



BLUE SCHOOLS INITIATIVE POLICIES

INTRODUCTION

The UAE has seen a dramatic decrease in COVID-19 community transmission rates, which, in addition to other safety measures,* has been bolstered by one of the most vigorous and effective vaccination campaigns in the world. As a result, the UAE government has confidently begun to relax COVID-19 measures across society.

In schools, all staff and students who are 16 and above** have been vaccinated to date, leaving students under 16 as the only primarily unvaccinated group, and thus the most vulnerable to infection.

In order to encourage the vaccination of this remaining group and thus increase their protection against COVID-19, the relevant Abu Dhabi authorities approved the launch of the Blue Schools Initiative (henceforth “initiative”).

*Other measures include regular mass testing and early detection, instituting precautionary practices such as masks, physical distancing, etc.

**Only includes individuals who are physically attending school and excludes individuals with official exemptions from vaccination.

OBJECTIVE

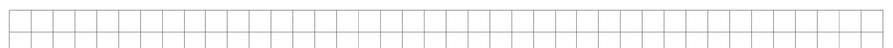
The initiative aims to serve as a roadmap to bringing Abu Dhabi schools yet another step closer to a fully open and normal school environment by increasing the vaccination rate within the school community.

It equally aims to provide the public with visibility and transparency on school vaccination rates.

A central tenet of the initiative is to respect the personal choice of parents by *encouraging*, not *requiring* the vaccination of students.

SCOPE

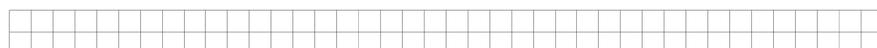
The scope of this policy covers Abu Dhabi private and Charter schools as it is based on the Private and Charter School Reopening Policies and Guidelines for AY 2021/22 and its compliance program.





DEFINITIONS

Bubble	A bubble is a group of younger students (Grade 2/Year 3 and below) and staff who spend the entire school day together without interacting with other bubbles/groups. It is an alternative to a class designed for smaller groups of younger students who do not practice physical distancing.
Class	A class is a group of students and staff who meet during a scheduled period (or multiple periods) of the school day (e.g., math class, PE class, free period, etc.).
Homeroom class	The main class to which a student is assigned for administrative purposes (e.g., for roll call, general announcements, eSIS assignment).
Inter-school	Between different schools.
Intra-school	Within the same school.
Macrobubble	A group of classes and individuals (students and staff) who are physically isolated from other groups of classes and individuals during the school day.
Privilege	An advantage associated with a specific tier.
School	A private or Charter school in the emirate of Abu Dhabi. In the context of the initiative, refers to the whole school (e.g., school-level).
Tier	An initiative level linked to a particular color that is based on a school's vaccination rate.
Vaccinated	In the context of this initiative, an individual is considered vaccinated if they have taken at least one dose of a UAE-approved vaccine.
Vaccination rate	The percentage of vaccinated students physically attending school amongst all students physically attending school. The vaccination rate is calculated at the homeroom class, macrobubble, and school level.





THE BLUE SCHOOLS INITIATIVE

The initiative lays out a roadmap to normalcy whereby schools can enjoy privileges associated with different tiers. Tiers are based on school vaccination rates and are categorized as follows:



School vaccination rates will be published on the ADEK website upon implementation of the initiative. A personalized view for each student will also be visible for parents on the ALHOSN application at a later stage.

Tier Privileges

Privileges are available for each tier as per the following table:

	ORANGE ⁽¹⁾ (<50%)	YELLOW (50 - 64%)	GREEN (65 - 84%)	BLUE (≥85%)
Physical Distancing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 meter for all students and staff 2 meters for "all-access" staff 	No change	No change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Remove physical distancing for students
School Closure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Class: 2 positive cases in a class OR 1 positive case in a bubble = Shift class or bubble to DL⁽²⁾ Macrobubble: 4 classes or bubbles shifted to DL AND/OR 8 cases in a macrobubble = Shift macrobubble to DL School: 3 macrobubbles shifted to DL AND/OR 24 cases in a school = Shift school to DL 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Class: no change Macrobubble: 5 classes AND/OR 10 cases School: no change 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Class: no change Macrobubble: 6 classes AND/OR 12 cases School: no change 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Class: only contacts to quarantine Macrobubble: 8 classes AND/OR 16 cases School: 4 macrobubbles
Duration of closure (days)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 10 days 	No change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 7 days 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 7 days
Class Bubble/Sizes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 16 per bubble (or 2 bubbles with max 10 students sharing 1 classroom) 25 per KG class 30 for Grade 1+ 	No change	No change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 25 per class KG/FS 30 per class Grade 1+/Year 2+
Masks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Required for Grade 1 and above No masks for KG Face shield option for students who can't wear masks 	No change	No change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Remove masks outdoors for students
Bus Capacity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 75% 	No change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 100% 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 100%
Field Trips	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Suspended 	No change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allow outdoor 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allow all
Events and Extra-Curricular Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inter-school events suspended Intra-school events suspended (e.g., assemblies, mixing of groups/macrobubbles) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allow all grade level events 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allow intra-school extracurricular sports activities and events (e.g., tournaments, competitions) Allow macrobubble level events (including parents with ALHOSN green pass and 48-hour valid negative PCR test) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Events permitted (e.g., school assemblies, graduation ceremonies) Interschool extracurricular activities with other BLUE schools (e.g., sport tournaments, competitions) Allow macrobubble level events for parents with ALHOSN green pass and 48-hour valid negative PCR test
Compliance Visits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Every 2 weeks 	No change	No change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monthly

