

Be a GEM - Learning Culture Policy 2025 - 2026

1. Introduction

At GEMS, we believe that every child shines brightest when they are surrounded by a culture of excellence. Be a GEM is the heartbeat of our community, where values are lived, connections are nurtured, and belonging is felt deeply by every learner, every teacher, and every family.

We celebrate and narrate the positives, ensuring they always outweigh the negatives, because every child deserves to be seen, valued, and uplifted.

Be a GEM sets the rhythm of our schools: routines that bring safety and clarity, expectations that inspire ambition, and relationships that build trust and empathy. It is through these habits of the HEART—kindness, respect, care, and awareness—that we create the bonds which allow every GEM to thrive.

Most importantly, this is where we are committed to nurturing the genius in every child. By shining a light on their unique gifts, we help each learner discover their brilliance, grow in confidence, and flourish with purpose.

Together, we are one family, united by vision, courage, and values. Together, we ensure that every day is another chance to sparkle.

At GEMS Founders School - Dubai South (GFD) we are a mindful school who puts wellbeing first. We want our students to be honest, respectful and hard-working individuals who take responsibility for their own actions, learning and achievements. We aim to create a culture which ensures all aspects of our provision supports learning. This policy describes the GFD approach to learning culture and the importance of responding well to others.

The key principles are:

- We recognise our emotions, use strategies to moderate our response to them and reach out for support when needed
- We accept that we are always developing and that everybody will make mistakes. We commit to working to rectify mistakes
- We all have a voice and we deserve to feel heard
- We feel a sense of belonging at GFD and we feel pride in our school community
- We are open to new learning opportunities and embrace challenges
- We respect our school and the environment we occupy

The key student expectations are:

- To follow adult instructions the **first time, every time**
- To use words and actions that **help** and don't hurt
- To **respect** other people and their property
- To move **safely and sensibly** around the school



2. Purpose of policy

The Learning Culture Policy is to ensure that all members of our school community feel safe, feel understood and feel a sense of belonging. We understand the importance of building positive relationships to improve and support learning.

