

An outstanding school cultivating dynamic students who are culturally aware and collaborative within a multicultural society.
مدرسة متميزة بتنمية الطلاب الديناميكيين الذين لديهم وعي ثقافي و تعاوني داخل مجتمع متعدد الثقافات



AMERICAN INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL DUBAI

CURRICULUM DESIGN, ADAPTATION AND MODIFICATION POLICY

AY 2026-27

Applicable to: Kindergarten – Grade 12

Approved by: Academic Team & Principal

Policy Review: Annually in June | Next Review: June 2027

An outstanding school cultivating dynamic students who are culturally aware and collaborative within a multicultural society.
مدرسة متميزة بتنمية الطلاب الديناميين الذين لديهم وعي ثقافي و تعاوني داخل مجتمع متعدد الثقافات

Table of Contents

1. Purpose	3
2. Scope.....	3
3. Guiding Principles	3
3.1 Equity and Inclusion	3
3.2 Standards-Based Design	4
3.3 Data-Informed Decision Making	4
3.4 Student-Centered Planning	4
3.5 Coherence and Vertical Alignment.....	4
3.6 Flexibility Within a Framework	4
4. Curriculum Design.....	4
4.1 Design Framework	4
4.2 Curriculum Components	5
4.3 Curriculum Review Cycle.....	5
5. Curriculum Adaptation.....	5
5.1 Definition	5
5.2 Grade-Band Adaptation Framework	5
5.3 KG – Grade 2: Teacher Observation-Led Adaptation.....	6
5.4 Grades 3 – 9: RTI-Informed and MAP-Driven Adaptation	6
5.5 Grade 10: PSAT 10-Aligned Curriculum Adaptation	7
5.6 Grades 11 – 12: SAT-Aligned Curriculum Adaptation	8
6. Curriculum Modification.....	8
6.1 Definition	8
6.2 Indicators for Modification	9
6.3 Types of Modification.....	9
7. Monitoring and Evaluation.....	9
8. Professional Development	10
9. Roles and Responsibilities	11
10. Compliance and Regulatory Alignment	11
11. Policy Administration.....	11

1. Purpose

An outstanding school cultivating dynamic students who are culturally aware and collaborative within a multicultural society. This policy establishes a clear, evidence-based framework for curriculum design, adaptation, and modification at American International School (AIS) Dubai. It ensures that all students, from Kindergarten through Grade 12, have access to a high-quality American curriculum that is responsive to their developmental stages, learning profiles, and performance trajectories.

Central to this policy is a commitment to elevating student performance on both internal and external assessments. The policy embeds structured, data-driven processes for curriculum adaptation and modification, differentiated by grade band, and anchored to the tools and assessment systems used at AIS: RTI Plans and NWEA MAP Growth data for Grades 3–9, teacher observation data for KG–Grade 2, PSAT 10 focus areas for Grade 10, and SAT performance data for Grades 11–12.

This policy supports compliance with UAE educational regulations (KHDA) and aligns with the American curriculum frameworks that govern instruction at AIS, including the Common Core State Standards (CCSS), Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS), and College Board standards.

2. Scope

This policy applies to:

- All academic subjects and grade levels from Kindergarten through Grade 12
- General education students and students of determination (Inclusion)
- English Language Learners (ELLs) at all proficiency levels
- All instructional staff, curriculum leaders, and support personnel
- Curriculum review, planning, and instructional decision-making processes

3. Guiding Principles

The following principles underpin all curriculum decisions at AIS Dubai:

3.1 Equity and Inclusion

Every student has the right to access a rigorous, engaging, and developmentally appropriate curriculum. Adaptations and modifications exist to remove barriers, not lower expectations, unless clinically or educationally warranted.

An outstanding school cultivating dynamic students who are culturally aware and collaborative within a multicultural society.
مدرسة متميزة بتنمية الطلاب الديناميين الذين لديهم وعي ثقافي و تعاوني داخل مجتمع متعدد الثقافات

3.2 Standards-Based Design

All curriculum design begins with standards: CCSS (ELA and Mathematics), NGSS (Science), C3 Framework (Social Studies), CASEL (Social-Emotional Learning), and UAE Moral Education. Instruction is mapped to standards and assessed against grade-level benchmarks.

