

Alternative Education Pathways Policy

Addendum

Ambassador International Academy

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Purpose

The purpose of this addendum is to articulate Ambassador International Academy's commitment to providing personalised, inclusive, and future-focused education for students whose learning needs require Alternative Education Pathways (AEP), in line with the KHDA's Inclusive Education Framework. It ensures that every student, regardless of ability, is given access to meaningful learning experiences that promote dignity, independence, and a successful transition to adult life.

This addendum supplements our existing Inclusion Policy and outlines our whole-school approach to:

- Identifying and supporting students who require significantly modified or individualised learning pathways,
- Designing and implementing a curriculum that is relevant, functional, and developmentally appropriate,
- Tracking and reporting progress in a way that reflects growth and achievement beyond academic benchmarks,
- Engaging families, staff, and external partners in collaborative planning,
- Preparing students for life beyond school.

Through these pathways, we uphold the belief that every learner has potential and deserves opportunities that reflect their interests, strengths, and aspirations, ensuring equitable access to success in a diverse and inclusive school community.

1. Definition of Alternative Education Pathways (AEP)

Alternative Education Pathways at AIA are structured, flexible educational programs designed to meet the individual needs of students who may benefit from modified curriculum, vocational training, life skills-focused programs, or other non-mainstream pathways. These are personalised and goal-oriented, supporting successful transition to adulthood and lifelong learning. Students enrolled in Alternative Education Pathways will continue to access mainstream learning, social, cultural and extracurricular opportunities whenever appropriate and beneficial to their development.

2. Eligibility and Identification

At AIA, a student may be considered for an Alternative Education Pathway (AEP) when traditional academic pathways do not fully meet their individual learning needs, even with high-quality differentiation, accommodations, and targeted support. Placement in an AEP is a collaborative, evidence-based decision made in the best interest of the learner.

Where consensus cannot be reached, the final pathway recommendation will be determined by the Student Support Team based on assessment evidence, while ensuring parental concerns are formally documented and considered.

Eligibility Criteria

Students may be eligible for an AEP if one or more of the following apply:

- The student has a diagnosed or suspected intellectual disability or global developmental delay that significantly impacts access to the age-related curriculum.
- The student performs well below expected academic levels, despite consistent, high-quality Wave 1 and Wave 2 interventions.
- Psychometric assessments (e.g., CAT4, WISC, SB-V) indicate cognitive functioning in the lower percentiles, necessitating a modified or functional curriculum.
- The student demonstrates limited independence in functional, communication, or adaptive skills, impacting their ability to engage with standard learning outcomes.
- The student requires life skills- or vocational-focused learning experiences that are better aligned with long-term outcomes such as independent living or supported employment.
- The student's profile suggests that they would benefit more from a modified or individualised curriculum, including greater emphasis on practical life skills, personal development, and social communication.
- Students who enrol for Grade 11 at the school with a CAT4 score of 120 or above but an English proficiency level of A or B are offered a one-year English Foundation Course. This initiative aims to enhance their proficiency to level D, enabling them to transition into programs that align with their abilities and interests in the following academic year.

Identification Process

The identification and referral process includes the following steps:

1. Initial Concerns Raised: Teachers, parents, or specialists flag concerns regarding the student's sustained difficulties in accessing the mainstream curriculum.
2. Data Review: Analysis of student work, assessments, IEP and ILP progress, CAT4 or cognitive reports, and intervention records.
3. Student Support Team Meeting: The Inclusion Team (including Head of Inclusion, Secondary Inclusion Lead, Head of Secondary, Program Coordinators, relevant specialists, and class teachers) convenes to discuss the suitability of an AEP.
4. Consultation with Parents: Parents are actively engaged in reviewing assessment findings and understanding the rationale, benefits, and structure of an alternative pathway.
5. Student Voice: Where developmentally appropriate, students are included in discussions about their learning pathway and future aspirations.
6. Formal Documentation: If agreed upon, the decision is formalised through an Individualised Education Plan (IEP) or Alternative Learning Plan (ALP) that outlines specific curriculum adjustments, learning outcomes, and review timelines.

Review and Reconsideration

- Eligibility is reviewed annually (or sooner if significant changes in ability or performance are noted).
- Pathways are flexible and may be adapted based on student progress or shifting needs.
- Movement between pathways is possible with team agreement, supported by data and readiness indicators.

3. Pathways Offered

At AIA, we recognise that students have diverse learning needs, aspirations, and potential. To honour this diversity, we offer a range of structured Alternative Education Pathways (AEPs) that are carefully tailored to support students who require modifications to the traditional curriculum or who benefit from functional and vocationally aligned programs. These pathways are inclusive, meaningful, and designed to support long-term success and independent functioning, both within and beyond the school environment.

