Al Zuhour Private School

AL ZUHOUR PRIVATE SCHOOL

TEACHING AND LEARNING POLICY

Approved by: SLT
Last reviewed on: June2026
Next review due by: June 2027

AZPS Vision:

AZPS is a community of lifelong learners that strives for academic excellence, prepares students for the global challenges, and maintains cultural identity.

AZPS Mission:

To provide a quality international education while maintaining the cultural identity. To celebrate diversity, encouraging leadership, responsible citizenship, moral values, and the development of lifelong learning skills.

AZPS Definition of Learning:

AZPS believes that learning is a process by which the learners:

- Acquire knowledge & skills through researching, experimenting & problem-solving.
- Teachers act as facilitators.
- Learners are provided with a degree of voice & choice in their own learning.
- Learners are actively engaged in hands-on experiences that require high-level thinking skills.
- Learners undergo various performance assessments that provide feedback directly linked to their performance level.
- Learners are provided with their next steps for learning.

Introduction

At Al-Zuhour Private School, our primary focus is on student-centered learning and inquiry-based learning, which are our top priorities. We strongly believe in the concept of lifelong learning, recognizing that both adults and children acquire new knowledge daily. Our core belief is that learning should be an enriching and pleasurable journey for all individuals, making it an enjoyable experience. We emphasize the significance of providing suitable educational practices that empower children to lead fulfilling and joyful lives.
We will ensure that students are provided with high quality learning experiences that lead to a consistently high level of achievement by creating an effective & well-managed learning environment in which the individual needs of each child are met.
Teaching is centered on the learning process of the individual child, with the learning of skills, concepts & real-life connections as one of AZPS 's most important goals. In developing the

Responsibilities

The School Principal is responsible for the implementation of the Teaching & Learning policy and ensuring that staff deliver the curriculum in such a way that the needs of all students have been met.

School staff are responsible for ensuring the policy and procedures are followed in school, and for ensuring that they provide a variety of opportunities for students to maximize their achievements in and out of the classroom. Staff play a fundamental role in ensuring that every student experience personalized learning that meets their individual needs and engages them in all areas of learning.

Aims

Through our teaching & learning programs, we aim to:

- Enable children to become confident, resourceful, inquirers and independent learners.
- Foster children's self-esteem and help them to build positive relationships with other people.
- Develop children's self-respect, encourage them to understand the ideas, attitudes, and values of others, and teach them to respect other people's feelings.
- Show respect for a diverse range of cultures and, in doing so, promote positive attitudes towards other people.
- Enable children to understand their community, and help them feel valued as part of it
- Help children grow into reliable, independent, and positive citizens.

Depth of Knowledge "DOK"

This policy aims to establish guidelines and expectations for educators regarding the depth of knowledge to be incorporated into teaching and learning practices. It recognizes the importance of promoting deeper levels of understanding, critical thinking, and application of knowledge among students to enhance their overall learning experience.

Definition of Depth of Knowledge:

Depth of Knowledge refers to the complexity and cognitive demand required to successfully engage with and demonstrate understanding of a particular concept or skill.

Depth of Knowledge levels can be categorized as follows:
Level 1: Recall and Reproduction - Basic recall of facts, terms, or concepts.
Level 2: Skill/Concept - Application of skills or concepts in familiar situations.
Level 3: Strategic Thinking - Reasoning, planning, and problem-solving in unfamiliar contexts.
Level 4: Extended Thinking - Complex reasoning, investigation, and analysis with multiple variables.

Curriculum Design and Alignment:

- The curriculum should be designed to incorporate a progression of depth of knowledge levels across grade levels and subject areas.
- Learning objectives and outcomes should reflect the appropriate depth of knowledge level for each topic or skill.
- Curriculum mapping should ensure a balanced distribution of depth of knowledge levels throughout the academic year.

Instructional Strategies:

- Teachers should use a variety of instructional strategies and resources to promote depth of knowledge, such as project-based learning, inquiry-based learning, problem-solving activities, case studies, and authentic assessments.
- Teachers should provide explicit instruction on higher-order thinking skills, including analysis, synthesis, evaluation, and creativity.
- Differentiation strategies should be employed to meet the diverse needs of students, allowing for varying levels of depth of knowledge based on their readiness and abilities.

Assessment and Feedback:

- Formative and summative assessments should be designed to evaluate students' depth of knowledge and their ability to apply concepts and skills at different levels.

- Feedback provided to students should focus not only on correctness but also on the depth of their understanding and application of knowledge.
- Assessments should align with the depth of knowledge expectations outlined in the curriculum and instruction.

