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Ambassador International Academy Mankhool

LEARNING AND TEACHING POLICY

Whole School

Date created: September 2026

Review date:	**Reviewed by:**	**Verified by:**	**Website upload**
September 2027	Paul Gardner, Vice Principal & Head of Secondary	Principal	Yes

Contents

1. Introduction

2. AIAM Approach to Learning and Teaching

3. The Great Teaching Toolkit

4. AIAM Teaching Principles

5. What Effective Learning Looks Like at AIAM

6. Lesson Routines and Learning Environments

7. Curriculum and Planning

8. Assessment and Feedback for Learning

9. Inclusion, Adaptation and Challenge

10. Language, Literacy and Communication

11. Technology and Digital Learning

12. Early Years Pedagogy and Practice

13. Securing Consistency and Quality

14. Roles and Responsibilities

15. Related Policies

1. Introduction

At Ambassador International Academy Mankhool (AIAM), our Learning and Teaching Policy establishes a coherent whole-school framework for high-quality, inclusive and ambitious learning. It provides a shared language for effective practice while recognising the developmental differences between Early Years, Primary and Secondary.

The policy is intended to support professional judgement, not replace it. Consistency at AIAM means consistency of purpose, expectations and quality rather than identical lesson structures. Teachers are expected to make evidence-informed decisions that respond to the curriculum, the learning intention and the needs of the students in front of them.

2. AIAM Approach to Learning and Teaching

Learning and teaching at AIAM combines the conceptual understanding, inquiry, agency and Approaches to Learning associated with an IB education with clear expectations for knowledge, progression and academic rigour. Our approach is evidence-informed, inclusive and responsive. Reading, language, discussion, practical learning, collaboration and human interaction are deliberately prioritised, with technology used where it adds genuine educational value.

Our approach is built on the following principles:

- Every student is entitled to ambitious learning, appropriate support and meaningful challenges.
- Prior knowledge matters. Effective teaching identifies what students already know and deliberately connects new learning to it.
- Learning should develop secure knowledge alongside conceptual understanding, disciplinary skills and the ability to transfer learning to unfamiliar contexts.
- Assessment is part of teaching. Teachers continually check understanding, identify misconceptions and adapt instruction in response.
- Students should increasingly understand themselves as learners, reflect on their progress and develop agency, independence and metacognition.
- Strong relationships, predictable routines and high expectations create conditions in which students can think hard and learn well.
- Curriculum and pedagogy should reflect the UAE context while developing internationally minded learners who can connect learning to the wider world.

3. The Great Teaching Toolkit

The Great Teaching Toolkit (GTT) provides AIAM's shared framework and common language for teaching quality. It is the reference point for professional development, instructional coaching, lesson observation, quality assurance and performance development.

Dimension	What this means at AIAM
1. Understanding the Content	Teachers understand the curriculum and subject deeply, sequence learning coherently, connect new learning to prior knowledge, explain and model clearly, and anticipate and address misconceptions.
2. Creating a Supportive Environment	Classrooms are safe, inclusive and purposeful. Relationships support learning, expectations are ambitious, routines are secure and students feel able to contribute, make mistakes and improve.
3. Maximising Opportunity to Learn	Learning time is protected. Teachers use explanation, modelling, questioning, practice, assessment and adaptive teaching to ensure students participate, practise and make progress.
4. Activating Hard Thinking	Students are expected to think, explain, justify, connect, solve problems, reflect and apply learning. Challenge is appropriate, sustained and responsive to the learner.

The GTT is not a checklist for a single lesson. No individual lesson is expected to demonstrate every feature equally. Judgements about teaching quality are built from evidence over time and interpreted in the context of the curriculum, phase and learning intention.

4. AIAM Teaching Principles

The GTT is complemented by AIAM-specific principles that reflect our curriculum, IB journey and educational priorities. These principles should be visible across learning where they are relevant to the lesson context.