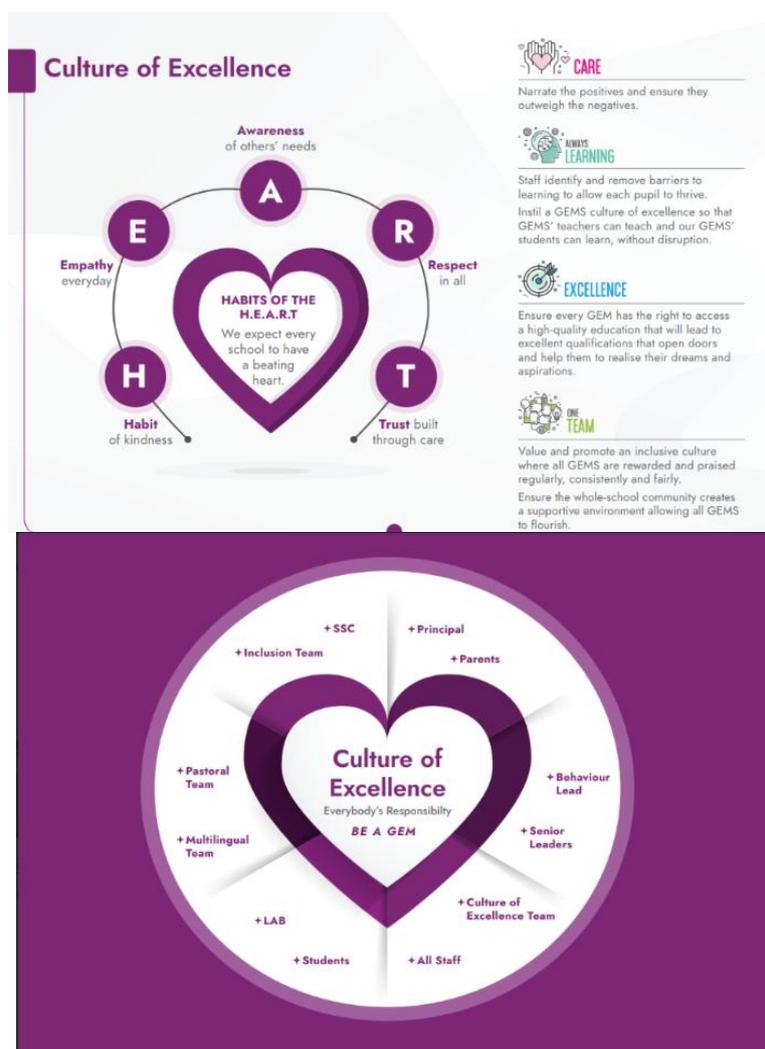
3. Aims and objectives

At GFD we believe that a consistent approach to positive behaviour enables optimum learning and excellent relationships to flourish that, in turn, creates a culture of excellence that leads to world class education.

We support students to 'Be a GEM' every day both within and outside of school. Our Be a GEM approach incorporates the best practice from across GEMS schools and globally, alongside the latest educational research and the UAE's MOE guidance.

Culture of Excellence

We aim to foster a culture of excellence through our Habits of the H.E.A.R.T. Creating a culture of excellence is everyone's responsibility, we want our school to have a beating heart that enables a culture of excellence in everything we do.





GEMS Song

Each school day we sing our GEMS song, this unites GEMS as one family and reinforces our vision for every GEM. This is sang by all students and facilitating staff each morning and at the beginning of key events such as assemblies.

We honor our leaders, our family, and true friends.
And thank our teachers who guide us from darkness to light.

We stand determined, ambitious, and strong.
Hardworking and steadfast, as we journey along.

We strive to stay healthy, hopeful, and bright.
With hearts full of courage and goals held in sight.

We're honest come rain, wind or shine

We learn to care, to share, and be kind,
and to say "I'm sorry", when we've been unkind.

Like gemstones, we stand with purpose and pride,
holding forever, our values inside.

With vision and courage, we reach for our light,
A force for good all day and night.

Commune to act, impact the world
A force for good all day and night.

Commune to act, impact the world
A force for good all day and night.

This is our rite.

4. Be a GEM: Sparkle Brightly

Our culture of excellence is underpinned by our 'BE a GEM Expectations'. There are seven expectations and these are regularly communicated to our GEMS students and displayed across the school. At the start and throughout each academic year we share these with our students so that they are aware of what we expect every day from every student. Students are rewarded for exemplifying our expectations, we believe when students live out these expectations this enables them to unlock their genius.





5. Be A GEM: Our Routines

Routines in daily life matter and we know that routines for behaviour free the mind to focus upon learning. Our routines build rhythm, and rhythm drives excellence. We have a set of eight behaviour routines, these are a set of clear, codified and embedded habits for learning that we expect all students to exemplify every day.

We intentionally teach our Be a GEM routines so that students are aware of and can demonstrate these every day. Our routines are rehearsed each day, and students will engage in sessions that explicitly teach each of our eight routines below:

 When a GEM, Be a GEM Travelling to and from school 01 BEHAVIOUR ROUTINE	 Another day to sparkle Arriving at school 02 BEHAVIOUR ROUTINE	 Quickly and quietly Moving around the school 03 BEHAVIOUR ROUTINE	 Ready to learn During lessons 04 BEHAVIOUR ROUTINE	 Leave as you enter! Leaving the classroom 05 BEHAVIOUR ROUTINE
 Kind and courteous Break and Lunchtime 06 BEHAVIOUR ROUTINE	 Tomorrow, we sparkle again Ending the day positively 07 BEHAVIOUR ROUTINE	 Pause, Reflect and Reset Entry to reflection 08 BEHAVIOUR ROUTINE		



6. Be a GEM: Accentuate the Positive

Our rewards system centers around our GEMS values of Care, Always Learning, Excellence and One Team. Students are recognised and rewarded for exemplifying GEMS values. Each reward links to a GEMS value, teachers and staff will promote and encourage students to exemplify a GEMS value at every opportunity.

