permission of instructor (for students) or IT Coordinator (staff).
- Playing commercial/online games is not permitted.

RESPECT FOR OTHERS

Users should respect the rights of others using the technology resources.

- Use assigned workstations, if required by teacher.
- Always log off your workstation.
- Avoid deliberately attempting to disrupt network performance or interfering with the work of another user.
- Leave equipment and room in good condition for next user/class.

RESPECT FOR SECURITY

Accounts on the systems at GAA are considered secure - although absolute security of any data cannot be guaranteed. Teachers can be provided access to student files for instructional or evaluative purposes.

- Use only your account/password. It is a violation to give access to your password to any other user.
- Reading, modifying or removing files and/or mail owned by other users is not allowed without prior approval by the instructor or IT Coordinator.
- Any attempts to transmit software designed to compromise the operation or security of the network is prohibited.

RESPECT FOR PROPERTY

Software Installation

Software may only be installed on the school information systems (including all individual workstations) with prior approval from the IT Coordinator.

Software Copyright

- The only software, other than students' projects, to be used on the school's computers are those for which the school owns a valid license.
- Licensed/copyrighted software is not available for borrowing and may only be used at other sites with approval of IT Coordinator.
- Copyrighted software shall not be downloaded from the Internet or further transmitted in any form without compliance with all terms of a preauthorized licensing agreement. Infringement or violation of U.S. or international copyright laws or restrictions will not be tolerated.
- Any attempts to circumvent the licensing control or the copying of software from the network without the IT Coordinator's permission is prohibited.

Hardware

- Report equipment problems immediately to instructor/Tech Assistants/Network Administration/IT Coordinator.
- Leave workstations and peripherals in their designated places.
- Keep work areas neat and clean and free from food and drink.

- Any attempts to move, repair, reconfigure, modify or attach external devices to existing information and network systems without the Network administration and/or IT Coordinator's permission is prohibited.
- Borrowing of school hardware is not permitted unless email authorization has been given from the IT department.

Audio Visual Hardware

If a person checks-out or borrows a piece of audio visual equipment, they are responsible for replacing it or repairing it if it is lost or damaged. All equipment must be properly signed-out and documented.

INTERNET/WORLD WIDE WEB USAGE

Internet access is available to all students and teachers at GEMS American Academy. We believe these communication links offer vast, diverse and unique resources to both students and staff and their availability outweighs any possible access to information that is not consistent with the educational goals of GAA. Expected standards of conduct include:

- The acknowledgement that access to the Internet is a privilege and not a right.
- Respect for the use of copy written materials.
- Respect for the rights and privacy of others.
- E-mail is allowed during school hours only in connection with a classroom assignment.
- Downloading of unauthorized programs is not allowed.
- Compromising the security of the school in any manner is unacceptable.
- Respect for the values and ethics of the local host culture.

A violation of the above standards and any others included in the Acceptable Use Policy will result in a denial of access and possible further disciplinary action.

Responsibilities:

- All users are prohibited from accessing portions of the Internet that do not promote the instructional mission of GAA.
- All school web pages are subject to initial approval of the Administration. All school web pages should reflect the mission of the school and adhere to the GAA Web Page Guidelines.

CYBER-BULLYING

This involves the use of information and communication technologies to support deliberate, repeated and hostile behavior, by an individual or group, which is intended to harm others.

Students will be held accountable for Cyber-Bullying, even if it occurs off-campus, during the school year and negatively impacts the academic environment at GAA.

Consequences of Violations:

- First violation: Denial of access to Network and/or Internet for one week.

- Second violation: Meeting with IT Director and Division Principal, denial of access to Network and/or Internet for one month and possible detention.
- Third violation: Meeting with IT Director, Division Principal, denial of access to Network and/or Internet for remainder of the year and possible suspension. This means that the user will not be allowed to have personal equipment, of any kind, on campus for the year.

STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

GUIDANCE AND COUNSELING SERVICES

The goal of Secondary Counseling at GAA is to create an environment that will:

Help students:

- develop self-insight and self-understanding as they progress through school.
- develop an understanding of the worth and dignity of others.
- select and enter school courses and activities.
- select and capitalize on educational opportunities beyond high school.
- participate meaningfully in the opportunities of the school.
- develop interpersonal relationships.

Help teachers:

- understand the students for whom they are responsible.
- understand and utilize the services of the guidance program.

Help administrators:

- understand the characteristics of the school's student population.

Help parents:

- understand their children's educational progress.
- understand the opportunities available to their children.
- understand and utilize the services of the guidance program.

