



Al Resalah American International School

Learning and Teaching Policy

2024 - 2025

Introduction

At Al Resalah American International School (RAIS), we believe in the concept of lifelong learning and in the idea that both adults and children learn new things every day. We maintain that learning should be a rewarding and enjoyable experience for everyone. We believe appropriate teaching and learning experiences help children lead happy and rewarding lives.

We strive to ensure that students are provided with high-quality learning experiences that lead to a consistently high level of achievement by creating an effective and well-managed learning environment in class or online in which each child's individual needs are met. Teaching is centered on the learning process of the individual child, with learning basic skills as one of RAIS's most important goals. In developing the school's curriculum, our staff personalizes learning and integrates the teaching and reinforcing of basic skills in all subject areas.

Aims

- Enable students to become confident, resourceful, enquiring, and independent learners.
- Foster students' self-esteem and help them to build positive relationships with other people
- Develop students' self-respect, encourage them to understand the ideas, attitudes, and values of others, and teach them to respect other people's feelings
- Show respect for a diverse range of cultures and, in doing so, promote positive attitudes towards other people.
- Enable the student to understand their community and help them feel valued as part of it
- Help students grow into reliable, independent, and positive citizens.

Our beliefs

Effective Learning

We believe all students can attain and progress at grade level and beyond if provided with the opportunity. We also acknowledge that people learn in many ways: visually, kinaesthetically, and auditorily. We consider these unique differences when planning our teaching and providing varied opportunities for learning. Opportunities are planned to promote independent and active learning and Athena Core Values.

Effective Teaching

- When teaching, we focus on motivating all the children and building on their skills, knowledge, and understanding of the curriculum so that they reach the highest level of personal achievement.
- We base our teaching on our knowledge of the children's level of attainment. Our focus is on developing the children's knowledge and skills further. We strive to ensure that all tasks set are appropriate to each child's level of performance and can challenge the child to progress. When planning work for children with special educational needs, we give due regard to information and targets in the children's Individual Education Plans (IEPs). We have high expectations of all children.
- We set academic targets for the children each year and share these targets with them and their parents. We also periodically review each child's progress and set revised targets.
- We plan our lessons with clear learning objectives. We take these objectives from California and MOE standards. SMART Learning Objectives drive our lesson plans. We thoroughly plan for differentiation, use of questioning, and collaborative learning opportunities. All students' progress is assessed and celebrated. Our plans are evaluated and reflected upon to inform future learning and teaching.
- We ensure that children feel safe and always appreciated.
- Teaching assistants and other adult helpers are deployed as effectively as possible to ensure progress and engagement for all our students.
- All our teachers reflect on their strengths and weaknesses and plan their professional development needs accordingly.
- All teachers recognize the need to use strategies that will allow all students to learn in ways that best suit them so that they will fulfil their potential and make meaningful connections in their learning. Many learning opportunities are made available to the students that take into account visual, auditory, and kinesthetic learning styles. Such opportunities include:
 - investigation and problem-solving
 - research and finding out
 - group work, paired work, or independent work
 - use of technology in all areas of the curriculum
 - project-based learning
 - asking and answering questions

- role-plays and oral presentations

Effective Learning Environment in Lessons and During Distance Learning

- Students are engaged, and their needs are met by incorporating various teaching methods, such as hands-on activities, group work, independent work, and technology integration.
- Students are treated in a fair, transparent, and consistent manner.
- Students know they are valued and respected, regardless of other factors such as ability, gender, sexuality, race, ethnicity, or religion.
- Students are challenged to achieve high expectations and receive the support necessary to meet those expectations.
- Students feel physically and emotionally safe in the classroom and during online classes. They view the classroom as a space where they can freely express themselves and their ideas without fear of judgment.
- Students embrace challenges, persevere through setbacks, and view mistakes as opportunities for growth.
- Students actively engage in problem-solving, questioning, critical thinking, and the practical application of knowledge.
- Students' achievements and efforts are regularly acknowledged and celebrated.
- Students have positive relationships with teachers and their peers.
- Students know their level and next steps.
- Students self-assess their learning and their peers.
- Students effectively use technology in the lessons.

Learners' Expectations

At RAIS, learners are expected to:

- Believe in themselves that they are capable of learning and achieving.
- Be self-respecting and positive individuals with an enthusiasm for learning.
- Be independent learners who take responsibility for their own learning.
- Set goals and strive hard to achieve them.
- Think through the consequences of their behavior and be able to learn without being disrupted by others.
- Be active, collaborative learners and consistently strive hard to achieve success.
- Be mindful of time management and the repercussions for non-compliance.

- Answer questions in class in a systematic and respectful manner.
- Engage in their social and emotional development.
- Provide feedback to peers and self-evaluate learning.
- Know their next steps in learning.

Teachers' Expectations

All teachers are expected to:

- Have excellent subject and pedagogical knowledge.
- Plan meaningful and engaging lessons to ensure all students' needs are being met.
- Use various teaching strategies, such as differentiated learning, project-based learning, collaborative learning, flipped learning, etc., to deliver the instruction.
- Integrate cross-curricular activities in the lessons.
- Be leaders of learning and enhance their own subject and pedagogical knowledge.
- Engage in a culture of self-learning, share best practices, undertake professional development and build capacity, and observe good practice.
- Be reflective practitioners to strengthen their teaching practice.
- Have high expectations from students and believe in their ability to learn.
- Understand students' strengths and weaknesses and provide them with learning that suits their needs.
- Use data-driven decisions to inform teaching-learning.
- Have open channels of communication with students and parents.
- Set goals that are built together with learners.
- Use time appropriately while adhering to timelines for effective work ethic and culture.
- Model and expect students to respect and care for themselves and their environment.
- Partner with parents in their children's learning journey.
- Enhance their skills in both in-class and online instruction, ensuring effective teaching practices across all learning modalities.