The positive behaviours we reward students for are below and each carries a point value. These points enable the school to evidence positive behaviours and these are analysed to inform the school rewards programme. Staff use Go4Schools to record instances when students exemplify our positive behaviours.

GEMS VALUES	POSITIVE BEHAVIOURS	Achievement Points
 ALWAYS LEARNING	Showing creativity and innovation to deepen your understanding in a focus area	2 points
	Working hard and going the extra mile consistently	2 points
	Learning beyond the subject through podcasts, books, online courses or masterclasses	2 points
	Engaging in co-curriculum activities and mastering a skill through self-discipline	2 points
	Learning from mistakes and taking on board constructive feedback	2 points
 ONE TEAM	Learning from, with, and about each other very well	2 points
	Using everyone's ideas to achieve a good solution (problem solving)	2 points
	Working well with others to achieve team goals	2 points
	Sharing responsibilities and tasks to achieve the best for everyone	2 points
 EXCELLENCE	Taking responsibility when things go wrong	2 points
	Having the grit to never give up	2 points
	Listening attentively and participating enthusiastically in lesson	2 points
	Trying hard to produce work of exceptional quality in lessons and during tests	2 points
	Being a self-starter and thinking outside the box	2 points
 CARE	Attending enrichment or additional catch-up sessions to help you reach your full potential	2 points
	Speaking politely with excellent manners	2 points
	Offering help to others through acts of kindness or community service	2 points
	Reporting bullying and speaking up when someone needs help	2 points
	Listening actively and respecting other opinions and differences	2 points
	Showing gratitude and appreciation for the little things that we often take for granted	2 points



7. Be a GEM: Finding the genius and shining a light on our GEMS.

Ensuring outstanding behaviour for learning is a shared responsibility among all staff. Recognising and rewarding students who exemplify this is essential. It is important that every member of staff understands the six steps we follow to celebrate excellence and how these are implemented. The table below shows the minimum expected awards that are to be distributed and logged by staff.

Type of Reward/Role	Teacher	Form Tutor	Head of Year/Key Stage	Heads of School	Principal	TAs	Non-Teaching Staff
Student achievement points	x3 every lesson	x1 every Tutor Time	x5 daily (non-lesson time)	x5 weekly		x1 every lesson	x5 weekly
Positive Postcards		After 50 points	After 100 points	After 150 points	After 200 points		
Positive Communication home (Top 10 each year)			Weekly				
GEM of The Week		Weekly					
Leadership GEMstone			Monthly				
GEMS Excellence Awards (x 8)				Half - Termly			
100% Attendance				Half Termly			
100% Attendance & Punctuality				Half Termly			
Most Improved Attendance				Half Termly			
Sparkling GEMS				Half Termly			
Principal's Be a GEM					Half Termly		
GEMS of Honour					Annually		

Detail about each of the six steps can be found below, here you can find detail about how we celebrate each award from achievement points to our prestigious GEMS of Honour award.



Step 1: Praise

Praise is used as the greatest lever for securing a positive culture. The most effective reward is immediate and identifies the action or behaviour, for example, “offering to help was kind, thank you”, can have a huge impact.

Positive interactions must outweigh the negative by a ratio of 5:1. Students experiencing trauma or adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) and/or seeing a counsellor or subject to a BE a GEM support plan the recommendation increases to 14:1.

Praise needs to be:

- Specific,
- Personalised through the students name,
- Consistently used in all lessons,
- Appropriate,
- Focused upon personal gains by individuals,
- Non-verbal as well as verbal (thumbs up, positive facial expressions).

Step 2: Daily Rewards

- Each form tutor/home room teacher will award at least 1 student with an achievement point during tutor time.
- Each class teacher will award at least 3 students within the lesson.
- Each head of year/house/grade leader will award at least 5 students from their year group during social times.
- It is important that all students are recognised for their achievements and especially students of determination.

