RAK AA
RAS AL KHAIMAH AMERICAN ACADEMY
أكاديمية رأس الخيمة الأمريكية

RAKAA Teaching and Learning Policy

Introduction

At Ras Al Khaimah American Academy, we are committed to the provision of broad and balanced learning experiences for our students, with opportunities for everyone to succeed and achieve the best outcomes. We know that there is also a place for unexpected and planned breaks from routine to keep things fresh and exciting.

Rationale

The purpose of this policy is to provide a practical document which will facilitate successful, varied and consistent teaching and learning across the school.

Effective Planning for Teaching and Learning

We believe that effective teaching happens when;

- Lessons are planned to make students learn and make good to outstanding progress students who may need support would have appropriate work planned for them, tasks are scaffolded to give them support or they are supported by the teacher on more challenging tasks.
- Planning considers the needs of all students, cross curricular links, success criteria and links with the UAE culture and other world cultures, assessment for learning and the lesson sequence.
- Students experience a balance of realistic challenges and are given time to consolidate learning.
- Students are clear and understand what they are being asked to do and
- Success criteria of their work will be judged upon because learning objectives are shared and understood.
- Learners are given feedback, which relates to the learning objectives and their personal targets and time is allowed for them to respond to their feedback.
- learners make good to outstanding progress in lessons

Catering for students' learning styles and learning needs.

Different learning styles are considered in teachers' planning and different abilities

- the visual learner (lots of things to see to stimulate visual memory).
- the auditory learner (the chance to hear, explore and discuss ideas)
- the kinaesthetic learner (the learner that needs to get up and do things).

Differentiation:

- Teachers must plan effective, challenging, enriching learning experiences for the gifted and talented and more able students, average, below average and students of determination.
- Learning experiences and activites must be adjusted to meet the needs of individual students focusing on the 'how' of personlised learning.
- When teachers are planning differentiation in their teaching, they must focus on:
  Content- the knowledge and skills students need to master
  Process- the activities students use to master the content
  Product – the method students use to demonstrate learning.

Group and collaborative Work

Teachers must also plan for learners to experience working in different groupings

- ability/mixed ability
- pairs
- small groups
- whole class
- individual / independent learning

Teachers subject knowledge:

4. Teachers are clear about what they are teaching
   -they have excellent knowledge of the subject and the necessary key skills for that year group.
5. -they use their subject knowledge expertly to challenge and inspire the students
   -they understand the next steps learners will need to take in their learning and implement them as soon as possible.
   -they undertake professional development to improve their own skills and to keep up-to-date with curriculum news and changes and seek advice from subject/aspect leaders.
   -they reflect on formal and informal assessments made, data gathered and plan future work accordingly.

Balance in curriculum areas and cross curricular links:

There is a balance in curriculum areas so that

- all learners get the chance to make good to outstanding progress
- the days are varied and stimulating.
- students become more independent and lifelong learners
- planning includes cross curricular links
- The curriculum is broad and balanced and linked to real life situations

Positive relationships and interactions between students, and their teachers

Teachers must relate well to their students

- they consider the needs of the individual students
- they have clear high expectations of every student
- they are reflective about their relationships with students and adapt accordingly
- their actions make clear to learners that they care e.g. they get to know their students as individuals, they welcome them back if they've been away, they deal with inappropriate behaviour professionally and sensitively
- they have a good relationship with parents and work with them to improve outcomes for the students
- they treat the students with respect and encourage them to treat each other respectfully

Classroom environment:

Teachers must establish and maintain a good working atmosphere

- the class is well behaved.
- the students are motivated and productive.
- students have some scope to make their own choices and use their own ideas.
- resources are readily accessible.
- the students know what to do when they have finished.
- the classroom is well organised and stimulating.

ALL Teachers act as good role models, for example:

- their use of standard English and Arabic
- how they solve problems and put things right.

- how to go about a piece of work (e.g. modelling the work for the students).

Assessment for learning:

- Teachers must ensure students' work is marked with feedback regarding what they must do to improve
- Use effective questioning techniques that promote higher order thinking, critical thinking and problem solving
- Teacher uses assessment to plan the next stage of students' learning
- Students make expected progress in the lesson based on the standard of work they complete in the lesson.

- To recognise students' academic strengths and areas of growth so that teachers can better plan teaching and learning.
- To ascertain students' prior knowledge and determine what skills, knowledge and understanding to teach next.
- To reflect on and evaluate their teaching.
- To give students feedback to improve their performance and achieve learning goals.
- To strive for consistent and reliable understanding of student work among subject area teachers
- To identify student support needs
- Must use assessment to ensure the students make expected progress during the lesson (based on actual lesson and produced work) and against curriculum linked outcomes.
- Teachers must use varied/authentic assessment (formative, summative, diagnostic) and (questioning, observation, quizzes, rubrics, etc.).
- Teacher assessment must measure the objectives against curriculum standards.
- A variety of assessment data informs planning and teaching.
- Written feedback is evident in student notebooks and their work.
- Written feedback in constructive and personalised (includes next step learning)
- Oral feedback is constructive.