If you would like to discuss a specific issue with the Counselor, please contact Secondary Secretary to schedule an appointment.

STUDENT SUPPORT TEAMS

The Student Support Team (SST) consists of members from a variety of teaching, administration, and support service positions within the school. The team meets regularly with the purpose to support students' academic, social, emotional or transitional needs. The team aims to establish an understanding of a child's strengths and to define our concerns so that we can discuss ways to

adapt or modify the school program or to design a more efficient and appropriate means of maximizing success at school. This plan may include further classroom options (such as accommodations, modifications, enrichments; out-of-school tutoring; a referral for a medical examination; an assessment by an educational psychologist, an occupational therapist or a speech and language therapist. Support from a guidance and counseling professional may also be recommended by the team. Reports generated from any of those referrals are confidential and not part of a child's permanent school record.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS (ELL)

The English Language Learners (ELL) program provides services to students whose primary language is not English and who may not yet be proficient in English. The program provides support focused on children's English language acquisition, literacy development, and academic achievement. Within the ELL Department, we focus on the development of the four skills areas of language learning (listening, speaking, reading, and writing).

ELL is a recognized, credit bearing class. ELLs attend English class with an ELL teacher. In addition, ELLs participate in a Directed Studies Class during the Modern Language Block. During Directed Studies, students receive tutoring, content based support, and homework help. Individual language instruction is also provided with credit arranged as appropriate.

ELL teachers may also provide in-class support for students and teachers in Math, Science, and Social Studies. Screening and placement tests are given at time of a student's enrollment, throughout the year (as needed, and at the end of the school year. Students may exit the ELL program based on the ELL teacher's recommendation, test scores, and consult with the core content teachers. The ELL program is fee based and may be conditional for some students.

LEARNING SUPPORT (LS)

Services are provided to students that need extra academic support in core academic classes. Services may include pull out, push in and small group settings. There may be costs associated with services depending on the level of need.

LIBRARY

OVERVIEW

GEMS American Academy is committed to helping students develop a solid foundation of information literacy skills and a lifelong love of reading. With online database subscriptions, breakout learning spaces, a collection of approximately 20,000 books, magazine subscriptions,

technology carts and more, we are well-equipped for exploration and discovery. In addition to the resources we offer within the school, please remember that many of our resources and services are available 24/7 around the world.

LIBRARY VISITS

- The main library is open between 7:30 am and 3.30 pm for the school community.

There will be occasions when the library is closed earlier due to whole school events (e.g. Parent/Teacher conferences, staff meetings) or library practices such as inventory. After school, students and parents utilize this time for the purpose of homework, borrowing and leisure reading. Overall the library lends itself to flexible and active use by class groups and individuals.

BORROWING RESOURCES

All members of the GAA community – students, staff and parents – are encouraged to check out Library resources. A maximum of five resources may be checked out at any one time for a period of two weeks; exceptions may be made in certain instances by the Head Librarian.

SCHEDULED LIBRARY VISITS

Secondary library times are flexible depending on the needs of the students and subject-area teachers. Students are encouraged to drop by the Library for research and book check-out at appropriate times during the school day.

OVERDUE MATERIALS

We ask that materials be returned on a timely basis to enable access by all community members. Students who fail to return books on a regular basis may have their borrowing restricted. Students leaving the school must have a form signed by the library acknowledging the return of all materials. Year-end report cards will be issued once all library books have been returned or accounted for.

LOST AND DAMAGED ITEMS

Any community member who loses or damages an item beyond repair will be billed for the original cost of the item plus shipping and handling.

Collection Management Policy

The Collection Management Policy for the GEMS American Academy Library will adhere to all relevant legislation as directed by both the UAE government, Abu Dhabi Education Council and GEMS Education.

HOME/SCHOOL COMMUNICATION

Great schools provide parents with timely information so that they can be informed participants in the learning process. With our move to embrace 'blended learning' we must communicate well and build capacity in parents to support a very different kind of 'home work'.

- **Edmodo:** Allows you to view your child's assignments on the Internet. Links to study guides, and sites the teachers create/identify and documents that may be of use to the students when working at home as well as important dates on the calendar are all items that you can access through Edmodo. Each student has his or her own screen name and password. Parents have a separate screen name and password. Both accounts will be activated when you join GAA.
- **The GAAzette:** Communication between parents and school is a high priority at GAA. Parents will receive notices throughout the year about school events as well as the GAAzette, a school-wide bi-weekly (fortnightly) newsletter sent by email.
- **Back-to-School Night:** In September, a Back-to-School Night is held to introduce parents to classroom expectations, a description of the year's curriculum, grade level policies on homework and other details of the functioning of each class.