Step 3: Weekly Rewards

- Positive posts – Postcards will be sent home acknowledging when a student has reached the following Achievement Point thresholds:
 - 50 – Form Tutor
 - 100 – Head of Key Stage
 - 150 – Head of School
 - 200 - Principal
- The top 10 students with the highest number of achievement points in each year group will receive a positive communication home.
- The student with the highest number of GEMS points within one week, in each year group will be named the GEM of the Week. Their names will be displayed on screens around the school and social media, where appropriate, to celebrate success. Student will receive the GEM of the Week certificate.
- Weekly Rewards will be posted on to the school’s social media platform.



Step 4: Monthly Rewards

Each month at GFD we have a leadership focus, we call these our Leadership Gemstones. Growing our young people as leaders will enable them to flourish and Discover their genius, supported by tutor sessions and assemblies we will teach our students about our thirteen Leadership Gemstones and each month we will celebrate those students whom have exemplified these characteristics. Each month one student in each year group will receive a Leadership Gemstones certificate. Each Leadership Gemstones can be viewed below:

Step 4: Monthly Rewards  

Monthly recognition of a student demonstrating the leadership Gemstone of the month across the school.

Month	GEMSTONE	Leadership Focus
January	 Moonstone	Leading with Reflection
February	 Emerald	Leading with Compassion
March	 Diamond	Leading with Integrity
April	 Labradorite	Leading with Vision
May	 Aquamarine	Leading with Adaptability
June	 Peridot	Leading with Service
July	 Ruby	Leading with Empathy
August	 Onyx	Leading with Resilience
September	 Sapphire	Leading with Respect
October	 Fluorite	Leading with Diversity
November	 Citrine	Leading with Gratitude
December	 Garnet	Leading with Unity
Ramadan	 Amethyst	Leading with Self-Discipline

Step 5: Half Termly Rewards

A half-termly Sparkling GEMS assembly recognises the highest number of positive achievement points achieved by a student in each half term, in each category within each homeroom/tutor group. The student receives a certificate and badge relative to the award. All half-termly rewards are posted on to the school's social media platforms

1. GEMS Excellence: Care award: pin badge, certificate and letter home.
2. GEMS Excellence: Always Learning award: pin badge, certificate and letter home.
3. GEMS Excellence: Excellence award: pin badge, certificate and letter home.
4. GEMS Excellence: One Team award: pin badge, certificate and letter home.
5. GEMS Determined Genius award: pin badge, certificate and letter home.
6. GEMS Beyond 100 award: pin badge, certificate and letter home.
7. GEMS Parent 360: family experience.
8. GEMS Family First award: family meal at our Family First Café.