AIAM Principle	Expected characteristics

IB Philosophy & Student Agency	Inquiry; conceptual understanding; Approaches to Learning; Learner Profile; reflection; meaningful student voice, choice and ownership.
Language, Literacy & Communication	Reading; vocabulary; oracy; disciplinary literacy; purposeful discussion; accurate subject-specific language; opportunities to explain and communicate thinking.
Inclusive Practice	Knowledge of individual learners; Students of Determination; ELL; adaptive teaching; appropriate scaffolding and challenge; equitable participation; high expectations for all.
Assessment for Learning	Checking understanding; effective questioning; retrieval; identifying misconceptions; actionable feedback; student response; teaching adapted from evidence of learning.
Challenge, Thinking & Metacognition	Appropriate cognitive challenge; problem-solving; application; connections; reflection; independence; resilience; students increasingly understanding how they learn.
Purposeful Curriculum & Context	Clear curriculum intent; coherent sequencing; real-world relevance; local and global contexts; UAE culture and values; meaningful interdisciplinary connections where appropriate.

5. What Effective Learning Looks Like at AIAM

5.1 Progress and Assessment

- Students build knowledge, understanding and skills over time.
- Teachers use questioning and other checks for understanding to reveal thinking rather than simply confirm task completion.
- Assessment information is used to adjust explanation, pace, scaffolding, practice and challenge.
- Misconceptions are identified and addressed.
- Students understand relevant success criteria and increasingly evaluate the quality of their own work.
- Feedback leads to action and improved learning.

5.2 Learning Culture

- Relationships are warm, respectful and professionally purposeful.
- Students understand routines and expectations and increasingly manage them independently.
- Learning time is maximised and transitions are efficient.
- Students feel safe to contribute, question, attempt difficult work and learn from mistakes.
- The classroom culture communicates that effort, thinking, improvement and high-quality work matter.
- Student participation is purposeful; the balance of teacher input and student activity is determined by what best supports the learning rather than an arbitrary ratio.

5.3 Challenge and Personalisation

- Teachers know their students and use available information to anticipate barriers and plan appropriate support.
- All students encounter ambitious curriculum content, with scaffolding used to enable access rather than lower expectations.
- Students who require additional support receive it promptly and purposefully.
- Students who are ready to go further encounter depth, complexity and appropriate challenge rather than simply more work.
- Teaching is adapted responsively from evidence gathered during learning.

5.4 Approaches to Learning

- Students communicate, collaborate, research, think and self-manage with increasing independence.
- Students retrieve, connect and apply prior learning.
- Inquiry and problem-solving are purposeful rather than activities in themselves.
- Students reflect on learning and develop metacognitive awareness.
- Learning creates opportunities to make meaningful connections across disciplines and to local, global and real-world contexts.

6. Lesson Routines and Learning Environments

Strong routines create calm classrooms, maximise learning time and allow attention to remain focused on learning. AIAM's routines provide a framework for effective teaching rather than a rigid lesson formula.

6.1 Primary and Secondary

- Students should be greeted at the door wherever possible, particularly where lessons involve movement between teaching spaces.
- Learning should begin promptly with a purposeful learning-on-entry activity.
- Retrieval practice should be used where it is the most appropriate way to strengthen prior learning; it is not required where another approach better serves the learning intention.
- The purpose of the opening activity should connect clearly to the learning that follows.
- In Grades 5 to 8, devices should not be used during lesson starters.
- Explanations, resources and classroom environments should minimise unnecessary cognitive load and distraction.
- Routines should become increasingly student-managed so that time and attention are available for learning.

6.2 Learning Environments

Learning environments should be safe, orderly, inclusive and purposeful. Displays, resources and classroom organisation should support learning rather than create unnecessary distraction. Student work should reflect pride, care and progress over time. Learning spaces should enable appropriate collaboration, discussion, practical activity, independent work and reflection.

