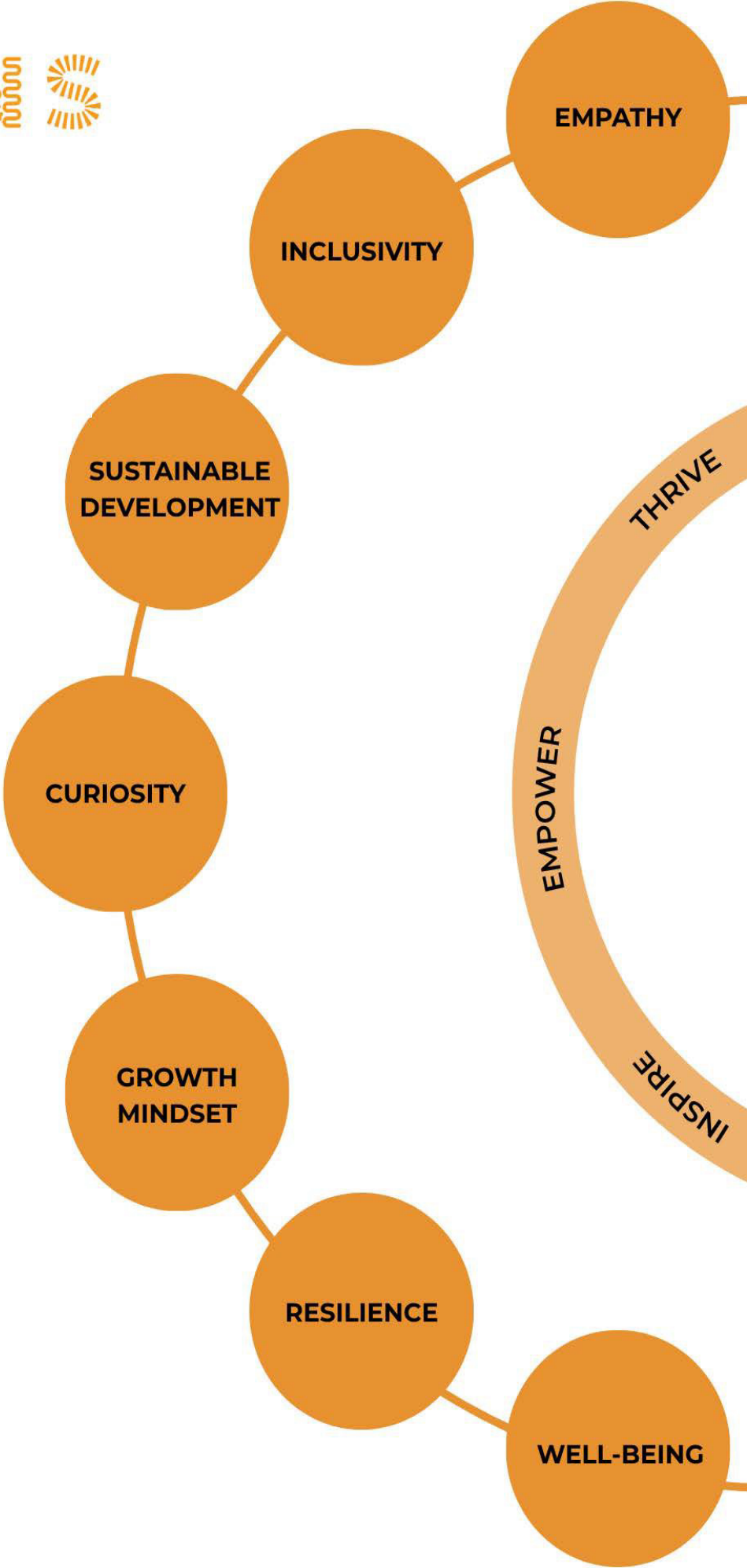




School Literacy Policy

2026 - 2027



Policy	Literacy Policy	Academic Year	2026 - 2027
Applicable to	All phases and subject areas	Review cycle	Annually
Policy owner	School Leadership	Linked policies	Teaching & Learning Assessment Inclusion Citizens EAL Digital Learning & AI

1. POLICY STATEMENT

Citizens School's approach to literacy is explicit, inclusive and cross-curricular. Literacy is taught through structured talk, disciplinary reading and writing, explicit vocabulary instruction and language-rich learning environments, supported by purposeful use of technology and AI.