(**Refer to the school's assessment policy for more details)**

Effective Learning

"Some people say learning when they mean teaching!" (Bill Lucas 2004). Learning is a voluntary activity for a child - that is the challenge of the teacher to motivate that voluntary activity.

Students' Wellbeing

For a student to learn effectively, they need

- to be emotionally ready.
- to be physically ready
- to feel good about themselves.
- to be interested and motivated.
- to have a range of learning strategies and know what to do when they are stuck.
- to harness the full range of their intelligence.
- to be able to release their creativity.
- to have time learning and to reflect upon their learning. (Learning shouldn't be overly compartmentalised - learners need time to evolve their work.
- They receive praise and positive reinforce for their effort

Students do not perform well under too much stress.
They need;

- to be set tasks and problems suitable for their age and ability.
- to feel 'safe' about sharing their ideas in the classroom environment.
- to be confident about experimenting with their learning.
- to feel that their work and contributions are valued.
- to learn in an atmosphere of respect and trust.
- to have consistency in teaching and expectation.
- to feel they are treated fairly.
- constructive feedback and positive responses.
- an ethos of working to their personal best.

Effective Learning:

Students need opportunities to learn in different ways. For example;

- **Problem solving and investigations:** teaching students to identify and define problems, come up with solutions, evaluate options, choose the best solution, implement the solution, and evaluate the outcomes.

- **Fieldwork and educational visits** : teachers must plan culturally enriching field trips at least once each term, to help students to learn outside the classroom and boost their educational outcomes.

-**Inquiry and research:** Students must be given opportunities for independent inquiry.
-They must have opportunities to develop skills of inquiry: research, data evaluation, argument development, etc.

-**Drama and role play**: teachers must plan drama and role play to "offer an authentic context for students to engage in discourses. These contexts can provide situations where students can be comfortable to speak, respond, initiate ideas, argue, be tentative and reflect". (Harden 2016)

-**Technology based learning:** teachers must plan technology-based learning which constitutes learning via electronic technology, including internet, intranets, bulletin boards, audio and video conferencing, webcasts, (to the school or their classmates). This style of learning prepares students to think creatively and find solutions to complex issues within a global or local context. Tech based learning also aids research and facilitates cross curricular links between IT and other subjects.

-Student interaction and working collaboratively:
teachers must plan educational experiences and collaborative learning that are active, social, contextual, engaging, and student owned, that leads to deeper learning, develop higher order thinking, oral communication, self-management and leadership skills.

-Real life learning: Incorporating real life connections into lesson planning helps students understand why what they are learning is useful beyond school and university. It gives students valuable insights into real life applications of the skills they are learning.

-Critical thinking: Teachers must incorporate critical thinking skills such as: Observations: which is the ability to notice and predict opportunities, problems and solutions. Analysis: the gathering , understanding and interpreting of data and other information. Inference: Drawing

conclusions based on relevant data, information and personal knowledge and experience. Communication: Sharing and receiving information with their peers verbally, nonverbally and in writing.

-**Independent learning:** Independent learning is self-guided learning where the learner works to expand their knowledge and skills. Independentt learning is student focused. Independent learning involves making the student an active participant and the teacher providing guidance and structure.

-Innovation : Innovation involves a different way of looking at problems and solving them. It compels students use levels of thinking to solve complex problems. Innovation encourages students and teachers to research, explore and use tools to explore something new.

-Cross curricular links : is an approach to planning whereby links are made between subjects rather then segregating them. It helps students to make connections in their learning and under the relationships between areas of learning.

-Links with UAE culture and other world cultures : Planning and linking the learning with UAE and world cultures broadens students' understanding and their appreciation and knowledge of UAE culture and its relevance to their understanding of the world.

-21st century skills: Incorporates most of the above including:
Critical thinking, collaboration, initiative, productivity and creativity
Information, media and technology literacy
Flexibility, leadership, and social skills
Connectivity, emotional intelligence and self responsibility.

Teachers should show students that learning is a continuous process - adults don't know everything! We are all lifelong learners.

Effective learners take some responsibility for their own learning.
Therefore teachers must try to involve them in

- assessing what they have learnt.
- how they learn best.
- what makes it difficult for them to learn.
- what they can use to support their learning.
- asking questions and negotiating tasks
- assessment for learning asking for help or clarification when they need it.

Effective learning happens when there is a sense of pace to lessons, so that the students' attention doesn't drift.

Effective learning happens when the school and the parents work together and give consistent messages to the students.

Classroom Management

<u>Arrangement of the Classroom</u>

The layout of the classroom should facilitate easy access of movement for students and adults and should promote students' independence

- see the board clearly
- have access to focus group teaching
- be in the clear view of the teacher
- move around the room freely when necessary.

