



New Academy School

Teaching and Learning Policy

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NAS Teaching and Learning Policy

Empowering future leaders through commitment to excellence

I. Rationale:

Our policy consists of the principles, practices and expectations that govern and support the operation of the educational system in the 21st century. This policy promotes best practices and establishes consistency in Teaching and Learning across the whole in all phases. Our aim ensures that all students are provided with high quality learning that offers structure and accountability.

II. Introduction

At New Academy School (NAS), we believe that learning is a lifelong process that should inspire students to achieve their fullest potential and become responsible, innovative and productive global citizens, and ambassadors of their own culture. New Academy School (NAS) is a K-12 American Curriculum school that follows California Common Core State Standards for English, Math, and Elective Subjects, Next Generation Science Standards for Science, and UAE Ministry of Education for Islamic, Arabic and Social Studies.

Standards are educational descriptors that describe what students should know and be able to do in each subject per grade level. The standards are horizontally and vertically mapped for continuity of learning. All assessments are aligned with the standards for all subject areas.

III. Teaching and Learning Principles

NAS' motto, 'Empowering future leaders through commitment to excellence', is embodied in strong Guiding Statements and a High Quality Learning (HQL) definition. At NAS, our teaching and learning principles are built upon our core beliefs and values of International Mindedness, Collaboration, Resilience, Wellbeing, Inclusion, Respect and Discipline. These beliefs and values are underpinned by our well-balanced and progressive curriculum which is supported by up-to-date teaching pedagogies. Learning at NAS provides academic, social and wellbeing experiences to transform knowledge, skills and dispositions of students. Learning takes into consideration curriculum, assessment, learner autonomy, social and emotional learning (SEL), wellbeing and the impact of these on students. NAS implements the 5Cs, which consists of a focus on critical thinking, choice, creativity, communication and collaboration to achieve successful outcomes. Based on the CASEL framework, NAS SEL program is fully integrated into the curriculum to enhance learner development of self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making. NAS also focuses on fostering ethical practices within the learning community to promote justice, transparency, honesty, and high moral values in their dealings, decision making, and interactions with diverse groups.

IV. Curriculum Aims

NAS offers balanced curriculum that aims to:

- Foster the values, qualities and skills outlined in NAS guiding statements.
- Cater for the needs of individual students from all ethnic and social groups, with a special focus on Emiratis, including the most able and those who are experiencing learning difficulties.
- Facilitate students' acquisition of knowledge and understanding.
- Be delivered through an exciting and stimulating learning environment.
- Ensure that each student's education has continuity and progression.
- Ensure that there is a match between the student's skills and the tasks s/he is asked to perform.
- Make sure of the crucial role which parents play in the children's education and encourage parental involvement in the educational process.
- Implement research-based instructional approaches to meet the needs of all students.
Curriculum design to follow UbD and UDL approaches for teaching and learning.
- Monitor vertical and horizontal curriculum mapping on a regular basis. The impact of curriculum implantation is measured against student performance outcomes in all subjects.
- Meet the needs of students of all abilities. Curriculum Adaptation is an ongoing dynamic process that modifies and adapts the prescribed program of studies to meet the learning requirements of students. This enables the teaching team to welcome students of all abilities and ensures that every student is challenged to learn.
- Offer a variety of curricular choices for students.

V. Philosophy of Curriculum and Instructional Design:

At New Academy School, our philosophy of learning allows for the exploration of curriculum rather than the coverage of curriculum. To accomplish this, we have integrated two models of teaching and learning, Understanding by Design (UbD) and Universal Design for Learning (UDL). UbD is a curriculum design framework that helps teachers determine the What and How of the curriculum, whereas UDL is a framework meant to enhance teaching and learning that focuses on the learner and the removal of barriers to learning. The two models support each other and provide for more effective alignment between curriculum delivery and meeting the needs of all students, thus enabling the provision of quality curriculum content and quality teaching and learning experiences and outcomes.

A. Understanding by Design (UbD)

Understanding by Design (UbD) is a framework that provides teachers with a planning procedure and system to guide curriculum, instruction and assessment. With increased curriculum demands, UbD helps teachers manage the content and answers the question, 'What do we teach.' With the aim of fostering lifelong learning, UbD focuses on 1) teaching, assessment and learning transfer of knowledge, and 2) starting 'Backwards' and designing the curriculum from the intended outcomes.