GAAPA (GAA PARENT ASSOCIATION)

Parents are encouraged to be actively involved in the school. GEMS American Academy has an active parent association (GAAPA). GAAPA is an important part of our school community and we encourage all parents to get involved and/or support the Association's activities throughout the year. In the past, these have included fund-raising activities, coffee mornings, movie afternoons, Iftar dinner during Ramadan and the very popular International Food Festival. In addition to GAAPA, volunteers are always welcome to help in the library and in the classrooms.

STUDENT/PARENT/TEACHER CONFERENCES

Student, parent and teacher conferences take place in November and April for all Grades KG-12 on the same days for parental convenience.

Student/Parent/Teacher conferences are an important part of our educational program and provide an opportunity for parents and teachers to discuss with the student personal goals as well as overall progress. Parents are expected to attend parent/teacher conferences.

EXTENDED PARENT ABSENCES

GAA students should always have proper home supervision by a parent. If, due to an emergency, you will be out of town and your child will not be under your direct supervision, please send a formal letter to let us know who will have guardianship responsibilities.

APPOINTMENT WITH THE DEAN OF STUDENTS OR GUIDANCE/COLLEGE COUNSELOR

If you would like to discuss a specific issue, please contact reception to schedule an appointment. All appointments must be made in advance.

WITHDRAWING FROM SCHOOL

All notices of withdrawal must be in writing to the Registrar. The school requires a minimum of two weeks notification of withdrawal. Parents are responsible for completing and returning a Student Clearance Form. In the event of outstanding books, fees or fines the school will neither release records nor issue a Transfer Certificate.

Parents who wish to hand carry their children's records may do so. However, they should notify the school of this intention with ample time to assemble records. Hand carrying of transcripts at the end of the year may be delayed due to scoring of exams - in this case, transcripts and/or records will be sent to the new school or to the parents. Parents should leave their forwarding address and a stamped envelope at the earliest possible date. Records cannot be released until all outstanding fees are paid.

TRANSFER CERTIFICATES

The Ministry of Education in the UAE requires that all students from Grade 2 onward submit a Transfer Certificate when they change schools. After the 1st of November each year, students in all grades require a Transfer Certificate to move schools. GEMS American Academy will be pleased to prepare a Transfer Certificate for all students who have completed the Withdrawal Process described above.

For students new to the school, please see the Application Package (available from the Registrar or online) for more information about Transfer Certificates.

SAFETY

SUPERVISION OF STUDENTS

When on campus, students are expected to follow school rules even after school and on weekends.

We operate a daily attendance system for all students arriving or departing school between 7.45 am and 2.55 pm. Telephone calls will be made to confirm all absences – usually before 8.30 am each morning. Students arriving after 7.45 am must sign in with the Secondary Secretary and receive a 'pink slip' before going to class. Students wishing to leave before 2.55 pm must provide notification to the school from their parents. Please note that we do not provide adult supervision before school in the morning and after school in the afternoons.

STUDENTS LEAVING SCHOOL DURING THE DAY

Parents who require their children to leave school for any reason during the school day must contact the Secondary Secretary and students must report to the Secretary who will issue a note for Security to allow the student out of the school gate.

FIRE ALARM/LOCK DOWN DRILLS

The buildings on the campus are fitted with a fire alarm system. Periodically, throughout the year, fire drills will take place in order to familiarize pupils with the procedures of emergency evacuation.

1. When the alarm is sounded, students and visitors should leave the building immediately in an orderly fashion using the designated exit.
2. After leaving the building, students and visitors should report to their designated assembly point for an attendance check. The assembly point for all students is at the rear of the sports field.
3. Emphasis is placed on staying quiet and observing rules and directions during the fire drills.
4. Lock down drill will be practiced immediately following fire drills early in the year so that students are familiar with the term and the procedures of getting inside and under cover.

SECURITY

Security officers are on duty on the school campus at all times. Their duties include assisting families on weekends and making certain that academic buildings are properly locked during non-school hours. The security officers have access to a telephone for use in an emergency.

HEALTH

SCHOOL CLINIC INFORMATION

A Registered and Health Authority of Abu Dhabi (HAAD) licensed nurse is on duty during school hours. The nurse provides health screenings; assesses and manages chronic and acute illness; administers medications; provides first aid for school-related injuries; promotes health and safety and maintains student medical records. The nurse is available to consult with parents as needed regarding health concerns of students, either in person, by telephone or e-mail.