3.3 Data-Informed Decision Making

Curriculum adaptation and modification decisions are grounded in assessment data. This includes standardised assessment data (MAP, NGRT, CAT4, PSAT 10, SAT), teacher observation records, and progress monitoring data from RTI plans. Data sources are differentiated by grade bands to ensure developmental appropriateness and instructional relevance.

3.4 Student-Centered Planning

Learners' academic needs, interests, learning styles, language backgrounds, and cultural contexts inform curriculum planning. Students are active participants in understanding their own learning goals where appropriate.

3.5 Coherence and Vertical Alignment

Curriculum decisions at each grade level are made with awareness of vertical alignment — ensuring knowledge and skill progression is coherent from KG through Grade 12 and prepares students for post-secondary success.

3.6 Flexibility Within a Framework

Teachers have professional latitude to adapt instructional delivery and curriculum pacing within the boundaries of the established curriculum framework, provided adaptations are documented, data-informed, and communicated to relevant stakeholders.

4. Curriculum Design

4.1 Design Framework

AIS Dubai follows a Backward Design model (Understanding by Design – UbD), in which curriculum planning begins with the identification of desired results (standards and learning outcomes), moves to the determination of acceptable evidence (assessments), and then progresses to planning learning experiences and instruction.

All curriculum units are mapped using the Atlas platform and are expected to include:

- Standards alignment (CCSS, NGSS, C3, or relevant framework)
- Essential questions and enduring understandings
- Summative and formative assessment design
- Differentiation and accommodation considerations
- Cross-curricular connections (STEAM, Global Competencies, SEL)
- UAE National Identity and Moral Education integration where applicable

An outstanding school cultivating dynamic students who are culturally aware and collaborative within a multicultural society.
مدرسة متميزة بتنمية الطلاب الديناميكيين الذين لديهم وعي ثقافي و تعاوني داخل مجتمع متعدد الثقافات

4.2 Curriculum Components

A well-designed curriculum unit at AIS includes:

- Content knowledge aligned to grade-level standards
- Skill development: 21st-century skills, literacy across content areas, numeracy
- Cross-curricular connections: STEAM, project-based learning, inquiry
- UAE National Identity, Moral Education, and cultural responsiveness
- Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) embedded into classroom culture and routines
- Assessment literacy: students understand the purpose and criteria of assessments

4.3 Curriculum Review Cycle

The curriculum is reviewed through a structured annual cycle:

- Ongoing: Teachers document instructional decisions and data reflections in Atlas
- Termly: Department Chairs review MAP and internal assessment data with teams
- End of Year: Academic Team, subject coordinators, and senior leaders conduct a full curriculum audit
- June: Policy and curriculum documentation is revised for the upcoming academic year

5. Curriculum Adaptation

5.1 Definition

Curriculum adaptation refers to changes made to the delivery, format, pacing, or instructional approach without altering the expected learning standards or outcomes. The goal remains grade-level achievement; the pathway is adjusted to make it accessible.

Adaptations are used for: English Language Learners (ELLs), students of determination (with or without IEPs), students below grade-level benchmarks, and students requiring enrichment or extension.

5.2 Grade-Band Adaptation Framework

Curriculum adaptation decisions are differentiated by grade band, with clearly defined data sources and review processes:

Grade Band	Primary Data Source(s)	Adaptation Trigger	Review Forum
KG – Grade 2	Teacher Observations, Portfolios, Running Records	Patterns identified in weekly/biweekly observation notes; shared in CRM	Curriculum Review Meetings (CRMs) with K–2 team



Grade Band	Primary Data Source(s)	Adaptation Trigger	Review Forum
Grades 3 – 9	RTI Plan + NWEA MAP Growth Data	MAP RIT scores below grade-level norms; RTI Tier placement; NGRT data (Gr. 1–9)	RTI Meetings, MAP Instructional Planning Sessions, CRMs
Grade 10	PSAT 10 Focus Areas	PSAT 10 (ERW & Math); Evidence-Based Reading & Writing targets	Standards Action Plan Review; Grade 10 CRM
Grades 11 – 12	SAT Score Reports + AP Performance Data	SAT scores; AP exam scores and course alignment; senior readiness indicators	Standards Action Plan Review; 11–12 CRM; AP Team Meetings

5.3 KG – Grade 2: Teacher Observation-Led Adaptation

In the early years (KG through Grade 2), formal standardised assessments are limited to support developmentally appropriate practice. Teacher observation is the primary and most reliable data source for adaptation decisions.