NAS curriculum design follows the UbD stages of 'backward design' as a roadmap to transformation of learning. The process begins with course scope and sequence. Each course is fully mapped out to reflect

the desired learning and transfer of knowledge by the end year. Next teachers break the yearly plan into Units. Each unit follows the three stages of the backward design process.

Three Stages of Backwards Design Model:

Stage 1: Identify Desired Results

1. What should students know, understand, and be able to do?
2. What is the primary transfer of knowledge we want as a result of this unit?
3. What enduring understandings do we desire?
4. What essential questions will students explore in-depth and provide focus to all learning?

Stage 2: Determine Assessment Evidence

1. How do we know when students have achieved the desired results?
2. What do we accept as evidence of learner understanding and their ability to use their learning in new situations?
3. How do we evaluate learner performance in an equitable and consistent way?
4. Students can explain concepts, principles, and processes by putting in their own words

Stage 3: Plan Learning Experiences and Instruction

1. How can we support students as they develop understanding of important ideas and processes?
2. How can we prepare students to transfer their learning autonomously?
3. What meaningful knowledge and skills do students need to perform effectively and achieve desired results?
4. What resources, activities, sequence, guidance, etc. are best suited to accomplish our goals?

B. Universal Design for Learning (UDL)

Universal Design for Learning is a framework is a teaching and learning approach that is intended to improve and maximize teaching and learning for all people and operates under the principle of “all students should have access to quality instruction.” UDL works to accommodate the needs and abilities of students by removing unnecessary barriers to learning that a student might face. NAS has adopted UDL as the nature of this approach embodies the desired impacts whereby learning at NAS is transformational and fosters autonomous, self-reliant, risk taking, critical, creative, and reflective lifelong students. UDL seeks to remove barriers to learning through flexible learning environments, accommodations for different learning preferences and types of intelligences, accommodations for learning differences and disabilities, and different ways of assessing students and presenting information to students.

There are three guidelines for teachers to follow when planning to optimize learning.

Guideline 1: Provide Multiple Means of Engagement

How can I engage all students in my class?

1. In what ways do I give students choice and autonomy?
2. How do I make learning relevant to students' needs and wants?
3. In what ways is my classroom accepting and supportive of all students?

Guideline 2: Provide Multiple Means of Representation

How can I present information in ways that reach all students?

1. Have I considered options for how printed texts, pictures, and carts are displayed?
2. What options do I provide for students who need support engaging with printed and / or with auditory learning?

Guideline 3: Provide Multiple Means of Action and Expression

How can I offer purposeful options for students to show what they know?

1. When can I provide flexibility with timing and pacing?
2. Have I considered methods aside from paper-and-pencil tasks for students to show what they know?
3. Am I providing students access to assistive technology (AT)?

VI. Learning Outcomes

Quality learning outcomes are at the center of determining the impact of teaching and learning. Well-developed learning outcomes drive curriculum planning and instruction. With the implementation of UDL, students are able to take charge of their learning by demonstrating their learning in a variety of ways as per their strengths, interests and choice.

Students monitor progress of their learning via learner profiles and e-portfolios. The Learner profile and e-portfolio allows for personalization of learning and increases self agency and self advocacy for every learner. Students tell the story of who they are, share their goals and aspirations, and communicate how they learn. Students use knowledge of themselves along with various assessment data to express what they know about their own learning. As the learning journey progresses, students choose pieces of work that demonstrate their learning. Students then reflect and set next targets. Additionally, Students use the Learner profile and portfolio to conduct Student Led Conferences with their parents where students share their achievements and areas of development and they receive feedback from their parents and teachers.

NAS is committed to shaping the future generation who will be creative independent thinkers, able to adapt their knowledge and skills to the ever changing needs of the technological age and the demands of the 21st century. This process creates partnerships in learning. Teachers use the learner profiles and portfolios to inform teaching and learning. Teachers seek to understand their students in order to design engaging lessons, projects and learning experiences to meet their needs.

VII. Curricular Choices

A. Electives - Middle and High School

Middle school students are provided with curricular choices such as Business, Engineering, Art, Robotics, and Coding to develop their aspirations, interests, talents and 21st Century Skills.

High school, a wide range of curricular choices that allows for a broader range of choices, learning opportunities and experiences to foster their interests, talents and career choices, such as FilmMaking and Theater, Media and Journalism, Mobile APP Development, Forensic Science, etc. NAS provides tier 3 students of determination (SOD) with alternative courses as per their interests.

