



# Teaching and Learning Policy

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## Beliefs/philosophy

The PYP section of Ras Al Khaimah Academy believes teaching and learning at RAKA is based upon a constructivist pedagogy aligned with the philosophy of the International Baccalaureate academic programme of the Primary Years Programme (PYP). Through inquiry based teaching methods, all students at RAKA will be inspired to be compassionate, confident and international minded. Our students will be challenged to excel in a safe, happy and nurturing learning community. As a direct result of their learning experiences RAKA student will be empowered to take thoughtful action locally and globally.

## Principles of Teaching and Learning at RAKA

At RAKA, we believe that students learn best when:

- their prior knowledge is considered to be important
- learning is in context
- context is relevant
- they can learn collaboratively
- the learning environment is provocative
- they get appropriate, formative feedback that supports their learning
- diverse learning styles are understood and accommodated
- they feel secure and their ideas are valued and respected
- values and expectations are explicit
- there is a culture of curiosity at the school
- they understand how learning is judged, and how to provide evidence of their learning
- they become aware of and understand how they learn
- structured inquiry, critical thinking, learning through experience and conceptual development are central to teaching in the school
- learning is engaging, challenging, rigorous, relevant and significant
- they are encouraged in everything they do in school to become responsible for their own learning and to become lifelong learners.
- The focus is on deep understanding.

Therefore teachers at RAKA recognize that:

- The relationship teachers build with their students profoundly impacts their learning.



- Each learner needs to feel valued for who they are.
- A learning community is more effective when open mindedness and risk taking is encouraged.
- Shared laughter can build classroom spirit.
- Learners will take risks and embrace challenges in an environment that feels safe, supportive and secure.
- Learners benefit from playing an active role in classroom decision making.
- Clear goals, processes, expectations, rules, routines and a discipline plan enable students to take more responsibility for their learning.
- Understanding the learning process and personal learning attributes enhance learning.
- All students can benefit from collaborative learning.
- When students are emotionally involved in learning, they are more likely to stay on task, accept challenges and remain motivated.
- Individual, constructive and on-going feedback can be a powerful key to engaging the learner.
- The physical environment can have a significant impact on the learner's engagement.
- Teacher expectations have a profound impact on the way learners see their own potential.
- Students need sustained periods of time to maximize learning.
- Families and communities are important sources of knowledge and skills that can enrich the school curriculum.
- Students benefit from interacting with a range of people as they learn – not just teachers.
- Reflection and metacognition are central to teaching and learning.
- Thinking skills can be taught. This is best done within the context of meaningful content and purposeful activities.
- Assessment strategies should lead to improved student learning.
- Assessment is more authentic and powerful when it is embedded within everyday learning experiences.
- Collaborative planning produces a richer and more coherent curriculum.
- Forward planning enables teachers to keep the 'big picture' in mind.

## Implementation

All teachers will have a copy of the relevant IB programme publication to guide their planning, teaching & assessing of students.

*PYP – Making the PYP Happen – A Curriculum Framework for International Primary Education Guide*



These documents will guide teachers with regard to the specific implementation of the PYP

## **The Learning Environment**

- All our classrooms are lively, safe and characterised by purposeful inquiry. They are places in which the pursuit of deep understanding and the construction of meaning is balanced with the acquisition of knowledge and skills.
- Students are empowered to set learning goals focusing on achieving their potential and supported to this end by their teacher and each other.
- Our classrooms encourage the development of international mindedness when teachers and students show respect, tolerance and empathy towards others of different gender, nationality and levels of academic, linguistic and intellectual development.
- As teachers, we model being life-long learners and take seriously students as critical thinkers with their developing ideas of the world.
- The learner profile is evident in every classroom and underpins everything we do.
- Displays within the classroom celebrate individual and collaborative achievements, on-going learning and thinking in progress.

Within the school the principles underlying the learner profile and the PYP Attitudes will guide the establishment of behavioural expectations.

## **Documentation of Teaching & Learning**

All teachers at RAKA are professionally accountable to ensure that accurate records are kept of all planning and assessment of learning. Planning and assessment files will be monitored and may be requested at any time by members of the Leadership Team to ensure that planning within and across grade levels shows consistency, progression and academic rigour. All planning and assessment will be stored electronically.

Documentation of planning will include:

- Long Term Planning: Yearly or by Semester overviews of the subject area (e.g. scope & sequence documents, curriculum maps)
- Medium Term Planning: PYP: Termly/6 weekly/monthly overviews of the subject area and completed PYP Unit Planners.
- Short Term Planning: Weekly or daily breakdown of specific learning objectives with reference to differentiating the learning to meet the needs of all students.

Documentation of assessment records can include (but is not limited to):



- Anecdotal records: brief written records based on observations of students. May include quotes from students.
- Continuums: visual representations of developmental stages of learning. Students are plotted on continuums based on teacher's assessment data.
- Rubrics: an established set of criteria for assessing students against agreed objectives
- Exemplars: samples of students' work that serve as concrete standards against which other samples are judged.
- Photographs or video with accompanying annotations.
- Checklists: lists of information, data, attributes or elements that should be present. A mark scheme is a type of checklist.

### **Accountability:**

As a school we believe that teachers are professionals, however, a school also has the responsibility to support and guide teachers in the implementation of the policy. Therefore, teachers will be supported through:

- Appraisal by administrators and peers
- Professional development,
- Coordinator/ heads of department structure.

### **Reference Material:**

- Various IB documentation
- Creating a Learner-Centred Primary Classroom: Learner-centred Strategic Teaching – Kath Murdoch & Jeni Wilson – David Fulton- Oxon.
- Teaching and Learning Policy – GEMS World Academy – Dubai – UAE.