VISION
FOREVER DRIVEN BY KNOWLEDGE,
INSPIRED BY SUCCESS

MISSION
TO NURTURE AN INTERNATIONALLY
MINDED COMMUNITY OF INTEGRITY
AND ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE

VALUES
RESPECT, INTEGRITY,
COLLABORATION, EXCELLENCE

Inclusion Policy (English)

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Al-Futtaim Education Foundation

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RATIONALE

At Universal American School we value children as individuals and recognize the diversity of our students. A student with Special Educational Needs (SEND) is called a Student of Determination (SoD), and some may find it much harder to learn or take part in activities compared to students of the same age. These students may need more support or provision to access the same curriculum. All members of staff are committed to offering an inclusive curriculum to ensure the best possible support and outcomes for all students, regardless of their needs, abilities, and aspirations. We promote a comprehensive approach and follow a social model rather than a medical model, meaning we focus on the individual and their surroundings rather than their actual diagnosis. We believe all children deserve the opportunity to access an extensive, balanced and differentiated academic and social curriculum. Alongside adapting the curriculum to cater for all needs, we strive to provide a nurturing environment that develops the well-being of each student. The guiding principles for learning support are:

- Every teacher is a teacher of students with SEND. Teaching students with SEND isa whole-school responsibility, requiring a whole-school response.
- Classrooms offer a safe, stimulating, and supportive learning environment that allowsaccess and challenge for all.
- Teaching and learning are approached with active awareness of learning difficultiesand barriers, learning differences, and learning styles.
- Recognition of the importance of emotional well-being and focusing on the development of self-esteem and confidence as a fundamental contributor toachievement.
- Language and literacy are vital to successful learning in all areas of the curriculum.
- Supporting students during phases of significant transition.
- To create a community of inclusion that encompasses the needs of all students while focusing on links to real life learning experiences ensuring all students areequipped for independence in the future.

This policy takes account of the Inclusive Education Policy Framework Policy (2017). The Dubai Inclusive Education Policy Framework Policy has been developed to support the UAE's commitment to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) as well as federal and local legislation that calls for the inclusion of all learners, regardless of ability, in the education sector. The Dubai Inclusive Education Framework Policy (2017) states that a Special Education Need and Disability is "a need which occurs when a student identified with an impairment requires the school to make specific modifications or provide specific supports to prevent, remove or reduce any potential disability from occurring and to ensure that the student can access education onan equitable basis and within a common learning environment with same aged peers."

AIMS OF OUR UAS INCLUSION POLICY

- To address the individual needs of all students with a SEND.
- To identify students with SEND as early as possible through admission procedures, observations, and screening tools.
- To ensure that students with SEND have equal access to an extensive andbalanced curriculum that suits their learning style and needs.
- To work with all stakeholders to continuously enhance an accessiblecurriculum for all students.
- To collaborate with class teachers to ensure that students with SEND have their lessons appropriately differentiated to enable students to overcome barriers tolearning.
- To provide information and support to all teachers about students with SEND on their difficulties and recommend strategies for their educational provision, sharingexamples of good practice.
- To successfully track and monitor the progress of all students with SEND to ensureeach student makes the expected progress.
- To ensure that parents are involved in their child's learning and gain anunderstanding of their SEND needs.

- To involve students in the development and review of their own learning journey and 'Individual Education Plans' (IEP).
- To liaise with outside agencies when specialist support is required.
- To support staff in embedding inclusive strategies within the classroom.
- Facilitate a Learning Support Team to oversee SEND provision and exemplary practices across the school.

LEGISLATION

This policy aims to ensure that Universal American School is compliant with:
- The UAE Federal Law 29 (2006) concerning the 'Rights of People with Special Educational Needs;
- The UAE Federal Law 2 (2015) against 'Discrimination and Hatred'.
- The Dubai Inclusive Education Framework Policy (2017);
- The UAE Federal Law 2 (2015) concerning the 'Protection of the Right of a Persons of Disabilities in the Emirate of Dubai'
- UAE Executive Council Resolution No. 2 of 2017 Regulating Private Schools in the Emirate of Dubai.

COMMITMENT TO INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

The concept of inclusive education lies at the heart of effective education and aligns with the global UN Sustainable Development Goal 4 - Quality Education. It encompasses the principles of diversity, personalization, equity, respect, acceptance, and enrichment. When we improve the quality of inclusion within our schools, we improve education for all.