If a student has special health needs (medication, chronic illness or condition, allergies or requires a special procedure or intervention), the parent is encouraged to schedule a time to meet with the school nurse to arrange for these needs to be taken care of during the student's school day. All medications and treatments require clear, written instructions by physician's order, as needed, and a parent/guardian's signature. The school nurse will assist the parent by preparing a plan of care for their child and advising them as to what supplies the student will need at school.

Several first aid kits are located throughout the campus (gymnasium, offices, art rooms, science labs, etc.) and certain teachers and members of staff are qualified to administer first aid.

EMERGENCY CONTACTS/CHANGE OF CONTACT DETAILS

The School Registrar, the School Office and the School Nurse should always have current details of your address, email, telephone number and mobile number(s). The accuracy of this information is vital in the case of an emergency. We also request a phone number of a friend we can call if we cannot reach the parents. When able, make sure your child knows how to reach you during the day. At the start of the school year we will send an Emergency Contact Sheet home with your child - please return this as quickly as possible. If your details change, it is your responsibility to give the updated information to the School Office, preferably by email or a note in the passport.

The Emergency Care Form will be utilized for school trips and events; as a quick contact resource to get in touch with parents; for emergency personnel if the student is transferred to an emergency care facility; or to ensure that the parents/guardians have authorized emergency medical treatment.

FORMS

Each year school health forms will be required for all students. They are: Health information Form; Emergency Care Form; Medication Consent Form; School Screening Form. New students will be required to fill out an Immunization Record to accompany their child's personal Immunization Record.

A physician-signed form to use or administer an inhaler or Epi-pen will be required if a student is asthmatic or has a life-threatening allergy. If your child has a short-term or chronic illness which requires any medical intervention/procedure during the school day, a Special Procedure Form will be required. (For example: blood glucose monitoring, dressing change, tube/catheter management, etc.)

If your Middle School or High School student athlete plans to participate in competitive sports at school, then a Pre-Participation Examination Certificate must be completed by a medical provider and submitted prior to the commencement of that sport.

MEDICATION

Administration of medications, especially short term, should be done at home whenever possible. However, if a student is required to take prescription or non-prescription medication during the school day, the following guidelines must be met:

- Physician, dentist or practitioner-prescribed medications must be clearly transcribed and all medication forms should state the student's name, the name of medication, the dosage, the time, the route (oral, inhaled, patch, etc.), and the duration of time that it is to be given (e.g., one week, the school year, etc.), along with the parent's/guardian's signature. Medication forms are available for your convenience in the school clinic.
- Medication must be in the original packaging by the pharmacy and not out of date. Over-the-counter medication to be held in the clinic must be in a sealed, unopened, new bottle. (For short

interval dosage, ask a pharmacist for a separate bottle to be kept in the clinic to prevent missed doses.)

- The parent/guardian, not the student, must deliver medication to the school clinic.
- All medicine must be picked up by a parent at the end of the school year.

In the case of students with asthma, severe allergic reactions or diabetes - they may self-administer their inhaled asthma medication, auto-injectable (epi-pen) medication or insulin. If medication is to be hand-carried, a back-up should also be kept in the school clinic. These situations require written health care plans along with other specific details for care.

When necessary, the nurse will accept verbal consent via phone to administer an over-the-counter (not prescription) medication. Medication will not be dispensed without written parental permission.

ILLNESS OR INJURY

If you are contacted by the school to pick up your sick child, please make every effort to do so promptly. If your child visits the clinic and we recommend you follow-up, or be informed of an intervention, you will receive a written note from the clinic. You will also be informed if your child sustains a head or neck injury while at school. If the nurse requests follow-up by your doctor for illness or a school-sustained injury, you will receive a Medical Referral Form. This is a formal way to receive a specific diagnosis and treatment plan while your child is at school.

Students with contagious infections need to stay home so they will not expose others. If your child is home with a communicable illness, please contact the school nurse so the parent(s) of other classmates may be alerted of symptoms.

As a rule of thumb, your child must stay home for any of the following:

- A fever > 37.7 C (100 F); must be fever-free for 24 hours without fever medication
- Vomited more than once; feeling of nausea
- Diarrhea (return to school after 48 hours or 24 hours on medication)
- A frequent cough; productive cough
- Persistent pain (ear, stomach, etc.)
- A widespread rash; contagious rash or skin spots
- Head lice (Pediculosis): please notify the school nurse to be given proper instructions
- Bacterial conjunctivitis/Pink Eye; awakens in the morning with thick or sticky eye drainage; eye lashes stuck; redness of the whites of the eyes throughout; can return to school after 24 hours of physician prescribed treatment.