Citizens School recognises literacy as fundamental to learning, academic achievement, learner agency and wellbeing. In the multilingual context of Dubai, literacy is essential to ensuring equity of access to the curriculum and enabling learners to participate fully and confidently in school life and beyond.

Citizens School is committed to ensuring that literacy is embedded consistently, explicitly and inclusively across the curriculum. Through high-quality teaching, purposeful use of technology and AI, and language-rich learning environments, Citizens develops learners who communicate effectively, think critically and engage confidently with the world.

2. PURPOSE

This policy articulates Citizens School's whole-school approach to literacy and sets out clear expectations for the consistent integration of literacy across all phases and subject areas.

This policy aims to ensure that:

- All learners develop the literacy skills required to access and succeed across the curriculum
- Literacy is embedded consistently within curriculum planning, teaching and assessment
- Teaching practices are inclusive and responsive to multilingual learners
- Oracy, reading, writing and vocabulary are explicitly taught in all subjects
- Digital tools and AI are used purposefully to enhance literacy and learning

3. SCOPE

This policy aligns with KHDA expectations for high-quality teaching and learning and reflects best practice in international education. It is informed by the principle that literacy development is the shared responsibility of all staff and is most effective when taught explicitly, systematically and consistently across the curriculum.

4. GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Definition of Literacy

At Citizens School, literacy is defined as the ability to understand, interpret, evaluate, communicate and create meaning across a range of spoken, written, visual and digital texts.

Literacy encompasses:

Reading for meaning, analysis, research and pleasure
Writing for a range of purposes, audiences and disciplines
Speaking with clarity, confidence and purpose
Listening actively and critically
Accurate and purposeful use of subject-specific vocabulary
Digital and information literacy, including the ethical and effective use of technology and AI

5. ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

Leadership

Ensure literacy is a strategic priority within teaching and learning
Monitor the quality and consistency of literacy practices across the school
Provide professional learning to support high-quality literacy instruction

Mentors

Plan for literacy explicitly within subject teaching
Teach the language demands of their discipline
Model high-quality spoken and written language
Use assessment and feedback to support literacy development

Learners

Engage actively in literacy-rich learning opportunities
Apply literacy strategies across subjects
Take increasing responsibility for communicating effectively

6. POLICY FRAMEWORK

6.1 Oracy: Speaking and Listening Across the Curriculum

Citizens School places high importance on oracy as a driver of thinking, learning and wellbeing. Structured talk is used intentionally across all phases to develop language, reasoning and confidence.

In EYFS, learners participate in a weekly Communication and Language session designed to explicitly develop spoken language as the foundation for literacy and learning. These sessions focus on the development of spoken language structures, the introduction of early discussion and debating skills, and the building of confidence in speaking to an audience. Pupils are supported in the exploration and purposeful use of new vocabulary within meaningful contexts.

Through structured talk, storytelling, role play and guided discussion, learners develop the ability to express ideas clearly, listen attentively and respond to others. The development of these skills is essential in supporting pupils' sense of identity, enhancing reasoning and thinking skills, and enabling effective communication. This explicit focus on oracy underpins early reading and writing development and supports learners in becoming confident communicators from the earliest stage of schooling.

In Primary English, Citizens adopts a Talk for Writing approach, recognising spoken language as the foundation for reading and writing development. Learners are supported to recognise language structures, vocabulary and text patterns orally before applying them in written form.

In addition, Citizens applies the core principles of Talk for Writing across subjects to support disciplinary literacy. While the specific pedagogical strategies vary by subject, the underlying

approach remains consistent: learners rehearse language, concepts and structures orally before being expected to read, write or present independently.