B. Advanced Placement (AP) Courses

High school students in grades 11 and 12 are offered a variety of Advanced Placement (AP) courses in various disciplines. AP courses are American Curriculum advanced courses that are designed, regulated, and assessed externally through the College Board. AP courses are accepted in colleges and universities all over the world. Taking AP courses in high school provides students with engagement and challenge. Students who take AP courses have a competitive advantage in university/college admissions. Students who take AP Courses must take the AP Assessments that are held beginning in May. Students who successfully pass the AP exam with a score of 3 or above will have .25 (per course) added to their final GPA.

With help of the career and guidance counselor, students select choices based on their career path and the requirements of their future universities. Once students have chosen their courses, a consent form must be signed by the student and guardian.

AP Courses offered at NAS:

- AP English Literature and Composition
- AP Microeconomics
- AP World History: Modern
- AP Calculus AB
- AP Calculus BC
- AP Computer Science A
- AP Biology
- AP Chemistry
- AP Environmental Science
- AP Physics 1: Algebra-Based
- AP Physics 2: Algebra-Based

C. Co-Curriculum Clubs (Passion Hour)

Co-curricular activities are an integral part of the NAS program to provide a well-rounded experience for our students. Clubs are offered to students KG-12.

- Co-curricular activities take place during the Passion Hour on Friday mornings.
- Teachers facilitate one club during Passion Hour for one semester.
- Passion Hour programs may be outsourced and facilitated by parents or other specialists in their fields.
- Passion Hour activities are sponsored by the school and are free of charge. Resources are provided for clubs such as science club, arts and crafts club, board games, etc.
- Clubs are decided based on student aspirations, interests and talents.

VIII. Roles and Responsibilities

Learning at NAS provides academic, social and wellbeing experiences to transform knowledge, skills and dispositions of students. All stakeholders have an important role to play in bringing about the desired learning impacts embodied in the learning definition.

The Governors

- The Governors remain informed and have a shared understanding of the vision, mission and guiding statements of the school.
- The Governors consider the advice of the principal and the SLT when setting school wide goals and policies for teaching and learning.
- The Governors monitor the work of the school both performance and quality, including the achievements and personal development of all students.
- Governors use information to discuss the schools' performance with senior leaders and other stakeholders.
- Governors will hold consistent meetings with other stakeholders to follow up on teaching and learning: Parent, student and teacher representative.
- Governors are able to exert a positive and direct impact on the overall performance of the school. They actively support school leaders to help the school meet its commitment to the students and their parents.

The Principal and Senior Leadership Team (SLT)

- The Principal and Curriculum Head ensure that arrangements for Academic compliance with regulations and relevant bye-laws set by MOE and KHDA are managed well ensuring no breaches of requirements.
- The Principal and SLT share a clear sense of purpose as a team and successfully communicate the school's definition of high quality learning. They demonstrate a competent understanding of current educational practices.
- The Principal and SLT make decisions about teaching and learning practices and initiatives based on the expectations of the curriculum, research of best practices, learner outcomes on internal

and external assessments, and learner needs and interests. Developments are carefully overseen with close attention to the impact made on students' achievement and their personal and social development. Input from external evaluation is well managed and leads to carefully devised and well-articulated plans for future development.

- The Principal and SLT ensure that LMT, MLT and teachers are clear of their responsibilities in achieving the school's vision and mission.
- The Principal and SLT ensure that learning the curriculum, teaching and assessment, are accessible for all students. They work to ensure that students learn in an inclusive and diverse environment with minimal barriers to learning.
- The Principal and SLT ensure that students and their parents receive regular information about the student's progress and attainments and how they compare with the school's set expectations and the next steps for development.