A. Modified Academic Programs (Whole School)

These programs are designed for students who cannot access the full scope of the age-related curriculum, even with accommodations. The learning focus is on:

- Core subjects such as functional literacy, numeracy, and science, delivered at a developmentally appropriate level
- Modified learning outcomes that emphasize practical application of concepts
- Differentiated instructional strategies, visuals, multi-sensory resources, and assistive technology, IB inclusion access accommodations
- Individualised Education Plans (IEPs) that align with student strengths and needs

Assessment is continuous and personalised, using teacher-designed rubrics, checklists, portfolios, and real-life application tasks.

B. Life Skills Programs

Our Life Skills Program supports students with more significant learning needs or global developmental delays. The focus areas include:

- Personal care and hygiene
- ADL – Activities of Daily Living
- Remedial sessions in their field of interest, like art, music, robotics
- Communication and social interaction
- Money management and time awareness
- Community participation and travel training
- Emotional regulation and interpersonal skills

Students participate in structured weekly sessions and school-wide inclusion opportunities and may work toward specific functional independence goals outlined in their IEPs.

C. ASDAN Modules

AIA is implementing modules from the ASDAN (Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network) program as part of its commitment to offering meaningful, accredited learning for students with SEND and those on alternative pathways. These modules:

- Are practical and portfolio-based, building real-life, work-readiness, and independence skills
- Can be personalised to reflect student interest areas and career aspirations
- Offer recognition of progress through internally moderated and externally verified accreditation, leading to Bronze, Silver or Gold certification.

- Include options like *Personal Progress, Personal and Social Development, Employability Skills, and Towards Independence*

ASDAN complements modified learning and provides a recognised alternative credential.

D. NCFE English and Mathematics Qualifications

As part of AIA's commitment to providing flexible and meaningful Alternative Education Pathways, the school is introducing **NCFE English and Mathematics qualifications** for students who may benefit from an alternative approach to developing and accrediting their core literacy and numeracy skills.

These qualifications will provide students with opportunities to:

- Develop functional and transferable **English and Mathematics skills** relevant to everyday life, further education, and future employment.
- Work towards recognised qualifications at an appropriate level, based on their individual learning profile, prior attainment, and future aspirations.
- Access learning through a more personalised and appropriately paced programme, with reasonable adjustments and inclusion access arrangements where required.
- Build confidence, independence, and practical application of English and Mathematics skills in real-life contexts.
- Gain recognised accreditation that can complement other AEP pathways, including ASDAN, BTEC and modified academic programmes.

NCFE English and Mathematics may form part of a **blended pathway**, where students continue to access other areas of the curriculum alongside their qualification programme. Placement and qualification level will be determined through assessment of the student's current attainment, individual needs, progression goals, and post-school aspirations.

The introduction of NCFE qualifications strengthens AIA's commitment to ensuring that students on alternative pathways have access to **meaningful, accredited and future-focused learning opportunities**, while maintaining flexibility to adapt provision according to individual needs.

E. DP/CP and BTEC Business (Mainstream and Advanced Learners)

For students who can access traditional academic or vocational routes with or without accommodations, we offer:

- **IB Diploma Programme (DP):** A rigorous academic route for students pursuing higher education pathways
- **IB Career-related Programme (CP):** Integrates academic courses with real-world career-related learning
- **BTEC Business:** A practical, career-oriented qualification focused on business fundamentals, entrepreneurship, and workplace skills. Pearson BTEC Business Certification offers practical business skills at multiple levels, from foundational (Level 1/2) to advanced (Level 3, equivalent to A-Levels) and specialised higher education (Level 4/5, equivalent to the first or second year of university).

F. CIS Accredited High School Diploma

As part of AIA's commitment to providing flexible and inclusive pathways to graduation, eligible students may work towards the **AIA High School Diploma**, awarded through the school's accreditation with the Council of International Schools (CIS). This pathway recognises successful completion of an individualised secondary education programme and may be appropriate for students whose strengths, learning needs, and future aspirations are best supported through a personalised curriculum and alternative assessment framework.

The High School Diploma pathway:

- Recognises achievement across academic, life skills, vocational, and personal development domains.
- Celebrates student progress through an individualised programme of study.
- Supports transition planning towards employment, vocational training, supported pathways, or selected post-secondary opportunities.
- May be delivered alongside ASDAN modules, NCFE qualifications, work-related learning experiences, and other alternative curriculum programmes.

These pathways are available to students whose diverse learning needs and styles are supported through inclusion access accommodations, enabling them to work at grade-level expectations. Parents and students will receive guidance about how alternative qualifications may impact future educational, vocational and higher education pathways before programme enrolment.

Pathway Planning and Flexibility

- AEPs are not rigid tracks; students may transition between pathways based on developmental growth, reassessment, or changes in interests.
- Blended approaches are common, for example, a student may follow a modified curriculum in core subjects while participating in an NCFE English or Mathematics qualification, BTEC or ASDAN module in their area of strength or identified need.
- Planning is always collaborative and revisited at least annually through IEP and ILP reviews or student progress meetings.