What needs to be ready from the beginning of the year

- Weekly planning (from the start of the term)
- Medium term plans
- Year plans
- Learning resources
- Tech resources.

Class expectations and developing a constructive working atmosphere

It is important that teachers spend time on establishing the teacher's expectations, explaining routines, and going through the class rules with the students. This needs regular reinforcement at the beginning and should be consistently applied.

Routines that need establishing include;

- fire drill
- lining up/leaving the classroom in an orderly manner
- where to line up for assembly
- walking around the room
- listening to other students before speaking
- going to the bathroom
- eating in the class rules
- acceptable noise levels
- etiquette for assembly
- the setting out of learning
- what to do if they are late

Health & Safety issues in the Classroom - See also the H&S Policy

Teachers are responsible for the following aspects of health and safety in their classroom;

- making sure fire exits are clear
- explaining fire drill procedures
- calling the cleaners to deal with rubbish
- making sure spillages are cleared up (e.g. of drinks)
- reporting damaged furniture, flooring etc. to the health and safety officer
- completing risk assessment for trips and getting them signed off by the health and safety officer
- teaching students about electrical safety
- make sure students use classroom and lab equipment safely

Students who are injured during break time must be sent to clinic.If a student is ill or hurt during lesson time, send him/her to the clinic with the TA or with an adult.

Presentation in students books:

All students must be taught to value the recording of their work, both as a record of their achievement and as evidence of consistently meeting the standards and expectations set. They must be expected and encouraged to take pride in their work and to see their work as valued by all members of the community.

Students must be taught,

- to always use the pages in order in their exercise book.
- to know where to write the date and title. The children should be taught to underline dates and titles with a ruler.
- how to stick work into their exercise books.
- to only use pens in middle and high school and pens for writing in their note books
- that their notebooks are only used for recording work associated with their task and for no other mark making/doodling/scribbling.
- how to plan their work with an awareness of presentation.
- to put ~~one~~ line through mistakes in their notebooks.

Involving Students In Their Own Learning

We encourage students to take responsibility for their own learning, to be involved in reviewing their progress and the way they learn best, what helps them learn and what makes it difficult for them to learn.

Some opportunities for self-evaluation

- Plenaries - students make judgements about how well they have performed in relation to key learning objectives for that lesson or that block of work (core subjects especially). They must write this in their books and set their own next steps.
- Evaluation of a particular piece of work e.g. a written evaluation of the success of a project
- End of term assessment weekly tests and quizzes, midterm assessments - students see how well they have performed in more formal testing situations
- time given to read the teacher's marking comments and respond to the marking.
- the achievement of a class target and setting of a new target through discussion.
- use the exit ticket to evaluate what they learned

Examples of questions which guide self evaluation.

- What did you learn?
- What did you find easy/difficult?
- Where did you get stuck?
- What helped you get out of the difficulty?
- What are you most pleased with?
- What do you need more help with?

For further information please see the Assessment Policy

Parents

The Role of Parents

We believe that parents have a fundamental role to play in helping children to learn. We aim to inform parents about what and how their children are learning by:

- Sending the learning objective to parents on Teams at the start of each term in which we outline the topics that the students will be studying at school.
- Reporting on students' progress at Parents Evenings and discussing targets for improvement.
- Explaining to parents how they can support their child with home learning activities

We believe that parents have the responsibility to support their children and the school in implementing the school policies. We would like parents to:

- Ensure that their child has the best attendance and punctuality record possible.
- Ensure that their child is equipped for school
- Do their best to keep their child healthy and fit to attend school.
- Inform school if there are matters outside of school that are likely to affect a students's behaviour or performance at school.
- Promote a positive attitude towards school and learning in general.
- Fulfil the requirements set out in the home/school agreement.

The Role of Principal and Governors

Our Governors support, monitor and review the school policies on teaching and learning. In particular they have responsibility for

- allocating resources effectively to support good teaching and learning
- ensuring that the school buildings and premises are supportive of successful teaching and learning.
- monitoring how effective teaching strategies in terms of raising student attainment.
- ensuring that staff development and performance management policies promote good quality teaching.
- contributing to the school improvement planning and reviewing process.
- The principal must report the quality of teaching and learning to the governors and also give advice regarding teacher appraisal.

Staff Development and Training

The school ensure teachers receive training with regards to the latest research in teaching and learning to keep teachers up to date regarding any changes and improvements to the school's policy, systems, and procedures.

In addition, the school makes use of staff training and whenever possible, staff to attend courses and conferences based on their professional development needs and through their teacher self-evaluations.

Monitoring and Review

The governing body, principal and SLT will monitor the effectiveness and impact of this policy on students' achievement annually. The principal will report to the governing body on the effectiveness of the policy at least annually and, if necessary, make recommendations for further improvements.