With our model of inclusivity, we meet our vision of Forever Driven by Knowledge, Inspired by Success by:
- Acceptance that all students bring value to our community.
- Commitment to ensure that every student is engaged in various academic and social activities.
- Inclusive offerings of ASAs across all divisions.
- An understanding that effective teaching practices are based on personalized consideration of the strengths and needs of each student.
- Our PD program includes specialized training delivered by our Learning Support Team.
- Establish a balance between learning with peers in a common learning environment and focusing on individual learning goals.

International research has shown that high-performing schools have the most success with inclusion. These schools prioritize equity and inclusiveness as key conditions for achieving educational excellence (Cologon, 2013; OECD, 2012; 2014; United Nations, 2016).

Willams's (2010) analysis of the 2009 PISA data shows that schools that adopt a more inclusive system of education, have higher levels of student achievement and better outcomes overall.

DEFINITION OF INCLUSION

UAS believes that inclusion is the careful and thoughtful combination of educational excellence and equity. By this we understand that no two students are the same and every student should receive the support they need to be successful. Inclusion is a basic right of individuals, and its objective should be to embrace everyone regardless of race, age, gender, ability, religious and cultural beliefs. When we have true inclusion, it is when we have removed all barriers, discrimination, and intolerance. When implemented properly, it should make everyone feel included and supported, whichever environment they are in.

STUDENTS OF DETERMINATION DEFINITION

A student of determination may find it significantly harder to learn or to take part inactivities compared to students of the same age. These students may need additional support or provision to access the same curriculum.

Special educational provision is additional to, or otherwise differentiated from, theeducational provision made for children of the same age. The aim of the provision is to ensure the student can access education on an equitable basis andwithin a common learning environment with peers the same age.

A student may be identified as having a learning difficulty if he/she:
- has significantly greater difficulty in learning than most other children ofthe same age.
- has a disability which either prevents or hinders the child from making use ofeducational facilities provided in comparison to children of the same age.

A disability is 'a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-termadverse effect on the ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.'

PHILOSOPHY DRIVING OUR INCLUSIVE LEARNING PRACTICES
Common Learning Environment

At UAS we offer a common learning environment, which is an educational setting where students from diverse backgrounds and with different abilities learn together in an inclusive environment. Common learning environments are used for the majority of the students' regular instruction hours and may include classrooms, libraries, gym, performance theatres, music rooms, cafeterias, playgrounds and the local community. We define a common learning environment as a place where every student learns in collaboration. Effective common learning environments:

- Enable each student to fully participate in the learning environment that is designedfor all students and is shared with peers in the chosen educational setting
- Provide a positive climate, promote a sense of belonging and ensure student progress toward appropriate personal, social, emotional, and academic goals
- Are responsive to individual learning needs by providing sufficient levels of supportand applying student-centered teaching practices and principles
- Ensure every student can fully access the learning environment. This includes all areas of the school community.

At Universal American School, our premises are fully accessible. This includes the provision of ramps, lifts, wide corridors, and emergency evacuation chairs for students with physical disabilities.

Equitable Access to Learning Experiences

Studies have shown the benefits that inclusive classrooms offer for children. Hence, where appropriate, instead of pulling children out of the classroom to offer them specialized instruction, an inclusive classroom teacher comes into the classroom. This allows our teachers and specialists to work together in the same learning environment, benefiting all students, whoare offered additional resources and support. Additionally, we provide access arrangements for assessments depending on specific student needs.
This may include:
- Extra time
- Small group settings
- Scribe

We believe that our procedures for intervention support results in greater academic gains for all students. Additional benefits include better communication skills and improve social skills for students with disabilities, and fewer disruptive behavior and absences.

Early Intervention

The UAS Referral Process provides a decision-making framework intended to give educators, in partnership with parents, a platform to evaluate students by examining data to identify strengths and areas of growth. This analysis determines what support is needed for each student. These supports will be facilitated in various ways, including individual intervention, group settings, push-in support, all of which are measured to determine if they are improving children's acquisition of essential developmental skills.

General Inclusive Learning Practices in Action

The overall services provided include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Differentiated and or personalized instruction
- Various classroom accommodations
- Various responses to intervention in the classroom
- Various testing accommodations
    - In-school testing support
    - College Board Accommodation Request Support (in collaboration with the university counselor)
    - IB Exam Accommodation Request Support (in collaboration with the IB department in line with IB's Access and Inclusion Policy)
- Assistive technology
- Small group instruction in the common learning environments
- Small group interventions in the common learning environments
- 1:1 support from an Individual Learning Support Assistant funded by the parents for students with high needs
- Modified curriculum and assessments
- Referral to external agencies for supportive services including speech, Occupational Therapy, Physical Therapy and Psychological Evaluations

IDENTIFICATION AND SUPPORT

Early identification of student needs is key in effective inclusion, provision, and support of all students. All staff members are accountable in identifying barriers to learning for students in their care. Through our Learning Support Team, we provide screening and observations of students to support the students and teacher. Members of the Learning Support Team work closely with all staff including the Admissions Team to ensure barriers to learning are identified as early as possible. Parents also play a key role in working alongside the school throughout the identification process.