Teachers in KG–Grade 2 are expected to:

- Maintain structured observation logs documenting individual student progress against developmental benchmarks and KG–2 CCSS standards
- Use running records, anecdotal notes, portfolio evidence, and classroom performance to identify patterns of need
- Share observation data during Curriculum Review Meetings (CRMs) for collective decision-making
- Collaborate with the Inclusion Team when observations suggest the need for additional support beyond classroom differentiation

Adaptations at this level may include flexible grouping, use of manipulatives and visual supports, differentiated reading materials, oral assessment alternatives, and bilingual scaffolding where appropriate.

5.4 Grades 3 – 9: RTI-Informed and MAP-Driven Adaptation

For Grades 3 through 9, NWEA MAP Growth data and the school's RTI (Response to Intervention) Action Plan serve as the primary drivers of curriculum adaptation. These tools together create a tiered, evidence-based system for identifying need and delivering targeted instruction.

5.4.1 NWEA MAP Growth Data

MAP is administered three times per year (Beginning of Year, Middle of Year, End of Year) in Reading and Mathematics. The Head of Data & Assessments leads the analysis and dissemination of MAP results to classroom teachers and curriculum teams.



An outstanding school cultivating dynamic students who are culturally aware and collaborative within a multicultural society.

مدرسة متميزة بتنمية الطلاب الديناميين الذين لديهم وعي ثقافي و تعاوني داخل مجتمع متعدد الثقافات

MAP data is used to:

- Identify students performing below, at, or above grade-level RIT norms
- Pinpoint instructional domains of strength and gap within each subject
- Track individual growth trajectories over time
- Inform differentiated group structures and instructional pacing
- Align to the NWEA Learning Continuum for targeted resource selection

5.4.2 RTI Action Plan

The RTI framework at AIS operates across three tiers:

- Tier 1 – High-quality, differentiated core instruction for all students
- Tier 2 – Targeted, supplemental small-group intervention for students below benchmark
- Tier 3 – Intensive, individualized intervention for students significantly below benchmark

RTI meetings are held regularly to review progress monitoring data, adjust tier placements, and update instructional strategies. These decisions directly inform curriculum adaptations at the classroom and department level.

5.4.3 NGRT (New Group Reading Test) – Grades 1–9

The NGRT is administered annually and provides standardised reading age and stanine data for students in Grades 1–9. NGRT results are used alongside MAP to inform literacy-focused curriculum adaptations across content areas. The annual NGRT report (produced by the Head of Data & Assessments) is shared with classroom teachers and used in CRMs as a planning tool.

5.5 Grade 10: PSAT 10-Aligned Curriculum Adaptation

For Grade 10 students, curriculum adaptation is anchored to the PSAT 10 assessment framework. The PSAT 10 measures college and career readiness across two primary domains: Evidence-Based Reading and Writing (ERW) and Math.

PSAT 10 focus areas inform curriculum adaptation through:

- Development and implementation of a Grade 10 Standards Action Plan that targets PSAT-aligned skills in ELA and Mathematics instruction
- Collaborative planning sessions between the Head of Data & Assessments, English, and Math department leads to embed PSAT focus skills into unit plans
- Formative assessment design that mirrors PSAT question formats and complexity levels
- Targeted curriculum pacing adjustments to allow depth of practice in high-priority skill areas before the PSAT 10 testing window.