Injuries that happen at home or over the weekend should be taken care of prior to returning to school along with a physician's note with instructions and limitations if needed. If your child has an out-patient procedure or surgery, you must provide a physician's certificate stating when they can safely return to school and with any limitations/instructions.

Before students return to school after surgery, injury or trauma the nurse and parents must meet to formulate a care plan and carry out a risk assessment (including a fire/evacuation risk assessment).

At times the medical advice provided for a student may be in variance with the school's recommendations. In all cases, the school nurse is the final arbiter and, if necessary in discussion with the Superintendent, will signal when a child is "safe" to return to school.

IMMUNIZATIONS

The Health Authority of Abu Dhabi (HAAD) promotes a successful immunization program and the Emirate is free from vaccine-preventable diseases. Parents are required to submit applicable vaccination documents to the School Nurse (or Registrar) for record purposes. Any parent who wishes to discuss their child's immunizations with the school nurse is welcome to do so.

HEALTH SCREENINGS

Per HAAD, the clinic promotes the screenings recommended annually. This consent form is part of the annual school health forms given out at the beginning of the school year. Please refer to the sheet with specific guidelines for your child's grade.

HELPFUL REMINDERS

- Encourage your child to eat breakfast every day before school.
- Make sure your child gets 8 or more hours of sleep each night.
- Always send your child to school with a refillable water bottle.
- Sneakers or tennis shoes are preferred for active participation and safety.
- Encourage good hand-washing; before and after meals, after toileting, etc.
- The school has a "No Hat, No Play" policy. Without a hat, your child will sit out for recess.
- Please inform the school if your child has any allergies. Nuts are not banned at GAA, but we ask that any food brought in for sharing is free of nuts/nut products.

Please contact your school nurse if you have any questions or concerns. By working together we can strive to ensure the health and well-being of your children so that they can gain the most from their experience at school.

MISCELLANEOUS

LOST AND FOUND

Personal items found in the school are collected and passed along to GAAPA. Parents are encouraged to label all items, especially water bottles and lunch boxes, and to check the Lost and Found frequently. Unattended school books will be returned to the TRC/Library for processing. At the end of each semester, all lost and found items are donated to charity.

CHARITABLE CAUSES/ COMMUNITY SERVICE

Our school community supports a growing number of organizations and charitable causes. These provide valued opportunities to our students to demonstrate initiative and further develop their skills and understandings of citizenship and leadership. Charitable drives and Community Service activities are often organized through the Student Council. It is important that charity work is carefully planned and strongly supported so that activities can be integrated into the school calendar. Ideas for fund-raising and/or service should be brought to the attention of the Dean of Students for presentation to the Student Council and, with their endorsement, to the School Leadership Team and the GAA Parents' Association. Generally, these groups will come together early in the school year to decide what charities will be the foci of activities and events for the school year. However, proposals can be considered at any time of the school year, particularly if the proposal relates to an emergency aid situation.

APPENDICES

I: ADMISSIONS POLICY

A student applying for admission must be accepted by the Superintendent, based on the school's ability to meet the educational needs of the student. While GAA can accommodate mild reading, learning and behavior challenges, it is not staffed or equipped to handle the needs of moderate or severely disabled children. Very few international schools make provision for very needy children and parents must consider very carefully the education options available before accepting an international post.

In general, the Registrar places students according to their birth date. The school will determine the student's grade placement based on prior records and recommendations if the school has doubts regarding the student's placement; if records are not available or if the parents feel that the recommended grade placement is not suitable. MAP test results generated during the admissions process are an important indicator of student readiness and experience and will help inform the placement decision.

II: PROCEDURES FOR ASSIGNING CLASS PLACEMENT

We believe strongly in the importance of well-balanced mixed groups – we want students to work within a heterogeneous group so that all benefit from the diversity of backgrounds, talent and thinking skills that makes GAA a special place. It is important that each class is representative of the whole school and can be held accountable to the same academic standards. In order to create the optimal class environment, we need to know as much as possible about the social, emotional, physical and academic needs of each student. A well-balanced learning environment has to take into account many different factors. The obvious ones are gender, nationality, whether new or returning family and level of English fluency but just as important are social relationships, emotional and physical needs, academic levels, learning styles and past experiences.

To facilitate our process of class placement, teachers fill out a card for each student that indicates the age, sex, nationality and number of years at GAA. The teacher also includes the names of three or four friends the student would like to have in the class next year (and sometimes a few who would be better separated). The teacher summarizes the student's academic level and describes any support or pull-out program the student needs or other special concerns or program modifications currently in place. This card gives a quick overview of each student. For new students, we use the report cards and records from previous schools to determine as much about the student as possible. This information is then used by the Registrar and Counselor to create balanced classes.