The Leadership and Management Team (LMT), and the Middle Leadership Team (MLT):

- LMT and MLT work together with the Principal and SLT to ensure that high quality learning is being implemented in accordance with NAS teaching and learning policy. They monitor the impact on learner outcomes.
- MLT guides and monitors teachers in their departments to ensure that quality teaching and learning is implemented.
- MLT monitors development of curriculum design in their departments. They ensure that the scope and sequence, unit plans and lesson plans are in line with UbD and UDL. They ensure that the academic component of the learning definition has been implemented. MLT reviews the curriculum design with the Curriculum Head (CH).
- MLT and the Inclusion Head (IH) work to ensure that the students of determination (SOD) are accommodated at all levels of the teaching and learning process (adaptation and modification of the curriculum, assessment and instruction).
- The Assessment Coordinator (AC) ensures that the procedures for assessment meet all legal requirements for internal and external exams.
- AC, MLT and (CH) ensure that all assessments are aligned with curriculum standards. They will ensure that assessments are fair, valid, and reliable as per grade level outcomes.
- The Wellbeing Coordinator (WC), MLT, IH and the Vice Principals (VPs) ensure that all aspects of the Social and Emotional component of the learning definition has been implemented. WC and IH ensure that systems are in place to monitor and document the impact on students personal and social development.
- LMT, MLT and the SLT work together to foster the Ethical component of the learning definition.
- LMT and MLT use data to inform decision-making within their given areas.

The Teachers:

- Teachers demonstrate that they are knowledgeable about their subjects and are able to convey their knowledge clearly and confidently to the students.

- Teachers demonstrate understanding that ALL students should have access to quality instruction and learning experiences.
- Teachers design positive learning experiences that foster high quality learning in accordance with NAS teaching and learning policy. Instruction and activities should inspire and motivate students and provide sufficient challenge as per their individual needs. Planning should purposely reflect the 5Cs of 21st century learning skills. Lessons should facilitate and encourage learner autonomy and voice and Choice. Students feel free to make mistakes. Mistakes are to be seen as opportunities to grow.
- Teachers are to ensure the incorporation of the 5Rs (relevance, rigor, relations, routine, and result) in their lesson plans.
- Teachers are to use UbD to design their curriculum (scope and sequence, unit plans and daily lesson plans) starting from the 'Big Idea' and working 'Backwards'.
- Teachers are to plan lessons carefully taking into consideration student needs. Teachers are to implement UDL strategies to ensure barriers to learning are removed. Through UDL, accommodations and adaptations are made for different learning preferences, types of intelligences, learning differences and disabilities.
- Teachers are to make sure that students are clear about the learning outcomes and the Success criteria. Provide enough time at the end of lessons to review how well they have learned. Students can reflect using various strategies such as: ICE, MP, Action and Reflection, exit tickets, summary, etc.
- Teachers are to plan and use formative and summative assessment data to inform teaching and learning to meet the needs of the students. Teachers foster critical and creative thinking through asking probing questions, driving questions, essential questions, etc. that require the learner to THINK and REFLECT on what they are learning.
- Teachers are to provide students with developmental feedback on work according to the learner's needs. Teachers are to ensure that students have responded to the feedback and understand their next steps.

The Students:

Implementation of NAS Definition of Learning and all of its components aims to have the following impacts on students:

- Students should be punctual in arriving at school and for lessons throughout the school day. They come with the appropriate resources and are prepared to learn.
- Students demonstrate knowledge, skills and understanding of what they have learned according to their learning preferences and/or skills and talents. Students exercise voice and choice in what they learn, how they learn it and how they demonstrate what they have learned.
- Students engage with their strengths, challenges, interests, and passions in personalized ways.
- Students are able to work and produce quality work that is at or above the grade level standards, while others are able to produce quality and show growth from their starting points.

- Students eagerly work to attain gains in knowledge, skills and understanding, as measured against the learning objectives and success criteria in lessons.
- Students make links to prior knowledge and are confident in applying their skills in everyday contexts. Students are inspired by their own learning and take informed risks to extend their learning.
- Students take responsibility for their own learning and assessment of it. Some are capable of working productively on their own. Students self-reflect regularly to determine their strengths and areas for development.
- Students use technology sensibly to support their work. Digital devices are only to be used for school related activities.
- Students are comfortable working on collaborative tasks. They are well aware of the benefits that group work produces. Students are able to hold collaborative discussions, use their creative and critical thinking skills, and solve problems.