An outstanding school cultivating dynamic students who are culturally aware and collaborative within a multicultural society.
مدرسة متميزة بتنمية الطلاب الديناميين الذين لديهم وعي ثقافي و تعاوني داخل مجتمع متعدد الثقافات

Curriculum Review Meetings for Grade 10 use PSAT 10 performance data as a core planning document.

5.6 Grades 11 – 12: SAT-Aligned Curriculum Adaptation

For Grades 11 and 12, curriculum adaptation is guided by SAT performance data and, where applicable, AP course and exam performance. The SAT serves as the primary external benchmark for college readiness in this grade band.

SAT-aligned curriculum adaptation includes:

- Disaggregation of SAT score reports by section (Reading and Writing; Math) and subscores (Command of Evidence, Words in Context, Standard English Conventions, Heart of Algebra, Problem Solving, etc.)
- Development of a Grades 11–12 Standards Action Plan that maps evaluated standards to instructional priorities in ELA and Mathematics
- Integration of SAT-style reading, writing, and mathematical reasoning tasks into everyday instruction, not as test prep, but as authentic applications of college-ready skills
- Cross-departmental collaboration to embed academic vocabulary, evidence-based writing, and data literacy skills across content areas
- Use of AP course performance data (where applicable) to validate curriculum rigor and identify alignment gaps
- Senior readiness check-ins conducted in collaboration with HS Counsellors to track progress toward SAT benchmark attainment

Curriculum Review Meetings for Grades 11–12 reference SAT score reports as a foundational planning document. The Head of Data & Assessments chairs these sessions and presents disaggregated data to department chairs.

6. Curriculum Modification

6.1 Definition

Curriculum modification refers to substantive changes to the level, complexity, or content of what is taught and assessed, made when a student's learning profile, as determined through the IEP process or Student Support Team review, requires a differentiated learning pathway that diverges from grade-level standards.

Modification differs from adaptation in that it changes the expected learning outcome, not only the delivery. Modifications are always formally documented and subject to regular review.

An outstanding school cultivating dynamic students who are culturally aware and collaborative within a multicultural society.
مدرسة متميزة بتنمية الطلاب الديناميكيين الذين لديهم وعي ثقافي و تعاوني داخل مجتمع متعدد الثقافات

6.2 Indicators for Modification

Modification is considered when:

- A student has a documented disability or cognitive profile that significantly impacts access to grade-level content, as identified through the IEP process
- RTI Tier 3 data (Gr. 3–9) consistently indicates that intensive intervention at grade-level has not produced meaningful progress over a defined monitoring period
- The Inclusion Team and Student Support Team collectively determine that grade-level standards are not an appropriate target, even with full adaptation support
- Teacher observations (KG–2) combined with specialist assessment data indicate significant developmental divergence requiring alternative learning goals

6.3 Types of Modification

Modifications at AIS may include:

- Reduction in the number of standards addressed within a unit or course
- Simplification of content complexity or reading level
- Alternative learning outcomes aligned to a student's functional ability level
- Modified or alternative assessments (e.g., oral responses, portfolio-based assessment, reduced task scope)
- Modified grading frameworks communicated clearly to parents and documented in the IEP/PLP

Modifications are reviewed at minimum quarterly by the Inclusion Team in collaboration with the relevant classroom teachers and parents. Progress data is shared in Curriculum Review Meetings and included in the annual curriculum audit.

7. Monitoring and Evaluation

The effectiveness of curriculum design, adaptation, and modification is monitored through a layered set of tools and review processes:

Monitoring Tool	Purpose	Frequency / Owner
NWEA MAP Growth	Track RIT growth vs. norms; identify instructional gaps in reading & math (Gr. 3–10)	3x/year; Head of Data & Assessments
RTI Action Plans	Tiered intervention tracking; progress monitoring for Gr. 3–9	Ongoing; Classroom Teachers + RTI Lead
NGRT Reading Assessment	Standardised literacy benchmarking; informs curriculum adaptation in ELA and across content areas (Gr. 1–9)	Annual; Head of Data
CAT4 (Cognitive Abilities)	Identifies cognitive profile; supports differentiation and expectation-setting	Annual; Head of Data