Parental input does play an important part in this process and we invite parents of returning students to submit a profile of their sons and daughters in May to help inform this process. More important, we hope that through the year you have formed a partnership with your child's teacher and you are confident that the teacher knows and understands the social and academic needs of your child. This knowledge of the student plays an important part in the negotiations and shuffling which eventually yields the class lists.

The ultimate task is to match teaching strengths and learning needs and to match teachers' management styles and students' management needs considering the teacher's observations,

parental concerns and student input, while still keeping the balance of gender, nationality and new and returning students.

Because our overriding value is to create balanced groups of students who will work well together, we are not able to entertain requests for placements with specific teachers. We ask that you refrain from asking for a particular teacher so that we are not being asked to compromise the integrity of this process for any student. You can be confident that all the teachers on any grade level work and plan together and provide similar learning opportunities and experiences for students.

Right up to the day school starts, our student lists are changing so we are not able to post class lists before the start of school. Despite the fact that we will have done the best job we can, not everyone will think his or her placement is ideal. We have found that the best advice we can give you if your child expresses disappointment with his or her new class group is to acknowledge a child's disappointment as genuine but to show your child that you have confidence in his or her social ability to live through the disappointment and to settle successfully in the new situation. Your child will be heavily influenced by your reaction!

This is an opportunity for social growth and independence. Trust your child to grow and learn. Children are so open to new and different experiences, relationships and learning when we encourage and support them in their efforts.

III: GAA SECONDARY PE STUDENT EXPECTATION POLICY

PE Coordinator: Mr. James Cochran Room: 107 Email: j.cochran_gaa@gemseducation.com

Course Description: Students in grade 6 to grade 11 will participate in a wide range of different of game and fitness based units. These courses emphasize regular participation in a variety of enjoyable physical activities that promote lifelong healthy active living. Students will learn movement skills and principles, ways to improve personal fitness and physical competence, and safety and injury prevention. These units include but are not limited to the following: Volleyball, Swimming, Basketball, Rugby, American Football, Soccer, Fitness, Softball, Athletics, tennis, Badminton and Gymnastics.

PE Student Uniform:

Grade 6 through grade 11, Student PE uniform requirements:

- Shirts with GAA logos
- Navy Micro shorts
- Quality Athletic Shoes (non-marking soles)
- Water Bottles must be brought to class
- If hair is longer than collar length it must be tied up in the back
- No Jewelry or watches are allowed to be worn during PE class, valuables must be left in student lockers. PE Teachers accept no responsibility for personal items.
- If it is a scheduled Swimming lesson, they are to wear appropriate swimming apparel, in which will be explained by PE teacher

A register of attendance will be taken at the start of each lesson. When a student is unable to participate in class, a conversation with that student will be initiated and the reasons for non-

participation in class will be discussed. In the case of a forgotten PE uniform, secondary PE teacher's work on a 3 strike policy (bullet description below). Students should be aware that participation mark levels are affected if non-compliance to uniform policies are not adhered to. In the case of a medical complaint supported by a note from parents / guardian, the student is asked to participate in a supporting role (e.g. observation / evaluation, peer mentoring, clean-up, etc) and in this case student's marks will not be affected by his or her lack of participation.

- 1st offense: Verbal warning toward student and a mark in the teacher's attendance book. Student is still expected to participate in PE Class, unless it is a swimming lesson
- 2nd offense: Verbal warning toward student, a mark in the teacher's attendance book and contact made with parents via e-mail or phone call home. Student is still expected to participate in PE Class, unless it is a swimming lesson.
- 3rd offense: After school or lunch detention on teacher arranged time and place.

Changing: During an 80 minute time frame afforded to secondary PE, students are asked to change from their school uniforms to their respective PE uniform in 7 minutes from the start of the period. Students will be provided 13 minutes to shower and change back into their school uniform at the end of the class. Students must change back into their school uniforms under all circumstances unless the student is participating in a sport related after school activity, in which PE occurs during the last period of the day. The aim of this policy is to maximize 60 minutes of physical activity in an 80 minute lesson.