Additional Rewards

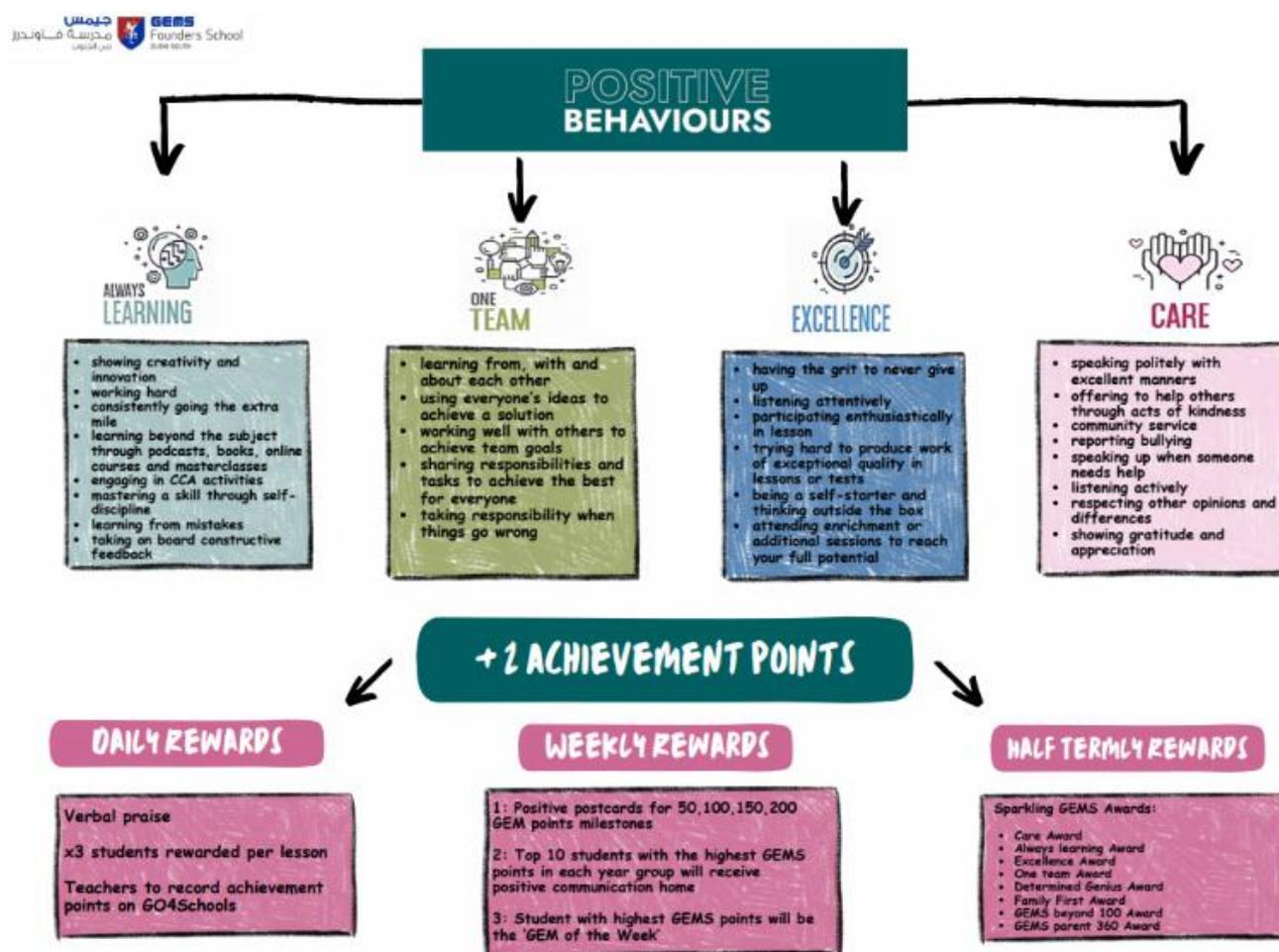
1. GEMS Excellence: 100% attendance award: Certificate and letter home
2. GEMS Excellence: Most improved attendance award: Certificate and letter home
3. Sparkling GEMS: 100% attendance, 100% punctuality and no disruptive/redline behaviour points – certificate, letter home, roll of honour and a GEMS experience.
4. GEMS Excellence: Principal's Be a GEM: Special reception with the Principal/ Brand Ambassador/ Executive Vice President.



Step 6: Annual Rewards

GEMS of Honour: Students who have excelled consistently throughout the school year receive a GEMS of Honour T-shirt/tie/scarf or pin badge linked to the academic year. This achievement includes a special reception with the Principal, their parents and the EVP/CedO. The student also qualifies for the prestigious GEMS Group Awards.

The below flow chart summarises how we implement our approach to positive behaviours.



8. Eliminate the Negative

Students need to understand what is acceptable and what is not, all students need to know the expectancy of the consequence and that it will happen if they display disruptive or red line behaviour. Failure to get this right will undermine our commitment to positive behaviour that enables optimum learning and excellent relationships to flourish, creating a culture of excellence and a world-class education.

Disruptive Behaviours

We prioritise learning, we work to eliminate any behaviours that disrupt this. When these behaviours occur in school staff will support students to stop or prevent them from happening.



Whisper Correction

A whisper correction aims to eliminate the behaviour before it becomes disruptive, staff will use a variety of strategies at this level e.g. non-verbal signal, 1-1 quiet conversation, a verbal reminder about what is expected. Staff will state to student that they are receiving a whisper correction, this is not logged on the school behaviour management system.

Example

Staff: “This is now a whisper correction, please ensure you do not do this again as it is disrupting yours and others learning, if you repeat this behaviour I will log it as a disruptive point and call home thank-you”.