INCLUSIVE ADMISSION

Universal American School is highly committed to being an inclusive school, which admits students with a variety of needs including those who are gifted and talented, students of determination, or have physical, emotional, social, cultural or language challenges.

We welcome families and students who share our American international educational philosophy and who are willing to fully commit to our approaches to learning and teaching, which are based on:

- Challenging international American and IB curriculum frameworks.

- Tolerant and respectful behavioral code.
- Supportive and collaborative home-school partnerships.
- Inclusive and diverse international community.

At UAS we ensure:
- Students are not refused admission based on their exceptionalities.
- All applicants have the right to participate in admission assessment tests.
- All applicants are fairly assessed.
- Collaboration between parents and previous schools to ensure a successful transition.
- Students of determination are provided with appropriate levels of support, accommodations and curricular modifications to access the same educational opportunities as their peers based on the resources available.
- The Admissions team uses the information gained from admissions assessments, other educational assessments and previous school reports provided to Admissions by the parents at time of application to determine the type and level of support appropriate for each student.

LEVELS OF SUPPORT
Students receive support based on their needs, there are 3 Levels of support:
- Level 1 – High quality teaching where teachers accommodate individual differences in ability, learning style and behavior, through affectively differentiated classroom practice.
- Level 2 – Students will receive accommodation and support from both the classroom teacher and learning support team. Lessons and activities will be differentiated based on their needs.
- Level 3 – Students will receive support from the classroom teacher, learning support team, and/or individual learning support assistant. These students may be on a modified curriculum and the classroom teacher(s) and learning support team will collaborate to modify and/or differentiate lessons and assessments.

LEARNING SUPPORT TEAM SERVICES
Our Learning Support Team comprises of specialist teachers (special education needs, Gifted and Talented, and English language acquisition experts), learning support assistants, individual learning support assistants, student counselors and is headed by our Inclusion Leader. The Inclusion Leader is a Extended Senior Leadership Team member and is supported by an Inclusion Governor. The Learning Support Team works in close collaboration with all teachers and other educational staff to promote and implement inclusive education across the school by removing barriers to learning and ensuring an inclusive culture.

Inclusion Leader
Our Inclusion Leader is responsible for the day-to-day operation, strategic planning, and oversight of inclusive education across the school. The roles and responsibilities of the Inclusion Leader include, yet are not limited to:
- Strategic overview of and the implementation of the Inclusion policy.
- The day-to-day leadership and management of the Learning Support Team.
- Tracking the progress of students receiving support from the Learning Support Team.
- Strategic leadership and direction for the Learning Support Team.
- Liaising with and advising all teachers.
- Contributing to the continued professional development of all teachers.
- Liaising with external agencies (Educational Psychologists, Speech Therapists, Occupational Therapists).

- Modelling best practices by actively teaching/supporting our learners and students of determination.

Learning Support Teacher

The Learning Support Teacher also acts as a teacher, role model, coach and professional mentor for classroom teachers as they work to develop their practices to meet the learning needs of diverse student populations. The Inclusion Support Teacher assists our students with a range of educational needs:

- Completing interventions within the classroom setting with students to improve their academic, social, and emotional abilities.
- Offering support and guidance to teachers to ensure each student has access to anaccommodated, engaging, and challenging curriculum.
- Tracking and monitoring the progress of students receiving additional support.
- Completing testing, screening, and specialist support to identify potential barriers to learning.
- Consulting with specialist agencies to ensure the level of provision is suitable foreach student.

LSA (Learning Support Assistant)

The Learning Support Assistants work in collaboration with classroom teachers so that students of determination are successfully included in the classroom environment alongside their peers. This includes being involved in record keeping, lesson-planning, and resource development. LSAs (Learning Support Assistants) are used differently across different phases of the school depending upon classroom and student need. The specific responsibilities will differ according to the individual context of each LSA, but will include:

- providing support for specific student(s)
- promoting access to targeted support inside of the classroom
- working on differentiated activities with groups of students inside the classroom
- liaising with the Inclusion Leader and Learning Support Teacher
- developing social/emotional skills
- working with teachers to monitor the progress of students

ILSA (Individual Learning Support Assistant)