The Parents

As stakeholders in their children's learning, NAS recognizes that parents are integral partners in the process of teaching and learning. Thus, parents are encouraged to support their children and the school in these ways:

- Parents are to ensure their children attend school everyday. Ensure children have had a good night's sleep. Send children to school with all of their school supplies and are ready to learn.
- Parents are encouraged to attend informative events designed to ensure they are knowledgeable about important developments that affect their children's education.
- Parents can stay up to date with school communications via email and newsletters. Parents may visit the school and positively express their concerns with the parent representative.
- Parents are asked to help the school with development and improvement planning by participating and responding to surveys and questionnaires. The views of parents inform new policies and priorities for improvement planning.
- Parents can take advantage of opportunities provided by the school for them to be actively involved in the life of the school. Parents volunteer to Read Aloud to younger students, offer clubs during Passion Hour, serve as expert judges for academic fairs, give specialized presentations to groups of students, etc.
- Parents are asked to follow up with the academic progress of their children. Parents can monitor their children through SeeSaw (Grades 1-5) and Google Classroom (Grades 6-12). Parents can check reports on Mograsys every term to monitor academic performance. Parents are also asked to attend both the Parent/Teacher and Student-Led Conferences for more detailed information about performance- academic and social-emotional.

IX. Monitoring and Evaluation

The effective implementation of all Teaching and Learning policies will be monitored by the Senior Leadership Team (SLT). The effectiveness and impact of the curriculum policy shall be reviewed and revised annually.

X. Language of Instruction Policy

The languages of instruction at New Academy School are English and Arabic. English is spoken during English, Math, Science, Physical Education, Arabic B, Moral, Social and cultural studies, Music, Art, and Elective courses. Arabic is spoken during Arabic A, Islamic Studies A.

XI. Instructional Equipment Policy

Equipment used for instructional courses are to support teaching and learning. Teachers are encouraged to integrate technology to enhance student-centered learning experiences. Computer use for courses must follow the Bring Your Own Device mentioned in the Student Code of Conduct Policy(NAS-P2-1). The school had the decision to shift to the Apple Education system to make sure that all devices used in the school premises are monitored and used fully for educational purposes. Stakeholders were surveyed, plans were set and it is piloted this academic year. This decision was taken to ensure a cyber secure learning environment for all students.

XII. Homework Policy

Quality homework is provided to students to reinforce and challenge their knowledge and skills of new material. Teachers will coordinate and inform other staff of assignments to avoid undue burdens to students. Teachers will provide written instructions, due dates, and rubrics for homework assignments which shall be aligned to standards. For detailed homework policy, refer to NAS-P8-2.

XIII. Standardized Classroom Expectations:

Classrooms are ordered with labels displaying (at minimum) school guiding statements, teacher's name, class schedule (timetable), classroom expectations, learning objectives, corrected student work with rubrics, and relevant student data.

XIV. Academic Integrity

Students are expected to complete their own work maintaining academic honesty and responsibility. Each department will display any penalties for lack of academic integrity in their rubrics. Violations of academic integrity on assessments are referenced in the Assessment policy (NAS- p8-3).

XV. Missed Assignments

Students are expected to complete their own work by the due date unless a medical excuse is provided. Each department will display any penalties for missed assignments with their rubrics.

XVI. Student Progress Reporting Policy

Teachers will document students' progress and communicate with parents through the designated electronic platform. One formal report is generated every semester for attendance and academic progress using a standard marking scale provided by KHDA. Parents are encouraged to inquire about students' progress anytime during the school year, especially during the Parents/Teacher Meeting and Student-Led Conference.

XVII. Grade Level Promotion

Grade level promotion and retention are based on academic performance at the end of each academic year with KHDA approval. The Ministry of Education does not allow students in grades 1 and 2 to be retained in the same grade. Students in grades 3-12 can repeat the same grade if the grade level promotion criteria is not met. Refer to the Assessment policy (NAS-p8-3) and Inclusion policy (NAS-p3-1) for grade level promotion of students identified for SOD.

Graduation is determined by a minimum of credits in specific subjects approved by KHDA. NAS provides a program of studies for students with options for electives and choices.

Students in grades 9-12 must complete the hours of instruction for each credit course according to KHDA guidelines. Students with 10 or more unexcused absences will not receive final credit for the course.

XVIII. Academic Advisement

Academic advice occurs with students in accordance with the minimum graduation requirements and course offerings available. Parents are encouraged to acknowledge student course selections and meet with the Career Counselor /VP (HS) throughout the academic school year.

XIX. Professional Development

NAS provides professional development training sessions including internal and external resources that staff members are required to attend for teaching and learning purposes. The individual, departmental, and group PD needs are identified and in-house or external PDs are recommended/planned based on the needs identified.

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