Disruptive Points (-2)

Disruptive Points(-2) are issued for students who repeat the behaviour after being given a whisper correction. At this point the member of staff will explain to the student that they have now received disruptive points, the teacher record this onto the school behaviour management system and this will trigger a phone call home by the teacher.

Example

Staff: “As you have continued to disrupt learning I will now be logging your behaviour and this means a phone call home, if you continue to repeat this behaviour I will refer you to reflection”.

Disruptive Points (-3)

Any behaviours that repeat beyond a whisper correction and a first disruptive point log are followed up by the teacher in a similar way to the previous step. In addition to this students are referred to reflection.

The table below summarises the disruptive behaviours alongside the tariffs.

Disruptive behaviours	1. Whisper correction to help the student get back on track quickly	2. Disruptive Points for a second correction within a lesson resulting in a phone call home	3. Disruptive Points for a third correction resulting in an immediate referral to Reflection
Chewing gum in school	0 points	-2 points	-3 points
Disturbing others/out of seat without permission	0 points	-2 points	-3 points
Failure to speak to peers/staff/visitors with respect	0 points	-2 points	-3 points
Head on desk/slumped in chair	0 points	-2 points	-3 points
Refusing to follow instructions from staff	0 points	-2 points	-3 points
Talking over the teacher/answering back	0 points	-2 points	-3 points
Walking off from a member of staff	0 points	-2 points	-3 points
Using headphones/Bluetooth headsets without permission	0 points	-2 points	-3 points
Failure to behave sensibly around the school (such as pushing or horseplay that can be a precursor to fighting)	0 points	-2 points	-3 points
Littering in the classroom or around the school	0 points	-2 points	-3 points



Reflection

Reflection is a restorative process and space where students pause, reflect, and reset their behaviour. It helps rebuild relationships, address underlying causes, and set positive goals before returning to class. During reflection session students must complete the Be a GEM reflection sheet. Reflection session will take place both during and after the school day. Please see the flow chart for more detail.

Red Line Behaviors

Red line Behaviors are unacceptable and not tolerated, any student behaviour that is detailed in the table below is managed robustly. All red line behaviours carry a -4 tariff and are recorded on the school behaviour management system. Members of the senior team will review all red line behaviours. It is important to note that some red line behaviours can result in a suspension and/or automatic expulsion(see policy).

Red line behaviours

Red line behaviours are unacceptable and must not be tolerated.

