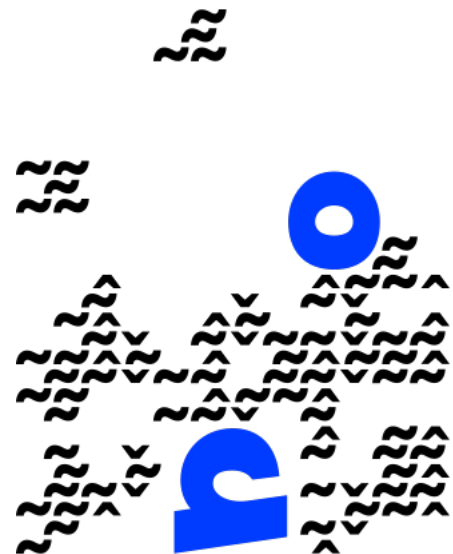| Effective From | AY 2024/25 (Fall term) |
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| Compliance From | AY 2025/26 (Fall term) |

EARLY EDUCATION INSTITUTION **POLICY**

on

# EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

## Purpose

This policy outlines the procedures for effectively responding to and managing emergencies at Early Education Institutions (EEIs). It covers important aspects such as evacuation plans, first aid procedures, and communication protocols. By standardizing the emergency response process, the policy ensures that everyone involved, including EEI management, staff, parents, regulators, and service providers, is well-prepared and aware of their roles and responsibilities during an emergency.

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# Definitions

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| **Assembly Point** | A designated area considered to be a safe point when there is an emergency at the EEI, to where staff and children are led after evacuating the building. |
| **Child** | A person under the age of 4 years, as per Federal Decree Law No. (51) of 2022 Regulating Nurseries. |
| **Corrective Action** | The action(s) or step(s) taken to address an incident that has occurred and to prevent similar incidents from happening in the future. |
| **Early Education Institutions (EEIs)** | All ADEK-licensed institutions that offer early years service (e.g., nurseries). |
| **Emergency** | A sudden or lengthy incident or sequence of events that causes severe impact, such as significant disruption to the EEI's routine, loss of a sense of control, or threat to the safety of children and staff. It may involve significant levels of danger, intervention by law enforcement or emergency services, and experiences that are outside the normal range of expectations for the EEI. |
| **Emergency Action Plan** | An EEI-specific written and approved plan, procedure, and strategy, which lists actions required by designated personnel and procedures to be followed in cases of emergency. |
| **Emergency Drill** | An exercise involving an emergency simulation in the EEI to evaluate the emergency preparedness of the staff and children in following evacuation procedures and assessment of staff effectiveness in delivering their duties such as identifying victims, locating fires, and taking protective actions. |
| **Emergency Equipment** | This equipment ensures staff can preserve the lives of children in their care and other adults onsite effectively and includes items like first aid kits, emergency kits, evacuation ropes, evacuation trolleys, evacuation cribs, and safety vests. |
| **Emergency Fixtures** | Non-permanent objects placed in the physical environment by fixing them to permanent structures. Examples include call points, sirens, fire alarms, fire extinguishers, and smoke detectors. |
| **Emergency Kit** | A collection of basic items the EEI may need in the event of an emergency (e.g., food, water, and medications) in sufficient quantity to last for an extended period of time. |
| **Emergency Preparedness** | All actions taken to plan for and respond to potential emergencies before they occur. It is the process of anticipating, preventing, mitigating the effects of, and recovering from emergency situations. |