PE STUDENT BEHAVIOR EXPECTATIONS:

- Arrive and leave promptly and in an orderly fashion.
- Behave in changing rooms appropriately and that changing rooms are not left in a mess.
- Arrive correctly equipped to every lesson and that the PE sanctions policy is clearly understood.
- Follow the correct procedure in terms of non-participation which will be advised by the respective PE Teacher.
- Respect the environment i.e. the area and equipment being used, as well as the work of others.
- Offer politeness and respect to all.
- Perform to the best of your ability

Sanctions and rewards: The PE teaching team will have a common and consistent approach to dealing with students: Good work will be suitably acknowledged and, where appropriate, rewarded depending on reward policy. General breaches of the expectations set for in lessons above such as low level disruption, should lead to one 'strike'. After three strikes the teacher concerned should contact their parents by email. Should this be the case the PE Coordinator and class teacher should also be informed. In more serious instances the student(s) may be referred to the PE Coordinator to be dealt with.

Assessment: Students will be assessed in a variety of different ways including self-assessment of performance and behaviors, game and movement skill/fundamental tests and written or verbal assessment facilitated by the PE teacher. PE teachers will record and document student's effort levels, and the progress of skills and attitude from the beginning of the unit until its completion

IV: COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE FOR PARENTS AND LEGAL GUARDIANS

At GAA we recognize the importance of regular interaction between faculty and parents so that support for student learning and development is consistent. In the circumstance that parents have a complaint with a teacher, the school will treat it in accordance with the following procedure.

1. Informal Resolution

It is hoped that most complaints and concerns will be resolved quickly and informally.

1. If parents have a complaint or concern they should, in the first instance, contact their son's/daughter's teacher. In most cases, the matter can be resolved in this way. If the matter cannot be resolved between the parents and teacher, it may be necessary for the Division Principal to be contacted.
2. Any complaint made directly to the Division Principal will normally be referred back to the relevant teacher unless the Division Principal deems it appropriate to deal with the matter personally.
3. Teachers and the Division Principal will keep anecdotal records of concerns and complaints on the date when they were received and reviewed. The Division Principal/teacher will document the outcome in a letter to the parent/guardian.

Most complaints will be resolved informally. If this does not happen, parents will be advised that they may follow the formal procedure below.

2. Formal Resolution

1. If the complaint cannot be resolved on an informal basis, then the parents should put their complaint in writing to the GEMS Director of International Schools (DIS). After considering the complaint, a decision will be made on the appropriate course of action to take.
2. In most cases the DIS will contact the parents concerned, normally within 3 days of receiving the complaint, to discuss the matter. If possible a resolution will be reached at this stage.
3. The DIS may need to carry out further investigations.
4. The DIS will keep written records of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint.
5. Once the DIS is satisfied that, so far as is practicable, all of the relevant facts have been established, a decision will be made. Parents will be informed of the decision, with an explanation, in writing.

QUESTIONS? WHO TO CALL FIRST:

GAA Telephone: +971 (0)2 557 4880
GAA Fax Number: +971 (0)2 557 4990

Email

Head of School and CEO	Dan Keller	d.keller_gaa@gemsedu.com
Secondary Assistant Principal (Teaching and Learning)	Timothy Fryer	t.fryer_gaa@gemsedu.com
Secondary Assistant Principal (Operations)	Josh Doubleday	j.doubleday_gaa@gemsedu.com
Registrar	Dina Morad	registrar_gaa@gemsedu.com
Accounting	Saikrishna Shetty	s.shetty_gaa@gemsedu.com
School College Counselor	Sharice Welch	s.welch_gaa@gemsedu.com
Secondary Curriculum Coordinator	Jaimala Quinlan	j.quinlan_gaa@gemsedu.com
Secondary Counselor	Sahra Mattot	s.mattot_gaa@gemsedu.com
Nurse		nurse_gaa@gemsedu.com
Parent Relations Executive	Shannon Hughes	s.hughes_gaa@gemsedu.com
Executive Secretary	Olga Carrillo	o.carrillo_gaa@gemsedu.com
Secondary Secretary	Lynne Brown	l.brown_gaa@gemsedu.com
Main Reception		reception_gaa@gemsedu.com

School Related Issues

I.B. Diploma	Secondary Curriculum Coordinator
After School Activities Program	ASA Coordinator via Reception
Facilities Usage	Manager – School Operations via Reception
Finance/Tuition	Accountant via Reception

Health
Bus Transport
Food Services
Classroom teacher

Nurse's office
Transport Manager via Reception
Leave a message with Reception
Leave a message with Secondary Secretary

Communication

Activities/Calendar
GAAzette Newsletter
Parent Association (GAAPA)

Reception
Parent Relations Executive
GAAPA representatives

GEMS AMERICAN ACADEMY PARENT & STUDENT CONTRACT

At GAA, we recognize that a successful partnership between school and home is one of the cornerstones to a child's educational success. We would respectfully ask parents to support this partnership by completing and returning this Parent Contract to Reception.