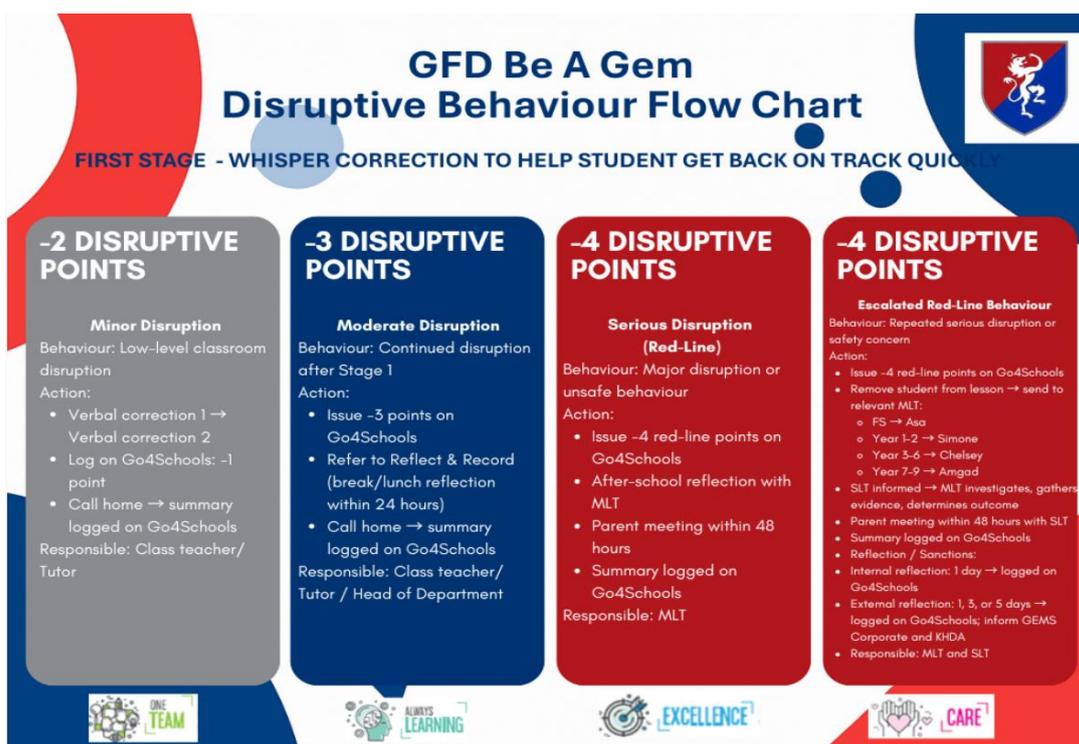
RED LINE BEHAVIOURS Behaviour marked with an * could lead to an automatic expulsion (See the policy)	Red Line Points (Referral to Reflection)	RED LINE BEHAVIOURS Behaviour marked with an * could lead to an automatic expulsion (See the policy)	Red Line Points (Referral to Reflection)
Refusing to handover a mobile phone when visible in school	-4 points	Having cigarettes/e-cigarettes or contraband on school premises*	-4 points
Truancy from lessons	-4 points	Theft or bringing in stolen items*	-4 points
Walking out of a classroom	-4 points	Aggressive or threatening behaviour towards a member of staff*	-4 points
Failure to attend a detention	-4 points	Aggressive or threatening behaviour towards peers*	-4 points
Rude language or swearing at someone	-4 points	Fighting, physically aggressive or threatening violence*	-4 points
Cheating in exams/assessments	-4 points	Extortion*	-4 points
Graffiti or obscene/offensive language or depictions	-4 points	Bringing a weapon into school*	-4 points
Damaging equipment/property	-4 points	Bringing the school into disrepute (social media/within the community)*	-4 points
Dangerous or unsafe behaviours*	-4 points	External truancy*	-4 points
Bullying (physical child-on-child abuse)*	-4 points	Inappropriate touch*	-4 points
Bullying (verbal child-on-child abuse) *	-4 points	Substance use*	-4 points
Racist language or behaviour*	-4 points		
Cyber bullying*	-4 points		



Repeated behaviours across multiple lessons or subjects require a graduated response to support improvements in behaviour. Each stage is two weeks in duration and aims to support the student to improve the behaviour alongside providing clear targets to work towards.



The below flow chart details how we follow up and escalate behaviours:





Out of Class Passes

Students out of class during lesson times must have a valid reason and permission. Students must have an official GFD pass, this can include a hall pass, toilet pass or calm pass. Students out of class without permission must be logged as truancy. None-attendance to lessons is a safeguarding matter and is treated with the up-most seriousness.

9. Restorative Practice and Relationships

Mutual Respect - At GFD, we believe that everybody deserves respect. When communicating to one another, we are respectful in our volume, tone and speech.

We understand that learning culture is best supported through strong relationships. We aim to follow the Establish-Maintain-Restore (EMR) method when developing and maintaining student-staff relationships.

- **Establish** – Intentional practices to cultivate a positive relationship with each student (i.e., build trust, connection and understanding)
- **Maintain** – Proactive efforts to prevent relationship quality from diminishing over time (i.e., ongoing positive interactions)
- **Restore** – Intentionally repairing harm to the relationship after a negative interaction (i.e., reconnecting with student).

Conflict resolution - Restorative practice is a way of working with conflict that puts the focus on repairing the harm that has been done. It is an approach to conflict resolution that includes all parties involved. It requires active listening and restorative questions as communication. A plan of action is created to solve the cause of the conflict and move forward using the restorative practice conversation scaffold. When necessary, the approach should be adapted to the individual's needs. This could include but is not limited to: pastoral support, welfare or counselling support or a positive report card.