Across the curriculum, Talk for Writing principles are used to support:

- Oral rehearsal of subject-specific vocabulary and sentence structures
- Modelling and recognition of explanations, arguments and processes
- Increased confidence, accuracy and fluency in written outcomes

In Secondary, oracy is taught explicitly as an academic skill that supports disciplinary thinking, argumentation and high-quality written outcomes. Learners are routinely required to articulate ideas using subject-specific vocabulary and formal academic structures, preparing them for extended writing, assessments and presentations.

Specific approaches include planned oral rehearsal before writing, including verbal paragraphing and sentence-level rehearsal; structured academic discussion formats such as debate, role-based discussion and evidence-led talk; explicit modelling of formal spoken language, including justification, comparison and evaluation; use of sentence stems and discourse markers to support clarity and precision; and regular opportunities for whole-class and small-group presentation with feedback on clarity and use of subject terminology.

Mentors will:

- Plan structured opportunities for discussion, storytelling, rehearsal and oral composition
- Model academic language, sentence structures and subject-specific vocabulary
- Use Talk for Writing strategies in Primary English, including imitation, innovation and independent application
- Use questioning strategies that promote reasoning and reflection
- Scaffold participation to ensure inclusion of all learners

Learners will:

- Rehearse ideas orally before writing
- Use talk to recognise language patterns and text structures
- Express ideas confidently using appropriate language
- Listen attentively and respond respectfully
- Use talk to clarify, challenge and extend thinking

6.2 Reading Across the Curriculum

Reading is taught as a disciplinary skill. Learners are explicitly taught how to engage with texts in different subject areas.

In EYFS and Primary, early reading is developed through a structured and systematic approach which includes explicit phonics instruction and guided reading. Phonics teaching supports learners in developing secure decoding, spelling and word-recognition skills, while guided reading provides targeted opportunities to develop fluency, comprehension and engagement with texts. These approaches are closely aligned with oracy and Talk for Writing practices, ensuring learners can apply their developing reading skills within meaningful contexts.

In Secondary, reading is taught as an active, analytical process, with mentors making explicit how texts are constructed, interpreted and evaluated within each discipline. Learners are supported to move beyond surface comprehension towards analysis, inference and critical evaluation.

Specific approaches include explicit teaching of reading for purpose, such as extracting evidence, identifying bias and tracking arguments; modelling annotation techniques linked to subject

demands; guided reading of challenging texts with mentors breaking down complex syntax and vocabulary; explicit instruction in evaluating reliability, particularly for online and AI-generated sources; and regular engagement with extended and unseen texts to build stamina and independence.

Mentors will:

- Select high-quality, appropriately challenging texts
- Teach reading strategies such as skimming, scanning, annotating and summarising
- Model expert reading behaviours relevant to the discipline
- Teach phonics explicitly and systematically in Primary
- Use guided reading to support fluency, comprehension and vocabulary development
- Support learners to evaluate sources, including digital and AI-generated texts

Learners will:

- Read with purpose and understanding
- Apply reading strategies independently
- Develop stamina and confidence as readers

6.3 Writing Across the Curriculum

Writing is used to support thinking, learning and assessment across all subjects.

In EYFS and Primary, phonics teaching also supports early writing and spelling development. Learners are taught to apply their phonics knowledge to encode words accurately, develop spelling patterns and write with increasing independence. This explicit teaching of transcription skills enables learners to focus on composition, structure and meaning in their writing.

In Secondary, writing is taught as a deliberate, structured process, closely aligned to disciplinary conventions and assessment expectations. Mentors explicitly teach paragraph structures appropriate to each subject, including analytical, explanatory and evaluative writing.

Learners are supported through modelling and deconstruction of high-quality exemplar responses, clear shared success criteria focused on structure, clarity and accuracy, sentence-level scaffolding to support precision and control of academic language, and drafting and redrafting cycles with targeted feedback linked to subject expectations.