7. Curriculum and Planning

Toddle is AIAM's central platform for curriculum documentation, collaborative planning and unit development. Teachers are expected to plan collaboratively using the school's agreed curriculum documentation, including the Programme of Inquiry where applicable, scope and sequence documents, unit planners and subject overviews.

Planning should make curriculum progression visible and ensure that learning is coherent, conceptually driven and aligned with intended knowledge, skills and understandings. Planning is a professional process rather than a compliance exercise: its value lies in the quality and coherence of the learning it enables.

7.1 Early Years

Early Years planning is responsive, purposeful and rooted in a secure understanding of the children. It draws on observations, interests, developmental needs, inquiry opportunities and the intended learning

within the relevant planning framework. Planning balances intentional teaching with child-initiated exploration, continuous provision, purposeful provocations and meaningful outdoor learning.

7.2 Primary and Secondary

Primary curriculum planning is underpinned by the International Baccalaureate framework and relevant Scope and Sequence documentation, enriched through English National Curriculum benchmarks. Secondary planning draws extensively on the English National Curriculum while implementing the MYP framework and creating coherent progression towards future IBDP/IBCP pathways.

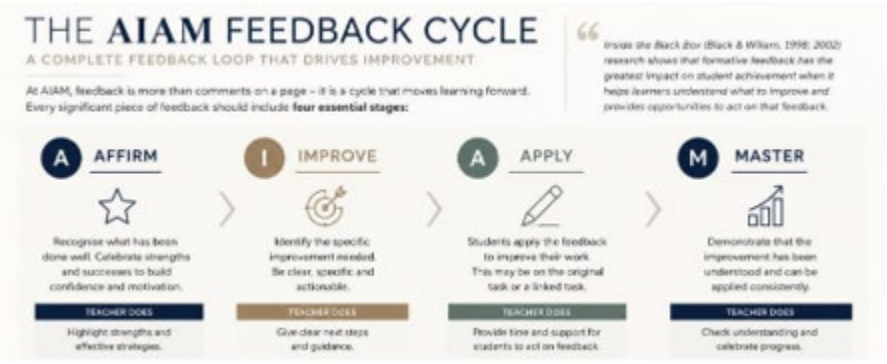
8. Assessment and Feedback for Learning

Assessment and feedback are integral to learning and teaching. Teachers should use a balanced range of formative strategies, including questioning, retrieval, observation, discussion, review of work, peer assessment and self-assessment, to establish what students understand and determine appropriate next steps.

Feedback should be timely, purposeful and actionable. It may be verbal, written, whole-class, peer or self-generated. Regardless of the method, feedback is complete only when students have an appropriate opportunity to respond and apply it. At AIAM, feedback should result in action.

In Secondary, every summative assessment should be preceded by a meaningful formative opportunity that allows misconceptions to be identified and teaching to be adapted. Following summative assessment, meaningful feedback and assessment outcomes should be recorded in Toddle within two weeks, preferably sooner, and students should have a planned opportunity to respond.

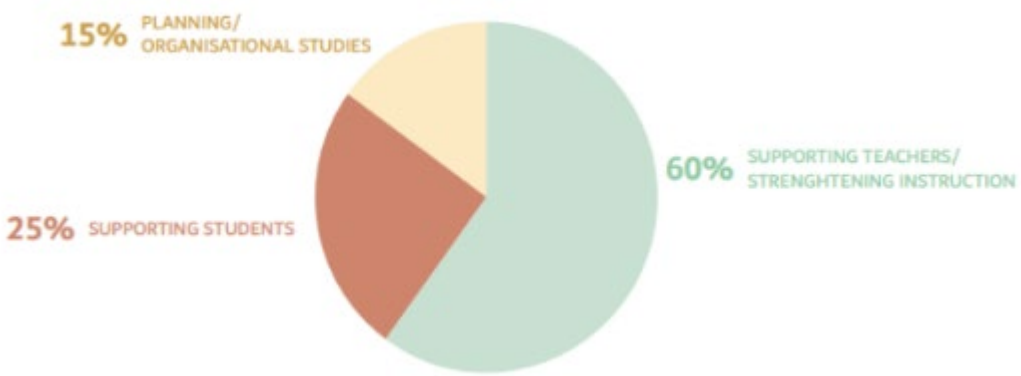
Detailed requirements for assessment, moderation, reporting and phase-specific feedback are set out in the AIAM Assessment Policy and Staff Handbook.