Distance Learning

During distance learning, the expectations from teachers and students remain the same. Normal schedules are maintained to uphold consistency in learning routines. However, lesson durations are frequently shortened to address concerns about excessive screen time. Online classes are facilitated

through Microsoft Teams, where attendance is recorded for each session. Parents are promptly notified in case of a student's absence to ensure continued support and learning. Furthermore, students submit their assignments on Teams, facilitating smooth communication and assignment submission.

WHAT A GOOD LESSON LOOKS LIKE?

- All students are engaged in asking and answering open-ended and critical-thinking questions.
- All students are working on the tasks according to their levels (differentiated tasks)
- Most students can make connections in their learning and apply their knowledge and skills in real-life contexts.
- The majority of the students make better-than-expected progress in the lessons.
- All students' self and peer assess their and their peer's learning.

Non-Negotiable in a Lesson

- Grade-level lesson objective and success criteria
- Classroom displays and layout
- Language development opportunity (Think-pair-share, students engaged in class discussions, etc.)
- Differentiated task
- Cross-curricular links, real-life connections, and critical thinking questions
- Effective use of technology
- Progress check and exit ticket
- Equal opportunities for all students
- Reflection of learning

Instructional Framework

Our instructional framework combines the Gradual Release of Responsibility model with the 4Es lesson structure—Engage, Explore, Express, and Evaluate—to create a comprehensive, student-centered learning experience.

Engage Phase

Teachers spark students' curiosity, establishing an interactive environment that captivates students' interest by using tools such as open-ended questions, real-life scenarios, games, building on student's prior knowledge to establish connections, and riddles, among other engaging techniques.

Explore Phase

After grasping students' attention, the instruction is shifted to hands-on experiences, active participation, inquiry-based learning, differentiated tasks, and group or independent work, allowing students to delve deeply into the subject matter, ask questions, visualize concepts, and make meaningful discoveries.

Express Phase

Transitioning to the Express phase, students apply their acquired knowledge and skills in real-life scenarios, utilizing various communication and creative expression mediums.

Evaluate Phase

Finally, formative assessments and reflective practices are integrated to measure comprehension and offer constructive feedback, ensuring a thorough understanding of the curriculum. The live feedback throughout the lesson helps students clear any misconceptions they may have.

Lesson Structure

- Before the lesson

Read, understand, and unpack the curriculum standards.

Plan lessons with SMART lesson objectives.

Use data to plan for differentiated tasks.

- During the lesson

Step 1:

Share the lesson objectives and success criteria with the students.

Step 2:

Show/model what students need to be able to do.

Use open-ended questions for students to think more and to check that they understand things.

Step 3:

Give time for students to partner up and work together on the concept (the teacher stops talking).

The teacher walks around to ask probing questions and provide constructive feedback (for example, the next steps).

Step 4:

Explore students' thinking; have them summarize new learning/information in different forms, such as Venn diagrams, graphical organizers, mind maps, writing, etc. Get the students to use what they have learned to produce something.

Step 5:

Conduct an assessment for learning. Ask students to self-assess their own and their peers' learning.

- After the lesson

Immediately check students' work to ensure completion of the task.

Apply simple and clear feedback (SIR Feedback: What they have learned, what needs improvement or next steps)

Parents' expectations:

We believe that parents have a fundamental role to play in helping children to learn. Engaging parents in their children's learning is one of our key priorities. This is achieved by:

- Holding parent meetings to explain our school strategies and discuss students' progress.
- Send information via circulars and newsletters and update the school website.
- Send reports throughout the year on student attainment and targets.
- Suggest to parents how they can support their children at home.
- Orientation meetings to explain the curriculum and assessments.

We expect parents to:

- ensure that their child has the best attendance record possible.
- follow up on their child's learning regularly.
- ensure that their child is equipped for school with the correct textbooks, stationery, uniform, and PE kit.
- do their best to keep their child healthy and fit to attend school.
- inform the school if matters outside of school are likely to affect their child's performance or behavior.
- promote a positive attitude towards school and learning in general.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Monitoring teaching and learning in schools is crucial for maintaining quality, supporting student growth, and ensuring that education is effective and responsive to student needs. It plays a vital role in continuous improvement and helps create a positive and successful learning environment for all students.

The senior leadership team at RAIS is responsible for leading and guiding the monitoring and evaluation of the teaching and learning process.

The following process is followed to monitor teaching & learning:

- Mentor teachers through their respective instructional coaches and fellow colleagues.
- Using teacher tracker to ensure consistency, accountability, and continuous improvement in teaching practices.
- Regular walk-throughs and work scrutiny to track students' progress.
- Analyzing the assessment data to track student attainment and progress and identify gaps in teaching and curriculum.
- Provision of need-based and generic professional development to support teachers' practice.
- In an academic year, two developmental lesson observations by an SLT member.
- Gaps across departments and phases are identified, which flow into the next professional development program.



Signed:
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