In order to best support my child's learning, I will

- Provide him or her with a quiet, orderly place to study
- Ensure my child is prepared for class
- Deliver my child to school on time every day
- Attend special activities sponsored by GAA to build my understanding of learning outcomes and my capacity to support learning at home.

I have read and understood both the Parent and Student Contract and the Community Handbook.

Name of Student: _____

Grade: _____

Signature of Parent: _____

Date: _____

Signature of Student: _____

Date: _____

SECONDARY SCHOOL CALENDAR 2013-2014

GEMS American Academy
2013-2014 Instructional and Duty Day Calendar

Version 17

Week Number	SU	MO	TU	WE	TH	FR	SA	Notes
AUGUST 2013								
								6-10 Aug: Eid Al Fitr
								11-Aug: Full Office Staff Return
								13-Aug: Senior Admin Return
								17-Aug: New Faculty Airport Arrivals
								19-27 Aug: New Faculty Orientation
								28-30 Aug: Returning Teacher Orientation
								31-Aug: GEMS Awareness Day (New Faculty)
								2 Teacher Duty Days
								0 Instructional Days
SEPTEMBER 2013								
								1-4 Sep: IA & Returning Faculty Orientation
								5-Sep: New Student Orientation Day
								8-Sep: All Students' First Day
								8-10 Sep: Staggered Start Kindergarten
								26-Sep: Hopes & Dreams Afternoon (K-5 only)
								28-30: Fall 2013 MAP testing window
								22 Teacher Duty Days
								17 Instructional Days
OCTOBER 2013								
								1-14 Oct: Fall 2013 MAP testing window
								13-17 Oct: Eid al Adha*
								31-Oct: PD Afternoon - half day for students
								19 Teacher Duty Days
								19 Instructional Days
NOVEMBER 2013								
								1-3 Nov: Hijra (Islamic New Year)*
								13-14 Nov: Afternoon Conferences (K-12)
								24-Nov: PD Afternoon - half day for students
								27-Nov: GAAPA Thanksgiving Celebration pm
								28-Nov: Thanksgiving 1/2 day for students & staff
								29-Nov: National Day Celebration - dismissal time tbc
								19 Teacher Duty Days
								19 Instructional Days
DECEMBER 2013								
								1-2 Dec: National Day Holidays
								8 Teacher Duty Days
								8 Instructional Days
JANUARY 2014								
								1-Jan: New Years Day
								4-Jan: Students Return to classes
								13-Jan: Prophet Mohammed's (PBUH) Birthday*
								29-Jan: PD Afternoon - half day for students
								19 Teacher Duty Days
								19 Instructional Days
FEBRUARY 2014								
								6-Feb: End of 1st Semester (K-12)
								16-Feb: Electronic Report Cards Issued (K-12)
								16-Feb: Hard Copy Report Cards Issued (K-12)
								27-Feb: PD Afternoon - half day for students
								20-Feb: International Day
								23-Feb: International Food Festival
								20 Teacher Duty Days
								20 Instructional Days
MARCH 2014								
								14-Mar: GAA Gala
								20-Mar: Spring Break Commences
								15 Teacher Duty Days
								15 Instructional Days
APRIL 2014								
								1-12 Apr: Spring Break continues
								13-Apr: Students Return to classes
								16-17 Apr: Afternoon Conferences (K-12)
								27-Apr: PD Afternoon - half day for students
								27-30 Apr: Spring 2014 MAP testing Window
								19 Teacher Duty Days
								19 Instructional Days
MAY 2014								
								1-12 May: Spring 2014 MAP testing window
								27-May: Night of Ascension
								29-May: PD Afternoon - half day for students
								20 Teacher Duty Days
								20 Instructional Days
JUNE 2014								
								10-Jun: End of 2nd Semester Assessment
								24-Jun: Electronic Report Cards Issued (K-12)
								25-Jun: Hard Copy Report Cards Issued (K-12)
								26-Jun: Students' Last Day
								30-Jun: Last Teacher Day
								22 Teacher Duty Days
								20 Instructional Days
JULY 2014								
								1-Jul: Last Day SLT
								3-Jul: Last Day Senior Admin
								4-Jul: Office open daily 08:30 - 14:30
								0 Teacher Duty Days
								0 Instructional Days

STAFF DUTY DAYS	
84	1st Semester
91	2nd Semester
185	TOTAL DUTY DAYS

STUDENT INSTRUCTIONAL DAYS	
87	1st Semester
88	2nd Semester
176	TOTAL INSTRUCTIONAL DAYS

Dates of Islamic Holidays (marked with an *) can only be confirmed by the moon sighting that month and may be subject to change.