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| **Emergency Response** | A set of actions taken to manage and mitigate the effects of a specific emergency. |
| **Emergency Service(s)** | National agencies or entities that provide immediate assistance and support in response to emergency situations. Examples of emergency services include civil defense, ambulance/paramedics, and police. |
| **Emergency Signage** | These include items like emergency lighting and exit signs that help staff and children evacuate the building quickly and safely in the event of an emergency, even if there is limited visibility. |
| **Evacuation** | Immediate transfer of people away from the location of the emergency to a safe area (e.g., assembly point). |
| **Incident** | An event or chain of events which has caused or could have caused fatality, injury, illness and/or damage (loss) to assets, entity reputation or third parties. |
| **Key Person** | A key staff member who is the primary contact for a key group of children and helps them feel safe and cared for. |
| **Lockdown** | An emergency response used in situations with intruders or emergencies that involve potential violence. Lockdowns require children and adults to shelter in a safe room, lock doors, and remain quiet until the event is over. |
| **Management** | The staff responsible for overseeing the EEI-based staff and daily operations, such as the EE Director, their deputy, as well as any other member of staff to whom they have delegated specific authorities. |
| **Medical Emergency** | A serious, potentially life-threatening condition that requires immediate medical attention from outside the EEI (e.g., a hospital, a clinic, or a physician). |
| **Parent** | The person legally liable for a child or entrusted with their care, defined as the custodian of the child as per the Federal Law No. (3) of 2016 on Child Rights (Wadeema). |
| **Physical Environment** | All visible and tangible aspects of the early education environment, regardless of location on the premises. |
| **Recovery** | The period after the emergency is over when efforts are focused on the physical, emotional, and psychological wellbeing of those affected, as well as business continuity and a return to normalcy. |
| **Reunification** | The act of bringing children and their families together after an emergency. |
| **Shelter-/Sheltering-in-Place** | An emergency response where the incident requires that staff and children seek immediate protection in the EEI building they are in. |
| **Transportation Service** | A service that transports children to and from the EEI offered by a third-party provider or operated by the management of the EEI. This definition includes regular services (e.g., taking children to and from home) as well as the occasional use of transportation (e.g., field trips). |

# Policy

All EEIs shall develop and implement an Emergency Management Policy, which at a minimum shall address the following:

1. Compliance with existing legislation, guidelines, and frameworks
2. Planning and preparing for emergencies
3. Procedures for specific emergencies (including procedures for medical emergencies, evacuations, lockdowns, and shelter-ins)
4. Communication procedures during emergencies
5. Designated roles and responsibilities during emergencies
6. Drills and training
7. Reunification and recovery

## 1. General Principles

### 1.1 Compliance

EEIs shall ensure their Emergency Management Policy guides the development and execution of effective emergency response in line with the laws, regulations, and policies enforced in the UAE regarding emergency preparedness and management. This also includes any specific requirements of ADEK and any other requirements by relevant authorities in Abu Dhabi such as the Abu Dhabi Public Health Centre (ADPHC) and the Abu Dhabi Civil Defense Authority (CDA).

### 1.2 Defining Emergencies

EEIs shall define and list possible emergencies as part of their Emergency Management Policy (refer to the definition in this document and the *ADEK EEI Emergency Management Policy Guide* for examples).

## 2. Emergency Preparedness

### 2.1 Emergency Signage, Fixtures, and Equipment

EEIs shall have in place all necessary emergency signage, fixtures, and equipment on their premises and transportation in line with the regulations laid out in the *UAE Fire and Life Safety Code of Practice* (MoI, 2018) and *Regulatory Compliance Manual for Early Childhood Institutions* (MoE, 2020). EEI emergency signage, fixtures, and equipment shall be regularly maintained in line with the requirements of the *ADEK EEI Physical Environment Policy*.

## 2.2    Designated Roles and Responsibilities

EEIs shall establish, designate, and document the following functions and responsibilities that lead to executing all emergency management activities within the institution in line with *the UAE Fire and Life Safety Code of Practice* (MoI, 2018):

- Fire Warden
- Assistant Fire Warden
- Emergency Response Team (ERT)
- Fire and Life Safety Managers

Refer to the *ADEK EEI Emergency Management Policy Guide* for indicative examples and the *UAE Fire and Life Safety Code of Practice* (MoI, 2018) for a full list of emergency management/response team duties and responsibilities.

## 2.3    Emergency Action Plans

EEIs shall prepare and develop an emergency action plan in line with the requirements of *the UAE Fire and Life Safety Code of Practice* (MoI, 2018) as well as any additional requirements set by the CDA and the Abu Dhabi Occupational Safety and Health System Framework (OSHAD-SF) (ADPHC, n.d.). At a minimum, standard procedures for each of the following responses/needs shall be documented:

a) Medical emergency (see Section 3.2 Procedures for Medical Emergencies)
b) Evacuation (see Section 3.3 Procedures for Evacuation)
c) Lockdowns and Sheltering-in-Place (see Section 3.4 Procedures for Lockdowns and Sheltering-in-Place)
d) Emergencies on the road (see Section 3.5 Procedures for Emergencies on Board Vehicles), in case your EEI uses a transportation service.

## 2.4    Parental Involvement in Planning

EEIs shall involve parents in the emergency planning process to the extent possible and promote knowledge and awareness around the emergency protocols followed at the EEI.