Individual Learning Support Assistants are in place for students with greater barriers to learning. They provide individual support to a student on a highly bespoke level and may be in place throughout the entire school day. The allocation of an ILSA would be discussed and deployed in agreement with the family. The specific responsibilities will differ according to the individual context of each ILSA, but will include:

- providing individual support to a specific student
- promoting access to targeted support inside the classroom
- working on differentiated activities with the student
- liaising with the Inclusion Leader/Deputy Inclusion Leader
- developing social/emotional skills of students
- working with teachers to monitor the progress of the student
- supporting intervention or therapy sessions

INDIVIDUAL EDUCATION PLAN (IEP)

Any student on Level 2 or above on the learning support register will receive an Individual Education Plan (IEP). IEPs will state a category of need. A student will have academic, social/emotional and/or physical/behavior/communication targets, which will be set in collaboration with the Inclusion Lead (or his/her designees), classroom teachers, outside support providers, and parents. These targets will be reviewed with the student's parents alongside the homeroom teacher and any outside agencies working with the student such as Educational Psychologists or therapists if this applies. All students placed on an IEP will still have full access to mainstream education; however, it may be modified to ensure the student can access, progress, and succeed at his/her own individual level where necessary. Passports are created from IEPs to provide teachers with a snapshot of a student's needs.

Students who receive intensive Level 3 Support may be supported by a 1:1 Individual Learning Support Assistant, which is parent funded. The ILSA might be full-time or part-time, depending on the student's needs. Once an ILSA is in place, parents will be asked to sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and an Individual Service Agreement (ISA) to ensure there is clarity between the school andparents, whilst also outlining the purpose and ensuring compliance.

CATEGORIES OF NEED

The following categories of needs are based upon the UAE unified categorization of disability as outlined in the revised categorization framework published by KHDA (2019). It provides an important structure to support the identification of students who qualify to receive tailored services at UAS, if it can be documented that the identified need adverselyaffects the child's academic performance.

Common Barrier toLearning	Identifying Descriptors
Cognition and Learning	• Intellectual disability (including Intellectual disability -unspecified) • Specific learning disorders • Multiple disabilities • Developmental delay (younger than five years of age)
Communication andInteraction	• Communication disorders • Autism spectrum disorders
Social, Emotional andMental Health	• Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) • Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD) • Psycho - Emotional disorders • Behavior disorders
Physical, Sensory andMedical	• Sensory impairment • Deaf-blind disability • Physical disability • Chronic or acute medical conditions

Modified Curriculum at UAS:

KEY TERMINOLOGY
Accommodations:
Accommodations are adjustments made to **how** a student accesses learning or demonstrates their understanding. They do not change the learning expectations but provide support to meet the curriculum expectations. Accommodation is often used to meet specific needs related to disabilities or learning challenges.

Differentiation:
Differentiation is a teaching approach that tailors' instruction and activities to meet students' diverse learning needs within the standard curriculum. All the students have the same learning goal. The instruction varies based on students' interests, preferences, strengths, and struggles.

Modified Curriculum:

A Modified Curriculum includes significant adjustments to what a student learns: content, expectations, or achievement standards in one or multiple subjects for students who cannot fully access grade-level material despite differentiated support.

Standards for a Modified Curriculum:

- o   Drawn from a lower grade level, where appropriate.
- o   Simplified versions of the current grade-level standards to better suit the student's learning needs.

Alternative Curriculum:

An **Alternative Curriculum** is a tailored educational program designed for students whose learning needs cannot be met through the general curriculum. It provides specialized content, teaching methods, and learning outcomes that address specific cognitive, developmental, or functional needs.

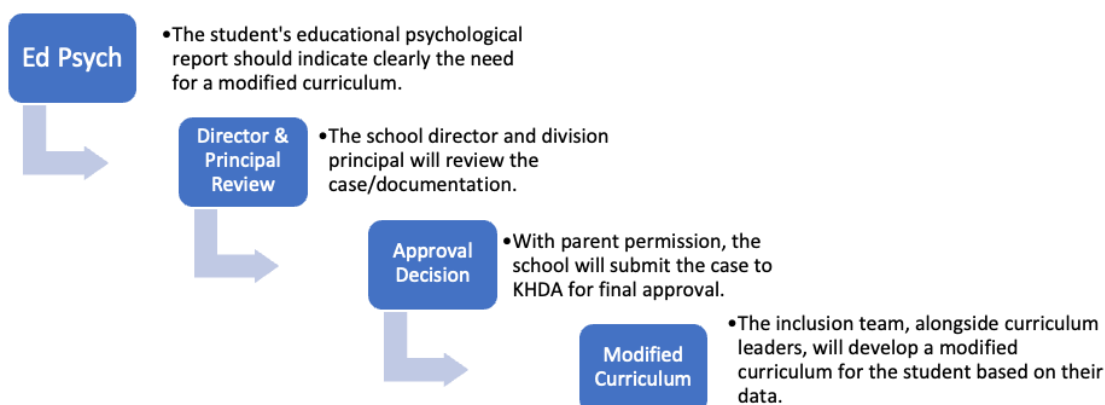**At UAS, we do not offer an Alternative Curriculum pathway.**