Professional Development and Support:

- Ongoing professional development opportunities should be provided to educators to enhance their understanding of depth of knowledge and effective instructional strategies to promote it.
- Collaborative planning sessions should be encouraged to facilitate the sharing of best practices and the development of depth of knowledge-aligned lessons.
- School leaders should support teachers in implementing depth of knowledge practices and provide resources, materials, and time for collaboration.

Monitoring and Evaluation:

- Regular monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning practices related to depth of knowledge should be conducted to ensure alignment with the policy.
- Data analysis should be used to identify areas for improvement, measure student progress, and inform instructional decision-making.
- Feedback from students, parents, and staff should be considered to refine and enhance depth of knowledge practices.

Instructional Models

Model. These models support structured and student-centered learning, fostering independence and engagement Our school employs two key instructional models to enhance the teaching and learning experience: the Gradual Release of Responsibility (GRR) model and the 5 Es Instructional.

Gradual Release of Responsibility

Our teaching approach follows the Gradual Release of Responsibility (GRR) model to foster independent learning and critical thinking skills. This model includes four stages:

- Focused Instruction ("**I Do**"): The teacher models the learning task, providing clear examples and explanations.
- Guided Instruction ("**We Do**"): The teacher guides students through the learning task, offering support and scaffolding as needed.
- Collaborative Learning ("**You Do** It Together"): Students work together in pairs or groups to practice the task, with the teacher facilitating and monitoring their progress.
- Independent Practice ("**You Do** It Alone"): Students complete the task independently, demonstrating their understanding and mastery of the content.

This structured approach helps students gradually take more responsibility for their learning, ensuring they develop the necessary skills to succeed independently.

"5 Es" Instructional Model

Our curriculum incorporates the 5 Es Instructional Model, which is a student-centered approach to teaching and learning. The 5 Es include:

- **Engage**: Capturing students' interest and curiosity through activities or questions that relate to their prior knowledge and experiences.

- **Explore**: Allowing students to investigate and experiment, fostering hands-on learning and discovery.
- **Explain**: Encouraging students to articulate their understanding and reasoning, with the teacher providing clear explanations and clarifications.
- **Elaborate**: Extending students' learning by applying concepts to new situations and integrating additional skills.
- **Evaluate**: Assessing students' understanding and skills through various formative and summative assessments, providing feedback for improvement.

This model ensures that students are actively involved in their learning process, promoting deeper understanding and retention of knowledge.

Twenty-First Century Skills

This policy aims to incorporate and prioritize the development of twenty-first century skills within the teaching and learning framework to prepare students for the demands and challenges of the modern world. It recognizes the critical role of these skills in fostering student success, ***promoting lifelong learning***, and equipping learners with the essential competencies needed to thrive in the twenty-first century. school's curriculum, the academic team works on personalizing & individualizing learning for students that provides them with ample opportunities to engage within their daily learning.

Definition and Framework:

- The policy adopts a comprehensive definition of twenty-first century skills, encompassing core competencies such as critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, communication, digital literacy, global awareness, and socio-emotional skills.
- The policy embraces a holistic framework that promotes the integration of these skills across all subject areas, grade levels, and education

Curriculum Integration:

- Curriculum design and delivery should incorporate explicit opportunities for students to develop and practice twenty-first century skills within diverse academic disciplines.
- Educators are encouraged to use interdisciplinary approaches that facilitate the application of these skills in real-world contexts and problem-solving scenarios.

Professional Development:

- Ongoing professional development programs will be provided to educators, enabling them to deepen their understanding of twenty-first century skills and acquire effective instructional strategies to nurture these skills in students.
- Educators will receive training on how to incorporate technology, project-based learning, and collaborative activities to foster the development of these skills.

Assessment and Evaluation:

- The policy emphasizes the use of varied and authentic assessment methods that effectively measure students' acquisition and mastery of twenty-first century skills.
- Assessment practices should focus not only on content knowledge but also on the application, integration, and demonstration of these skills in different contexts.

Technology Integration:

- The policy recognizes the transformative potential of technology in enhancing the acquisition and practice of twenty-first century skills.
- Schools will provide access to digital tools, resources, and learning platforms that facilitate the

development of digital literacy, critical thinking, and creativity.

Collaboration and Partnerships:

- The policy encourages collaboration among educators, administrators, parents, and the community to support the integration of twenty-first century skills into teaching and learning practices.
- Partnerships with external organizations, businesses, and institutions will be sought to provide authentic learning experiences and real-world connections for students.