9 Inclusion, Adaptation and Challenge

Inclusive practice is the responsibility of every teacher. Teachers should understand the needs, starting points and learning profiles of the students they teach and use this knowledge to remove unnecessary barriers while maintaining ambitious expectations.

- Use assessment evidence to adapt teaching in real time.
- Provide scaffolding that enables access to ambitious learning and is reduced as independence develops.
- Plan for Students of Determination, English Language Learners, Emirati students and more able learners using the school's agreed student information and support plans.
- Use support adults purposefully to increase participation, independence and learning rather than create dependency.
- Ensure challenge is appropriate to students' readiness and promotes depth of thought, application and transfer.
- Seek support from the Inclusion Team where a student's needs require additional assessment, planning or intervention.



10. Language, Literacy and Communication

Reading sits at the heart of the AIAM curriculum. Every teacher contributes to the development of language, literacy and communication within their subject or phase.

- Students should encounter high-quality, age-appropriate texts and opportunities to read widely.
- Teachers explicitly develop vocabulary and subject-specific language.

- Purposeful talk, questioning and discussion should enable students to articulate, refine and justify thinking.
- Writing, where appropriate, should develop students' ability to communicate accurately within the conventions of the discipline.
- Teachers should recognise students' language profiles and provide appropriate support without reducing the intellectual ambition of the curriculum.

11. Technology and Digital Learning

At AIAM, technology should enhance learning, not dominate it. Digital tools are used intentionally and only where they add genuine educational value. Teachers should consider whether technology enhances, modifies or redefines learning, rather than simply digitising a task that could be achieved equally well through discussion, reading, writing or practical activity.

Phase	AIAM expectation
Early Years	No routine screen use.
Grades 1-2	Minimal technology, used only where there is a clear educational purpose.
Grades 3-4	Limited technology use, supporting digital literacy and relevant elements of the curriculum.
Grades 5-9	AIAM-managed Chromebooks may be used, with screen time ordinarily limited to a maximum of 45 minutes per school day across subjects.

Toddle is AIAM's primary learning management system and central hub for learning resources, homework, assessment information, feedback, progress monitoring and routine academic communication.

12. Early Years Pedagogy and Practice

In Early Years, the principles of the Great Teaching Toolkit are expressed through developmentally appropriate pedagogy rather than a fixed lesson structure. High-quality interactions, purposeful play, language-rich environments, responsive teaching and skilled adult-child dialogue are central.

- Every child is welcomed warmly and known as an individual.
- Learning may be adult-led, child-initiated or emerge through continuous provision.

- Planned adult-led experiences have a clear learning intention, shared with children in developmentally appropriate ways where suitable.
- Adults observe carefully, join play sensitively and extend thinking, language and skills without unnecessarily taking ownership of the experience.
- Teaching responds to developmental stage and individual need through modelling, scaffolding, re-teaching and appropriate challenge.
- Open-ended questioning and meaningful conversation encourage children to think, explain, predict, investigate and develop ideas.
- Observation and assessment inform what adults provide and do next.

13. Securing Consistency and Quality

At AIAM, securing consistently high-quality teaching and learning is a shared responsibility. Our approach to quality assurance is developmental, evidence-informed and professionally rigorous. The purpose is to improve teaching and student learning, not to create performative compliance. Our professional culture is centred on **"improving, not proving."** This reflects the approach established in the Staff Handbook, where coaching, reflection and continual development are part of everyday professional practice.