Monitoring Tool	Purpose	Frequency / Owner
Teacher Observation Logs	Primary data source for KG–Gr. 2 adaptation decisions	Weekly; Class Teachers reported in CRMs
PSAT 10 Reports	Identifies Gr. 10 skill gaps in Evidence-Based Reading & Writing and Math for targeted curriculum adaptation	Annual (Oct/Nov); Head of Data + Gr. 10 Team
SAT Score Reports	Informs Gr. 11–12 Standards Action Plans; tracks college-readiness benchmark attainment	Per testing window; Head of Data + HS Counselors
IEP / PLP Progress Reviews	Tracks individual modification outcomes for students of determination	Quarterly; Inclusion Team + Teachers
KHDA Inspection Feedback	External validation of curriculum quality, inclusion, and student outcomes	Annual; Principal + Senior Leadership

All monitoring data is compiled and reported by the Head of Data & Assessments, who presents term-by-term summaries to the Academic Team and senior leadership.

8. Professional Development

Sustained professional development is a prerequisite for effective curriculum adaptation and modification. AIS provides structured professional learning aligned to the demands of this policy.

Professional development offerings include:

- Universal Design for Learning (UDL): designing for variability from the outset
- Differentiation strategies grounded in data: using MAP, RTI, and NGRT to plan instruction
- Assessment literacy: understanding and using PSAT 10 and SAT data reports
- ELL inclusion and language-responsive teaching practices
- SEND-inclusive curriculum planning and IEP goal integration
- Data-informed instructional design and UbD curriculum development
- AI-informed assessment design: maintaining rigor and authenticity in an AI-enabled environment

Professional development is planned collaboratively by the Head of Data & Assessments and curriculum coordinators, delivered termly, and evaluated through teacher feedback, observation data, and student performance outcomes.



An outstanding school cultivating dynamic students who are culturally aware and collaborative within a multicultural society.
مدرسة متميزة بتنمية الطلاب الديناميكيين الذين لديهم وعي ثقافي و تعاوني داخل مجتمع متعدد الثقافات

9. Roles and Responsibilities

Role	Responsibility
School Principal	Oversight and compliance with KHDA and school vision; ultimate accountability for policy implementation
Head of Data & Assessments	Leads curriculum adaptation and modification framework using assessment data; oversees RTI, MAP, and external assessment alignment (PSAT/SAT); chairs Curriculum Review Meetings
Curriculum Coordinators / Dept. Chairs	Curriculum mapping, monitoring standards alignment and instructional rigor; coordinate grade-band adaptation cycles
Teachers	Deliver differentiated instruction; document adaptations and modifications; use data from RTI, MAP, and teacher observations to guide instructional decisions
Inclusion / SEND Team	Design, implement, and track accommodations and modifications per IEPs and PLPs
Parents / Guardians	Partners in planning, supporting, and reviewing individualized learning pathways

10. Compliance and Regulatory Alignment

This policy is aligned with the following regulatory and curricular frameworks:

- KHDA Inclusion Framework and Quality Standards
- UAE Federal Law No. 29 of 2006 on the Rights of People of Determination
- Common Core State Standards (CCSS) — ELA and Mathematics
- Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS)
- College Board Standards (PSAT 10 and SAT) — Grades 10–12
- NWEA MAP Growth Framework — Grades 3–10
- WIDA English Language Development Standards — for ELL students
- CASEL Social-Emotional Learning Framework

11. Policy Administration

Policy Owner	Head of Data & Assessments
Approved By	Academic Team & School Principal
Academic Year	2025 – 2026
Scope	Kindergarten – Grade 12
Review Frequency	Annually in June



ATHENA EDUCATION

American International School
المدرسة الأمريكية الدولية



Next Review Date

June 2027

Related Documents

RTI Action Plan | MAP Instructional Planning Guide
Standards Action Plan (Gr. 10–12) | NGRT Literacy Report
SEND/Inclusion Policy | ELL Support Framework | IEP
Documentation



04 298 8666



www.aisch.ae | info@aisschool.net



P.O. Box: 87727, Al Qusasis, Dubai.

