مدرستنا الثانوية الإنجليزية ، الشارقة - بنات
Our Own English High School, Sharjah-Girls

GEMS EDUCATION

DIGITAL LEARNING POLICY

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In the fast-paced competitive workplace we now live in, our traditional school models are not capable of meeting the needs of the 21st century student. All students need to develop advanced critical thinking and information literacy skills as well as master new digital tools. At the same time, they need to develop the initiative to become self-directed learners while adapting to the ever-changing digital information landscape.

Digital technologies create new opportunities for accelerating, expanding, and individualizing learning. OOS embraces this new environment and these new technologies to better prepare our students for 21st century.

Support and Enhance Educator Professionalism

OOS believes that the increasing use of technology in classrooms will transform the role of educators allowing the educational process to become ever more student-centered. This latest transformation is not novel, but part of the continuing evolution of our education system. Educators, as professionals working in the best interests of their students, will continue to adjust and adapt their instructional practice and use of digital technology/tools to meet the needs and enhance the learning of their students.

All educators—are essential to student learning and should have access to relevant, high-quality, interactive professional development in the integration of digital learning and the use of technology into their instruction and practice.
Teachers need access to relevant training on how to use technology and incorporate its use into their instruction.

Administrators need training to make informed decisions about purchasing equipment, technology use, course assignments, and personnel assignments.

The training needs to address both the basic preparation on how to make the technology work, and how to most effectively incorporate it into the educational program.

Teacher should have the opportunity to learn different strategies so they are prepared for using not only the technology of today, but of tomorrow.

Enhance and Enrich Student Learning

Optimal learning environments should neither be totally technology free, nor should they be totally online and devoid of educator and peer interaction. OOS believes that an environment that maximizes student learning will use a “blended” and/or “hybrid” model situated somewhere along a continuum between these two extremes.

OOS believes there should be perfect integration of technology and traditional forms of delivering education for all students. Every class will need to be differentiated, and at some level

every student needs a different approach. Teachers must be directly involved in determining what combination works best in particular classes and with particular students.

Students' maturity and developmental status determines how students adapt to the use of digital technology as they continually face more challenging materials. The use of technology in the classroom will help build self-reliance and motivation in students, but it must be appropriate to their developmental and skill level, as determined by professional educators.

As different digital tools are created and used, the impact of technology on **traditional socialization** roles must be considered. The face-to-face relationship between student and teacher is critical to increasing student learning, and students' interactions with each other are an important part of their socialization into society.

Additionally, assessment and accountability systems need to be carefully developed to ensure academic integrity and accurately measure the impact on students. Sensible guidelines and strategies should be used to ensure students are completing their own online assignments and taking the appropriate assessments.

Promoting High Quality, Digital Learning

OOS encourages its teaching staff engage in professional learning that enhances their understanding of how to creatively and appropriately integrate digital tools and high quality digital learning into their instruction. Such professional learning should include sharing of expertise by members who can serve as valuable mentors and professional partners for other members who are new to digital instruction.
OOS works with parents also to seize the opportunities that digital technologies provide.

Ensure Equity to Meet the Needs of Every Student

OOS believes that educational programs and strategies designed to close the achievement and digital gaps must address equity issues related to broadband Internet access, software and technical support, and hardware maintenance. Also, technical support must be adequate to ensure that digital classrooms function properly and reliably for both educators and students.

ADDENDUM

Blended and/or Hybrid Learning

Blended and/or hybrid learning is an integrated instructional approach in which a student learns, at least in part through online delivery where the student has control over at least some aspects of the time and place of accessing the curriculum. The policy statement supports maximizing student learning by using both technology and real life educators in the process. It rejects the idea that effective learning can take place completely online and without interaction with certified teachers and fully qualified faculty.

The Definition of Fully Qualified Educators

The term “educator” includes teachers and education support professionals in schools. Teachers should be fully qualified, certified, and/or licensed to teach the subjects they are teaching, including in online instructional settings.

Technology as a Tool

Technology is a tool to enhance and enrich instruction for students, and should not be used to replace educational employees who work with students or limit their employment.

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