4. Curriculum Design and Implementation

The curriculum across Alternative Education Pathways (AEPs) at AIA is designed to be personalised, functional, and aspirational, enabling all students to progress toward meaningful, relevant outcomes. It maintains alignment with KHDA's Inclusive Education Framework, emphasizing equity, dignity, and success for all.

Key Features of Curriculum Design:

- **Individualised Goals:** All AEP students follow learning plans with specific, measurable goals informed by baseline data, student profiles, and long-term outcomes.
- **Accredited Core Skills:** Where appropriate, students may access NCFE English and Mathematics qualifications as part of their personalised pathway. The level and content of study will be determined by the student's current attainment, individual learning needs, and future progression goals.
- **Functional and Life Skills Curriculum:** Emphasizes practical competencies such as time management, social interaction, health and safety, money skills, travel training, and household management, especially in the Life Skills Program and ASDAN modules.
- **Vocational and Career Pathways:** For secondary and post-16 students, options such as ASDAN *transition challenge* modules, BTEC Business, and the IBCP support workplace readiness and career-oriented skills.
- **Inclusive Participation:** AEP students are included in whole-school activities, cultural events, assemblies, and relevant mainstream lessons, with accommodations as needed.
- **Flexible Grouping:** Students may be grouped by developmental level, interest, or target skills rather than age, especially in life skills or ASDAN-based modules.
- **English Language Learner (ELL) Program:** Non-native English-speaking students joining grade-level programs are supported through an ELL program. This program prepares them to achieve the necessary English proficiency within the first year,

enabling them to participate in examinations in Year 2. Accommodations and support are tailored to their proficiency level to ensure equitable access to assessments and learning outcomes.

Curriculum delivery is managed collaboratively between classroom teachers, inclusion support staff, therapists, and where appropriate, external agencies to ensure holistic support.

5. Assessment and Reporting

Assessment in AEPs focuses on measuring personal progress, functional competence, and growth over time rather than comparison to age-related academic standards.

Principles of Assessment:

- **Baseline Assessments:** Conducted upon entry into an AEP to establish current functioning levels using tools like teacher observation checklists, developmental scales, or functional skills inventories.
- **Ongoing Formative Assessment:** Teachers assess daily learning using observation, checklists, photo/video evidence, task analysis, student reflections, and performance-based tasks.
- **Progress Tracking:** IEP goals are monitored through termly reviews using individualized rubrics and annotated portfolios. For ASDAN modules, evidence is compiled within internally moderated portfolios. ILP goals are assessed termly through performance-based evaluations focused on reading, writing, listening, and speaking skills.
- **Functional Assessments:** In the Life Skills Program, students are assessed on independence, routine-following, and skill generalization in real-world settings.
- **Accreditation:** Students completing ASDAN modules earn formally recognised certificates. Where applicable, students undertaking NCFE English and Mathematics qualifications will be assessed in accordance with the requirements of the relevant NCFE qualification and will receive the appropriate certification upon successful completion. BTEC and IBCP students are evaluated through coursework, practical assessments, and standardized moderation, with time-bound exams at the end of Year 2 based on their chosen certification level.
- **Students undertaking the CIS Accredited High School Diploma pathway** will be assessed against their individual learning goals, graduation requirements, portfolio evidence, and pathway outcomes. Progress toward diploma completion will be reported to parents through the school's alternative reporting framework.

Reporting Structure:

- Termly Learning Updates: Parents receive detailed reports outlining student progress toward IEP, AEP and ILP targets, skill acquisition, and areas of challenge.
- Narrative Comments: Replaces grades where appropriate, focusing on what the student can do, next steps, and support strategies.
- Alternative Report Cards: Students on modified or functional curricula may receive tailored report cards that align with their individual pathway and do not include standard grading or age-related benchmarks.
- Parent-Teacher Review Meetings: Held termly, with ongoing communication via learning logs, home-school diaries, or digital portfolios.

All assessment and reporting practices respect the dignity and identity of the learner, celebrating individual growth and personal success.

6. Roles and Responsibilities

A shared commitment to inclusive education underpins the success of Alternative Education Pathways (AEPs). At AIA, the implementation, monitoring, and review of AEPs involve collaboration among staff, students, and families, ensuring that every child's educational journey is meaningful and empowering.

School Leadership Team

- Ensure that AEPs are embedded within the school's inclusive vision and improvement plans.
- Allocate resources (staffing, materials, training) to support the effective delivery of all pathways.
- Monitor implementation, compliance, and outcomes in line with KHDA's Inclusive Education Framework.