Equity and Inclusion:

- The policy underscores the importance of ensuring equitable access to opportunities for all students to develop twenty-first century skills, irrespective of their background, abilities, or socio- economic status.
- Strategies will be implemented to address any existing gaps in access, resources, and support, with a particular focus on fostering inclusivity and promoting diversity.

Problem Solving, Creativity, and Innovation

AZPS emphasizes the development of problem-solving skills, creativity, and innovation as essential components of our teaching and learning strategy. These elements are integrated into the curriculum to prepare students for the challenges of the future and to cultivate a mindset geared toward continuous improvement and original thinking.

Problem Solving

Critical Thinking: Encouraging students to analyze situations, identify problems, and develop logical solutions through structured activities and real-world scenarios.
Collaborative Learning: Promoting teamwork and collaboration in tackling complex problems, allowing students to learn from diverse perspectives and approaches.
Reflective Practice: Fostering an environment where students regularly reflect on their problem- solving processes and outcomes to improve their skills.

Creativity

Creative Expression: Providing opportunities for students to express their creativity through various mediums such as art, music, writing, and digital media.
Diverse Activities: Designing lessons that incorporate creative thinking exercises, brainstorming sessions, and innovation challenges to stimulate students' imaginations.
Encouraging Originality: Valuing unique ideas and approaches and encouraging students to think outside the box and explore new possibilities.

Innovation

Project-Based Learning: Implementing project-based learning (PBL) where students can design and execute projects that require innovative thinking and problem-solving.
Technological Integration: Utilizing technology and digital tools to support innovative practices and to introduce students to modern advancements in various fields.
Entrepreneurial Mindset: Encouraging students to develop an entrepreneurial spirit by exploring opportunities for innovation, understanding market needs, and creating value through new ideas.

Learning Environment

The purpose of this policy is to establish guidelines and expectations for creating a positive and conducive learning environment within the school. This policy aims to foster an inclusive, respectful, and engaging atmosphere that supports effective teaching and learning.

Inclusivity and Diversity:

- AZPS is committed to create an inclusive learning environment that values and respects the diversity of our students and staff. Discrimination, harassment, or any form of bias based on race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, religion, disability, or any other protected characteristic will not be tolerated.
- AZPS strives to provide equal opportunities for all learners, ensuring that educational resources, materials, and activities are accessible and relevant to diverse student backgrounds and learning styles.

Safe and Supportive Environment:

- AZPS is committed to maintain a safe and supportive learning environment. Physical and emotional safety of students and staff is of utmost importance.
- Bullying, intimidation, or any form of violence will not be tolerated. Appropriate measures will be taken to address and prevent such incidents.
- Students are encouraged to report any safety concerns or incidents promptly to the appropriate authorities.

Purposeful Classroom Displays:

- Classroom displays should be purposeful and aligned with the curriculum, educational objectives, and student learning outcomes. They should support and enhance the teaching and learning process.
- Displays should be relevant, informative, and visually engaging, providing students with valuable learning resources, examples, and prompts.

Representative Displays:

- Classroom displays should reflect and celebrate the diversity of the student body. They should include representations of different cultures, backgrounds, and perspectives, promoting inclusivity and cultural awareness.
- Display materials should avoid stereotypes and biases, fostering an environment where every student feels valued and represented.

Organization and Visual Clarity:

- Displays should be well-organized, visually clear, and easy to understand. Information should be presented in a logical and coherent manner, ensuring that students can easily access and comprehend the displayed content.
- Font size, color contrast, and overall design should be chosen thoughtfully to maximize legibility and readability.

Student Engagement and Interactivity:

- Classroom displays should encourage student engagement and interaction. They can include interactive elements, such as interactive boards, student-generated content, or hands-on activities that promote active learning and collaboration.
- Students should be encouraged to contribute to the displays by showcasing their work, projects, or creative expressions, fostering a sense of ownership and pride in their learning environment.

Timely Updates and Maintenance:

- Classroom displays should be regularly updated and refreshed to align with ongoing learning activities and to reflect student progress and achievements.
- The maintenance of displays, including fixing any damages or replacing outdated materials, should be promptly addressed to ensure a visually appealing and functional learning environment.

Professional Development and Support:

- Teachers will receive professional development opportunities and support to enhance their skills in designing effective and meaningful classroom displays.
- Resources and guidelines will be provided to assist teachers in creating engaging displays that align with this policy.

Students' Notebooks

This policy establishes guidelines and expectations regarding the use and maintenance of students' notebooks within the school. It aims to promote effective learning, organization, and accountability among students.

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Encourage students to maintain organized and comprehensive notebooks as a tool for learning and review.
- Foster a sense of responsibility and ownership over personal notes.
- Support teachers in their instructional practices and assessment of student progress.