Note: (1) As per the Private and Charter School Reopening Policies and Guidelines for AY 2021/22; (2) DL refers to distance learning



Policies

* **Health Requirements:** These policies are subject to the latest directives and health requirements issued by the relevant authorities.

* **Vaccination Rate Formula:** The school vaccination rate is calculated as per the following formula:

$$\frac{\text{The number of vaccinated students physically attending}}{\text{The total number of students physically attending}} \times 100$$

⦿ **Inclusion/Exclusion Criteria:**

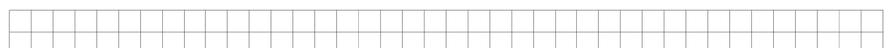
- The formula includes all students enrolled in a school from FS1 (corresponding to 3 years of age) onwards.
- The formula includes all students who physically attend school for at least one regular school day in the term.
- The formula excludes students who have official vaccinations exemptions (these must be reflected in the ALHOSN application).
- The formula refers to the whole equation, regardless of numerator or denominator.

* **Vaccination Data:** The vaccination status of students will be shared between the relevant government authorities for the purpose of this initiative. Schools are not required to update student vaccination data on eSIS; however, they are required to ensure the accuracy of student data (class and macrobubble assignment) and to ensure any changes are correctly reflected.

* **Review Period:** School vaccination rates (and the corresponding tier) will be published every two weeks on the ADEK website and the ALHOSN application. Schools may only activate corresponding privileges upon publication of their tier or a formal communication from ADEK.

* **Applicability of Privileges:** Privileges associated with a tier are applicable to *all physically attending* students enrolled at that school (unless otherwise specified), regardless of individual vaccination status or their homeroom class or macrobubble vaccination rate. For example, all physically present vaccinated and unvaccinated students in a blue tier school, regardless of their homeroom class or macrobubble tier, will equally enjoy blue tier privileges.

* **Voluntary Vaccination:** This initiative is based on voluntary vaccination of students and schools are strictly prohibited from requiring the mandatory vaccination of students below the age of 16.





*** Anti-Discrimination:** Under no circumstance is the identification of unvaccinated students allowed in schools. The initiative intends to encourage vaccination but strongly condemns the discrimination and stigmatization of unvaccinated students who are physically attending schools.

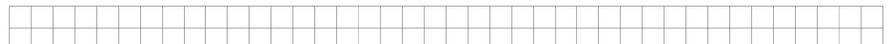
- ⦿ Schools shall have in place an anti-discrimination and anti-stigmatization policy to safeguard against such practices.
- ⦿ Schools are prohibited from requesting vaccination status or using a student's known vaccination status as part of their admissions process.
- ⦿ Schools are prohibited from switching students to distance learning mode based on their vaccination status.
- ⦿ Schools are prohibited from prioritizing the physical return of students who previously opted for distance learning based on their vaccination status.

*** Class-Level Restrictions:**

- ⦿ The class vaccination rate is based on the homeroom class only and is simply a proxy indicator as students will be in different classes throughout the day (e.g., language class, PE class, etc.). Vaccination rates in non-homeroom classes are not tracked.
- ⦿ Class vaccination rates are purely for information purposes and have no impact on an individual student's privileges, which are based on the school vaccination rate and not that of the class.
- ⦿ The movement of students to another homeroom class is not allowed under any circumstance. During the validity of this initiative, any requests for student homeroom reassignment must be approved by ADEK via eSIS.

*** Downshifting:** In the case a school's vaccination rate drops below its current tier threshold, the following measures are applicable:

- ⦿ Schools may continue to retain their current tier as long as their vaccination rate does not drop to 10 percentage points below the tier threshold (so tolerance thresholds of 75% for a blue school, 55% for a green school, and 40% for a yellow school).
- ⦿ If a school's vaccination rate drops below the tolerance threshold, it has a four-week period to maintain its current tier, after which it will be downshifted at the next full two-week cycle.
- ⦿ Only reversible privileges apply when downshifting. Reversible privileges include the following:
 - Closure criteria for classes, macrobubbles, and the school
 - Closure duration
 - Masks





- Compliance visits
- The following are considered irreversible privileges and are not subject to change following a tier downshift:
 - Physical distancing
 - Class Size
 - Bus capacity
 - Field trips
 - Events and Extracurricular Activities
- ADEK reserves the right to revoke any privilege, reversible or irreversible, as deemed appropriate if a school is found to be in violation of any of these policies.