Modified Curriculum Protocol
1. Requirements:

Students must have an external Educational Psychology report that includes specific diagnoses and recommendations for curriculum modification. The Inclusion Leader will present the report, along with internal and external data (e.g., work samples, if available), to the Director and Division Principal for review. Approval from the Director of UAS, KHDA, and parents is required before implementing a modified curriculum.

2. Criteria for a Modified Curriculum:

- The student's Educational Psychology report must specify a diagnosis and clear recommendations for curriculum modifications and must specify which subjects need modifications.
- Students on a modified curriculum do not necessarily require 1:1 support, however, inclusion will provide support during core subjects.
- The modified curriculum may apply to one or multiple subjects, depending on the student's needs. Standards may be adapted from a lower grade level or simplified versions of current grade-level expectations.
- Obtain written approval from the Director, KHDA, and parent(s) before implementing any curriculum modifications.

Ed Psych
- The student's educational psychological report should indicate clearly the need for a modified curriculum.

Director & Principal Review
- The school director and division principal will review the case/documentation.

Approval Decision
- With parent permission, the school will submit the case to KHDA for final approval.

Modified Curriculum
- The inclusion team, alongside curriculum leaders, will develop a modified curriculum for the student based on their data.

3. Parent Communication and Consent:

- **Informed Consent:** Parents must sign a consent form acknowledging their understanding of the modified curriculum and its implications on grading, assessments, and transcripts.
- **Periodic Updates:** The Inclusion Case Manager will schedule regular meetings with parents to review the student's progress and any necessary adjustments.

4. Teacher and Resource Requirements:

- At the beginning of the academic year, teachers will administer the IXL baseline (English, Math, Science and Social Studies) assessment to students to align the modified curriculum standards accordingly.
- At the beginning of the academic year, the case manager, subject teacher, and Curriculum Leader (CL) will meet to develop a modified curriculum aligned with standards and resources.
- For non-core subjects, the Inclusion Case Manager, teachers and CLs will determine appropriate strategies, accommodations and possible modifications as needed.

5. Reporting on Modified Curriculum:

- The status of the Modified Curriculum will be indicated on semester report cards, with a note directing parents to check the details on their child's IEP/ Passport.
- Reports will use a standards-based tick-box format to show completed standards rather than traditional ABC grading.
  - o The Inclusion team will collaborate with Curriculum Leaders to determine the standards being assessed each semester
- The cumulative number of completed standards will be translated into a traditional grade for GPA calculation (MC).
- An asterisk (*) will denote Modified Curriculum status on transcripts, and specific standards and achievement levels will be noted as appropriate.

6. Progress Monitoring and Review:

- **Regular Monitoring:** The Case Manager and teachers will schedule regular meetings with parents to review the student's progress and any necessary adjustments.
- **Annual Review:** An annual review will be conducted at the start of the academic year to review the student's requirements for modified curriculum, as well as any amendments to accommodations and/or strategies.
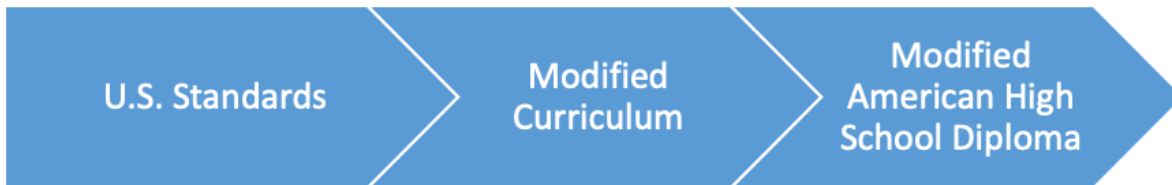
7. Documentation and Record-Keeping:
- The Inclusion Leader and Inclusion Case Manager will ensure all decisions, communications, and approvals are documented and securely stored for future reference.

DIPLOMA PATHWAYS:

Diploma Pathways at UAS:

U.S. Standards > Modified Curriculum > Modified American High School Diploma

Diploma Pathways not offered at UAS:

Vocational Curricular