## 2.5    Planning Communication During Emergencies

EEIs shall have in place a comprehensive approach for communication during emergencies that includes, but is not solely restricted to, the following components (refer to the *ADEK EEI Emergency Management Policy Guide* for detailed descriptors and examples):

- A clear chain of command
- Communication procedures specific to types of responses as noted under Section 3. Procedures During Emergencies
- An information-sharing mechanism

### 2.6    Staff Support, Training, and Emergency Drills

EEIs shall provide comprehensive training to staff on emergency procedures laid out in their EEI's Emergency Management Policy in line with the requirements of *the UAE Fire and Life Safety Code of Practice* (MoI, 2018). As a minimum, staff training shall cover:

a)  Information on the following emergency procedures: Evacuation, lockdowns/shelter-ins, medical emergencies, and emergencies on board vehicles.

b)  Location of fire safety signage, equipment, and fixtures such as manual call points, exit signage, assembly points, extinguishers, and fire hose reels.

c)  Familiarity with the layout of the EEI (including exits and evacuation routes).

d)  Familiarity with the designated roles and responsibilities of staff during emergencies.

e)  Emergency communication procedures.

f)  Assisting and supervising children during emergencies.

g)  Use of emergency equipment.

EEIs shall also have in place a mechanism to run regular evacuation drills in line with the requirements of *the UAE Fire and Life Safety Code of Practice* (MoI, 2018), and any other requirements by the ADPHC and CDA. Following each drill conducted, the Drill Observer shall fill out the Drill Observation Checklist shown in the *ADEK EEI Emergency Management Policy Guide.* This checklist is used as an assessment of the effectiveness of the drill and captures actions taken before, during, and after its occurrence.

### 2.7    Emergency Contact Information

EEIs shall have an accurate list of emergency contacts for every child enrolled and every member of staff in line with the following requirements:

a)  Emergency contact information shall consist of:
    - Name of emergency contact
    - Relationship to the individual
    - Home address
    - Mobile phone number(s)
    - Home phone number(s)
    - Work phone number(s)
    - Work email
    - Work name and address

b)  In total, the information of 3 emergency contacts for every child (including at least 1 parent) and staff shall be kept on record.

c) EEIs shall use a form to obtain and document emergency communication preferences from at least one parent and one emergency contact person, including preferred language and the communication method, such as phone, email, or parent app. While every effort shall be made to uphold these preferences, circumstances of an emergency may necessitate alternative communication methods.

d) Emergency contact information shall be accessible and available in every child and staff folder or record.

e) Contacts of national and local agencies or entities that provide immediate assistance and support in response to emergencies such as the civil defense, ambulance/paramedics, and police shall be displayed in a place that is visible and accessible by all adults on site (e.g., bulletin board, near the entrance, etc.).

### 2.8 Emergency Kits

EEIs shall build, prepare, and maintain an emergency kit that contains the following items:

- Emergency contact information for children and staff
- Daily attendance sheet
- Evacuation map/floor plan with evacuation route outlined
- Printed directions to a safe evacuation location (if distant from the EEI)
- Medication list with dosing instructions for each child who takes medication
- Medications
- First aid kit
- Nappies, baby wipes, and toilet paper
- Sanitary wipes and hand sanitizer
- Medical gloves
- Bottled water
- Flashlight and batteries
- Paper towels
- Blankets
- Whistle

# 3. Procedures During Emergencies

### 3.1 Identifying the Appropriate Response

As part of the emergency action plan, EEIs shall have in place instructions that guide staff in assessing the emergency and identifying the appropriate response to be taken in case of an emergency.

### 3.2 Procedures for Medical Emergencies

Staff responding to an emergency shall ensure that there is no immediate threat to the person harmed from the sequence of actions taken and that any action taken first and foremost prioritizes the individuals' safety, health, and wellbeing. EEIs shall therefore include the following actions by staff in their medical emergency response:

a) Assess the situation by:
- Checking that the individuals harmed and/or anyone else close by (including staff themselves) are not in any immediate danger.
- Identifying what caused the medical emergency and how many harmed individuals there are.

b) Protect themselves, the individuals harmed, and others from any immediate danger. Staff shall not put themselves or anyone else at risk.

c) Move the individual harmed if leaving them would cause them more harm.

d) Ensure the individual harmed has sufficient space (or a "safe zone") around them either by:
- Moving the individual to a secure place without any children around to avoid creating any stressors for both the individual and the children in attendance.
- Clearing children from the area where the individual is located.