Notebook Requirements:

- Each student is required to maintain a dedicated notebook for each subject or course.
- Notebooks should be of appropriate size and quality to facilitate notetaking and organization.
- Students are responsible for bringing their notebooks to class and keeping them up to date.

Note-Taking Guidelines:

- Students are encouraged to take clear, legible, and organized notes during class lectures, discussions, and activities.
- Notes should accurately reflect the content covered, highlighting key concepts, important details, and relevant examples.
- Students should use their own words and demonstrate active engagement with the material.
- Diagrams, charts, graphs, and other visual aids may be included to enhance understanding.
- Students are encouraged to review and revise their notes regularly to reinforce learning.

Notebook Maintenance:

- Students are responsible for maintaining the cleanliness and orderliness of their notebooks.
- Pages should be numbered, and headings or titles should be included for each new topic or section.
- Notes should be organized chronologically or thematically, as appropriate, to facilitate easy reference.
- Loose papers or handouts should be properly secured or taped into the notebook.

Review and Assessment:

- Teachers may periodically review students' notebooks to assess their note-taking skills, comprehension, and engagement.
- Reviewing notebooks may be part of the grading process, with criteria established by the teacher.
- Feedback and constructive feedback for improvement should be provided to students to enhance their note-taking abilities.

Learning Expectations and Outcomes

Students learn best when they:

- have a sense of belonging.
- are happy.
- are interested and motivated through access to their learning style preferences.
- achieve success and gain approval.
- are given tasks which match their personalized/ individualized needs.
- clearly understand the task
- are confident, feel secure and are aware of boundaries.
- are challenged and stimulated.
- are aware of what they need to do to improve their learning.
- In a safe learning environment Organization

Teachers organize & structure the learning environment to ensure that students can:

- work individually, in groups and as a class
- make decisions.
- work co-operatively
- solve problems.
- be creative.
- discuss their ideas.
- develop social skills.
- develop independence.
- use initiative.
- receive support.
- achieve academically

Effective Learning

AZPS acknowledges that people learn in many ways, visually, kinesthetically, and auditory. We aim to consider these different forms of intelligence when planning our teaching, and as a result
provide varied opportunities for learning. These opportunities are systematically planned to promote independent and active learning, as well as Athena Core Values.

Effective Teaching

When teaching we focus on motivating all the children, and building on their skills, knowledge and understanding of the curriculum, so that they reach the highest level of personal achievement. We use the school curriculum plan and curriculum maps to guide our teaching. This sets out the aims, objectives and values of the school, and details what is to be taught to each grade level, and what standards need to be mastered at the end of each academic year per grade level curriculum requirements.

We base our teaching on our knowledge of the learner's level of attainment & progress. Our focus is to develop further the knowledge, skills & real-life application of our students. When planning work for our learners with special educational needs, we give due regard to information and targets contained in the children's Individual Education Plans (IEPs). We strive to ensure that all tasks set are appropriate to each child's level of ability, and we have high expectations of all children.

We set academic targets for the children at the beginning of each year, and we share these targets with children and their parents. We review the progress of each child at the end of the academic year and set revised targets.

We plan our daily lessons with clear, measurable learning success criteria. These success criteria are unpacked from the US California CCSS/ NGSS & MOE National Curriculum. We thoroughly plan for transfer of daily learning success criteria using the gradual release model & 4Es (Engage, Explore, Express & Evaluate). Differentiation, questioning, collaborative learning opportunities, and individual learning are key components

in daily AZPS lessons. All learners' progress in daily lessons is regularly assessed & celebrated. To inform future learning and teaching, our plans are regularly reviewed & adjusted accordingly.

Teaching assistants and other adult helpers support as effectively as possible to ensure highly engaging personalized/ individualized learning for all students.

All our teachers reflect on their strengths and weaknesses and plan their professional development needs from the beginning of the year using Individual Professional Development Plans. These IPDPs are created at the beginning of the year with academic leads & respective teachers and followed up regularly throughout the academic year. Teachers continuously develop their skills & improve their teaching methodologies through strategies like peer teaching, team teaching and coaching. All our teaching staff attend in-house bespoke CPD workshops & share good practices across the Athena network.

Distance Learning:

Distance learning is a way of providing educational content and teaching to students who are not physically present in a typical classroom setting. With the use of digital platforms and technologies, this type of education makes it possible for students to access interactive activities, assignments, and courses at a distance. Since distance learning offers time and geographical flexibility, it's a useful option for continuing education in case of emergencies or other circumstances that preclude in-person attendance.

Please check AZPS Distance Learning Policy 25-26 for more information