10. Proactive strategies

At GFD, we believe that the consistent use of strategies is the most effective way to ensure there is a positive learning culture in school. We ensure that staff are trained to understand the different approaches that students may need based on their stage of development. Their stage of development informs learning strategies to ensure effective relationships are established and maintained across all areas of the school.

11. Inclusion including reference to SEND, EAL and Advanced Learners

We recognise that students of determination may need an individual approach to manage learning. Where consideration for additional support is needed, the Inclusion Team will work alongside the student's teachers and parents to develop a personalised support plan for the individual.

Where a language barrier exists, the inclusion team will support teachers to ensure they can communicate effectively with the student to help them to follow the learning culture policy.

12. Supporting Mental Health and Wellbeing – Welfare and Counselling Teams

We believe that the learning culture of a school thrives when all members of the school community have access to wellbeing support. The purpose of the welfare and counselling teams at GFD is to implement a welfare strategy which promotes positive mental health and ensures that all stakeholders have equitable access to wellbeing support. The counselling team works alongside the safeguarding leads



and welfare team to ensure that individual cases are triaged effectively. Where needed, they offer 1:1 counselling sessions for students across the school. The welfare team provide mental health first aid support for students as and when needed. They offer 1:1 wellbeing sessions with students who have been triaged by the counselling team. Our trained adult mental health first aiders offer support for adults within the school community.

Incidents of cyberbullying and inappropriate use of ICT, including social media

Cyberbullying is defined as bullying that takes place online, such as through social networking sites, messaging apps or gaming sites. Cyberbullying is not tolerated and will be treated as a serious incident.

Examples of inappropriate use of ICT include:

- Recording a person on a device without consent
- Creating and posting media content which clearly identifies a child in GEMS Founders uniform
- Creating and/or sharing media content which occurred on school grounds
- Accessing illegal online content
- Accessing sexual online content
- Sharing media content which can be harmful or hurtful to others (e.g. airdropping a video or picture)

This is not an exhaustive list and any inappropriate use of ICT may be treated as a serious incident. Staff must report any instances of cyberbullying or inappropriate use of ICT to a senior leader.

Incidents of racial language

Racial harassment will not be tolerated and must always be reported. At GFD we promote and celebrate diversity. Staff members who witness an incident must inform an SLT member immediately. The school records all racial incidents. Developing appropriate attitudes is supported through the schools' Moral Social Cultural Studies and PSHE curriculum.

13. Parental Involvement

We believe fully in working in partnership with parents to ensure our learning culture policy is adhered to by all members of the school community. We take regular feedback from the parent community to ensure we can support students to have a positive and successful experience at GFD.

14. Assessment and recording

All *achievement points* and concerns must be recorded in GO4Schools and monitored by leaders across school. Relevant leaders should regularly monitor trends and patterns in their areas of the school and act when needed to ensure our learning culture policy is adhered to. While we understand that unpredictable events can happen, we believe in using a range of data to frequently review the learning culture of the school. This includes but is not limited to the following data sets: attendance, punctuality, clinic records, achievement points, concerns, student, parent and teacher voice and observational data.



Timings for the Issuance of Internal/External Reflection

Reflections will only be issued once the behaviour investigation has been fully completed. This includes gathering all evidence, securing student statements, and reviewing the incident. Wherever possible, the reflection decision will be communicated to parents on the same school day that the investigation is concluded to ensure clarity, transparency, and consistency of process and as to allow appropriate child care arrangements to be put in place.

Parental Notification During Behaviour Investigations

For investigations of a serious matter parents will be notified if their child is placed in a reflection room for a significant amount of time. This notification will outline the reason for the temporary placement and the next steps, ensuring that parents understand that no final decision has been made until the investigation is complete. There will also be instances whereby children are placed in reflection spaces for safeguarding reasons.

Supervision During Student Statement-Taking

Students must be supervised when providing written statements as part of any behaviour investigation. A responsible adult must remain present to ensure that the student feels safe, supported, and free from peer pressure or influence.

Monitoring and review

Signed Date

Head of Primary

Signed Date:

Head of Secondary

Signed Date:

Principal/CEO

Next policy review date:

September 2026