Head of Inclusion / Inclusion Support Team

- Lead the identification, planning, and coordination of AEPs.
- Ensure appropriate assessments and documentation are in place (IEPs, ALPs, portfolios, ASDAN tracking, etc.).
- Support teachers in curriculum adaptation, differentiation, and functional skill instruction.
- Coordinate with external agencies for additional assessments or therapy when required.

- Coordinate the implementation and monitoring of accredited alternative qualifications, including NCFE English and Mathematics, where these form part of a student's personalised pathway.
- Deliver or arrange ongoing CPD for staff on alternative curriculum design and delivery.

Head of ELL / ELL Support Team

- Lead the identification, planning, and implementation of English Language Learner (ELL) programs.
- Ensure the availability and accuracy of necessary assessments and documentation, such as Individualized Learning Plans (ILPs), language proficiency tracking, and annotated portfolios.
- Assist teachers with adapting the curriculum, implementing differentiation strategies, and integrating functional language skills into instruction.
- Coordinate with external providers for additional assessments, language therapy, or specialized interventions as needed.
- Organize or deliver ongoing CPD sessions for staff on ELL curriculum development, language acquisition strategies, and inclusive teaching practices.

Class/Subject Teachers

- Deliver the modified or functional curriculum in a way that is accessible and engaging.
- Collect evidence of student learning and contribute to termly progress reviews.
- Communicate regularly with parents and the Inclusion and ELL team regarding progress, challenges, and adjustments.
- Include AEP students meaningfully in class activities, events, and peer learning opportunities.
- Support the delivery of NCFE English and Mathematics programmes where appropriate and contribute evidence of student progress towards qualification and individual learning goals.

Learning Support Assistants (LSAs) / Inclusion Support Staff

- Implement individualized strategies under teacher/inclusion leader guidance.
- Facilitate student access to activities, provide tailored support, and promote independence.

- Maintain logs and contribute to progress monitoring and reporting.

Parents / Guardians

- Participate actively in all planning and review processes (IEP meetings, ILP, AEP reviews, pathway discussions).
- Support learning and life skills development at home.
- Collaborate with the school on transition planning and long-term aspirations for their child.

Students (Where Developmentally Appropriate)

- Be encouraged to participate in goal setting, reflect on their learning, and express preferences for learning styles, topics, and activities.
- Develop self-advocacy skills and a sense of ownership in their learning journey.

7. Review, Monitoring, and Evaluation

Continuous review ensures that Alternative Education Pathways remain relevant, effective, and responsive to individual needs. Monitoring also ensures compliance with KHDA regulations and alignment with whole-school improvement priorities.

Individual Student Progress

- IEPs and ILPs are reviewed at least once per term to evaluate progress and refine goals.
- Parent-teacher meetings and student-led conferences (when appropriate) form part of the review process.
- Transitions between pathways (e.g., moving from modified academic to functional or vocational) are discussed based on evidence of readiness or need.

Program Review

- Annual review of the structure, effectiveness, and outcomes of each AEP strand (Modified Academic, Life Skills, ASDAN, etc.).
- Feedback collected from stakeholders (students, parents, teachers, therapists) via surveys or focus groups.
- Internal audits of portfolios, planning documents, and assessment practices.

Reporting to Leadership and KHDA

- Inclusion and ELL Lead reports on student outcomes, accreditation data (ASDAN, NCFE, BTEC, CP and High School Diploma pathways) and progress toward inclusive education goals.

- Findings inform updates to the school's Self-Evaluation Form (SEF) and School Improvement Plan (SIP).
- Adjustments to policies, training, or curriculum are made based on data analysis and inspection feedback.

Professional Development

- Staff training needs are reviewed annually.
- CPD focused on curriculum modification, functional assessment, ASDAN delivery, and inclusive pedagogy, conducted termly or at least two times a year.

8. Policy Review and Amendment

This Alternative Education Pathways Policy is a dynamic document, reviewed regularly to ensure it remains relevant, evidence-based, and compliant with the UAE's inclusive education legislation and KHDA guidelines.

Review Cycle:

- The policy will be reviewed annually by the Head of Inclusion, in consultation with the Senior Leadership Team, teachers, and relevant stakeholders.
- Interim reviews may be conducted in response to:
 - Changes in KHDA regulations or national policy
 - Introduction of new educational programmes or accredited qualifications (e.g., additional ASDAN modules, NCFE qualifications, vocational options)
 - Feedback from school inspections or internal evaluations
 - Shifts in student population needs or staff capacity

Amendment Process:

- All proposed amendments will be discussed with the Inclusion Team and Senior Leadership Team.
- Where applicable, feedback from parents, students, and external professionals will be considered.
- Final approval of any revisions rests with the Principal or School Governing Body.

The updated version of the policy will be circulated to all staff and made accessible to parents and other stakeholders through the school website or upon request.