14.1 Quality Assurance

The quality of teaching and learning is evaluated through multiple sources of evidence gathered over time. No single lesson observation defines a teacher's effectiveness. Evidence may include:

- learning walks and formal lesson observations;
- student voice;
- review of student work;
- curriculum planning and Toddle;
- assessment and feedback practices;
- professional discussions;
- collaboration and contribution to the wider life of the school; and
- engagement in professional development and instructional coaching.

Together, these provide a balanced picture of teaching quality, curriculum implementation and the impact of teaching on student learning.

Quality assurance is aligned with the **Great Teaching Toolkit and AIAM Teaching Principles**, providing a consistent shared language while recognising that effective teaching may look different according to phase, subject, curriculum and learning context.

14.2 Performance Management and Professional Development Cycle

Teaching quality and professional development are reviewed through an annual cycle of developmental observation, coaching, quality assurance and performance review.

The cycle includes an initial period of developmental learning walks and feedback, formal observation and review points, opportunities for coaching and deliberate practice, and subsequent evaluation of progress against agreed professional priorities. Developmental coaching is deliberately distinguished from formal evaluation so that colleagues have meaningful opportunities to reflect upon feedback, refine their practice and demonstrate improvement over time. This reflects the approach established within the Staff Handbook.

The **precise dates, deadlines and review points for each stage of the annual performance management and professional development cycle are published in the AIAM Staff Handbook for the relevant academic year**. This allows the operational timetable to be reviewed annually without requiring amendment to this policy.

14.3 Support and Performance Improvement

Where further development is identified, colleagues will receive clear feedback, agreed next steps and appropriate professional support. This may include instructional coaching through StepLab, mentoring, modelling, deliberate practice, targeted professional development and subsequent review of impact.

Where more structured support is required, a **Performance Improvement Plan (PIP)** may be implemented. The purpose of a PIP is developmental rather than punitive and is to provide structured coaching, targeted professional support, clearly defined success criteria and scheduled review points.

The expectation throughout is that colleagues are given appropriate support and opportunity to meet AIAM's standards for high-quality teaching while remaining accountable for demonstrating sustained professional growth and improvement.

14. Roles and Responsibilities

Role	Key responsibilities
Principal and Senior Leadership Team	Set and communicate the strategic expectations for learning and teaching; ensure coherence across phases; monitor quality and impact; provide appropriate professional development and support.
Heads of Section	Lead implementation within Early Years, Primary and Secondary; monitor curriculum, teaching, learning and assessment; support staff development; ensure phase practice aligns with this policy while remaining developmentally appropriate.
Heads of Department/ Subject and Curriculum Leaders	Lead curriculum quality and progression; support collaborative planning; develop subject-specific pedagogy; monitor implementation and student outcomes; support moderation and professional learning.
Teachers	Know the curriculum and their students; plan and teach ambitious, inclusive learning; use assessment responsively; provide actionable feedback; maintain strong routines and learning environments; engage actively in coaching, collaboration and professional development.
Learning Support/ Classroom Support Staff	Work with teachers to support participation, learning and increasing independence; understand relevant student needs and agreed strategies; contribute observations and professional insight.
Students	Engage purposefully in learning; contribute to a positive learning culture; act on feedback; reflect on progress; develop independence, agency and responsibility.
Parents/Guardians	Support regular reading, homework and learning routines; engage with Toddle, reports and conferences; work in partnership with the school to support progress and wellbeing.

15. Related Policies

- Assessment Policy
- Positive Behaviour Policy
- Inclusion Policy
- Academic Integrity Policy
- Homework expectations within the AIAM Staff Handbook
- Technology and Artificial Intelligence guidance within the AIAM Staff Handbook
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Professional Development, Quality Assurance and Performance Management procedures
- AIAM Teaching and Learning Observation Rubric