Mentors will:

- Teach subject-specific writing conventions explicitly
- Model the writing process and provide clear success criteria
- Provide feedback focused on clarity, structure and accuracy
- In EYFS and Primary, explicitly support learners to apply phonics knowledge to spelling and transcription within writing tasks
- Support learners in using digital tools and AI ethically to plan, draft and refine writing

Learners will:

- Write for a range of purposes and audiences
- Use subject-specific vocabulary accurately
- Edit and improve work based on feedback

6.4 Vocabulary Instruction

Vocabulary development is a priority across all subjects.

In Secondary, vocabulary is taught explicitly and systematically, with a strong focus on precision and transfer across contexts. Learners are taught not only the meaning of words, but how and when to use them accurately.

Specific approaches include identification and explicit teaching of Tier 2 and Tier 3 vocabulary central to each subject, pre-teaching of key terminology prior to reading and writing tasks, explicit modelling of vocabulary use within spoken and written responses, and retrieval practice to secure vocabulary over time.

Mentors will:

- Identify and explicitly teach Tier 2 and Tier 3 vocabulary
- Reinforce vocabulary through repeated and varied use
- Support learners to transfer vocabulary across contexts

6.5 Literacy, Technology and AI

Citizens School recognises the role of technology and AI in supporting literacy development.

Practice includes:

- Using digital tools to support reading, writing, research and collaboration
- Teaching learners to evaluate the accuracy and reliability of digital and AI-generated content
- Using AI to support planning, feedback and language development, while maintaining academic integrity
- Developing learner awareness of ethical, responsible and effective use of AI

6.6 Learning Environments

Learning environments at Citizens School are intentionally designed to promote literacy.

These include:

- Language-rich classrooms with visible subject-specific vocabulary
- Access to diverse, inclusive and high-quality texts
- Digital platforms that support reading, writing and collaboration
- Spaces that encourage discussion, reflection and independent learning

6.7 Inclusion and Multilingual Learners

This policy operates in alignment with the Citizens EAL Policy.

Mentors will:

- Plan explicit language objectives alongside content objectives
- Use scaffolding strategies and visual supports
- Value and leverage learners' home languages as assets
- Collaborate with EAL mentors to support learner progress

7. PROCEDURES

Literacy is embedded consistently within curriculum planning, teaching and assessment.

Oracy, reading, writing and vocabulary are explicitly taught in all subjects.

Digital tools and AI are used purposefully to enhance literacy and learning.

8. MONITORING & EVALUATION

Literacy development is monitored through:

- Analysis of assessment data
- Review of learner work across subjects
- Learning walks and lesson observations
- Learner voice and mentor reflection

The impact of this policy will be reviewed annually and refined to ensure continued alignment with KHDA expectations and school priorities.

9. GOVERNANCE

Leadership

- Ensure literacy is a strategic priority within teaching and learning
- Monitor the quality and consistency of literacy practices across the school
- Provide professional learning to support high-quality literacy instruction

The impact of this policy will be reviewed annually and refined to ensure continued alignment with KHDA expectations and school priorities.

10. RELATED POLICIES

- Teaching & Learning Policy
- Assessment Policy
- Inclusion Policy
- Citizens EAL Policy
- Digital Learning & AI Policy

11. APPENDICES

Appendix A - Whole-School Literacy Expectations

Area	Mentors	Learners
Oracy	Plan structured opportunities for discussion, storytelling, rehearsal and oral composition	Rehearse ideas orally before writing; listen attentively and respond respectfully
Reading	Select high-quality, appropriately challenging texts; teach reading strategies	Read with purpose and understanding; apply reading strategies independently
Writing	Teach subject-specific writing conventions explicitly; model the writing process	Write for a range of purposes and audiences; edit and improve work based on feedback
Vocabulary	Identify and explicitly teach Tier 2 and Tier 3 vocabulary	Use subject-specific vocabulary accurately
Digital & AI	Support learners to evaluate sources and use digital tools and AI ethically	Develop awareness of ethical, responsible and effective use of AI

Policy Review

Drafted by

Fareeha Nadkar

**Reviewed and
approved by**

David Lees

Review Date

September 2026



David Lees
Principal