e) Contact emergency services (998) immediately for medical assistance.

f) Check the individual's breathing if they are unconscious. If there are no signs of breathing, the individual should be carefully positioned for artificial respiration, their airway cleared, and cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) administered.

g) Continue to administer CPR until the paramedics arrive.

h) Commence with defibrillation (only by staff trained on the use of an automated external defibrillator), watching for signs of responsiveness. Continue with CPR and defibrillation in alternation until paramedics arrive or until the individual becomes responsive. Non-trained staff shall not use the defibrillator under any circumstance.

i) Focus on keeping the individual calm, speaking to them in a soothing voice, and providing comfort and support as needed.

j) Explain the situation to the harmed individual and describe any actions that will be performed on them before doing so.

k) Administer first aid to stabilize the individual's condition, alleviate any pain, or prevent the condition from getting worse. If there are multiple people harmed, those with life-threatening conditions shall be tended to first.

l) Notify the EE Director (or staff holding the highest authority on duty) and nurse (if applicable) of the medical emergency.

m) Contact other relevant authorities where appropriate once the condition is stabilized (e.g., police, civil defense).

n) Inform the individual's emergency contact(s) of the incident and request additional instructions, information, and/or consent where applicable (e.g., asking for preferences in terms of hospitalization, whether the incident has happened before, whether the individual is allergic to penicillin, etc.).

o) Clear access path for emergency services by moving furniture and unlocking doors.

p) Assign another staff member to wait for the ambulance outside.

q) Remove the individual's medical record file and medication/dosage instructions from the emergency kit and share it with the first respondents on arrival (if the individual harmed is a child or a member of staff).

### 3.3 Procedures for Evacuation

EEIs shall develop an evacuation plan in line with the requirements detailed in *the UAE Fire and Life Safety Code of Practice* (MoI, 2018) and include the following actions:

a) Staff who discover or witness an emergency requiring evacuation (e.g., fire, smoke, gas leak) shall raise the alarm and follow the planned communication procedures for an emergency to be declared.

b) Any staff near fire, smoke, or heat shall evacuate without delay using fire exits. Staff responsible for children located near gas, fire, smoke, or heat shall evacuate them along with visitors immediately without the need to use emergency equipment since any delays can be costly.

c) Staff shall not wait for lifts, elevators, and escalators unless instructed by Emergency Service Personnel and/or the Fire Warden.

d) Staff shall not re-enter the evacuated building unless instructed by Emergency Service Personnel and/or the Fire Warden.

e) Staff with designated roles and responsibilities undertake their predetermined responsibilities as listed in the *UAE Fire and Life Safety Code of Practice* (MoI, 2018).

f) The CDA shall be contacted as soon as is reasonably possible.

g) The First Aider(s), Assistant Fire Warden, and/or Fire Warden shall collect and distribute the emergency kit(s) and emergency equipment as needed (e.g., walking/evacuation ropes, evacuation cribs) upon hearing the alarm.

h) Staff with older children in their care (2 years or older) shall gather them, count heads, and evacuate them using a walking/evacuation rope.

i) Staff with younger children in their care (below 2 years old) shall place them in evacuation cribs, count heads, and evacuate them.

Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans (PEEPs) shall also be developed for each child and staff member who may require additional support or guidance to evacuate safely for any long- or short-term needs, and any identified staff assisting in the evacuation shall receive relevant training before them undertaking their responsibilities.

EEIs shall have at least 1 predetermined assembly point as per *the UAE Fire and Life Safety Code of Practice* (MoI, 2018), which mandates that each assembly point:

a) Is identifiable by the necessary signage in English and Arabic in line with the specifications listed in *the UAE Fire and Life Safety Code of Practice* (MoI, 2018).

b) Is located a minimum of 15 meters away from the building. It also cannot be located at a horizontal distance that is less than the vertical height of the building.

c) Is located somewhere safe from possible falling debris or fire/heat radiation.

d) Is located away from fire access roads and fire truck parking areas so as not to obstruct emergency service operations.

e) Is easily accessible.

f) Shall be large enough to accommodate all occupants of the EEI premises.

g) Can be in landscaped areas, parking lots, pedestrian paths, or playgrounds.

### 3.4 Procedures for Lockdowns and Sheltering-in-Place

EEIs shall develop a lockdown and shelter-in-place plan, which shall include the following actions:

a) Staff who witness or discover an emergency requiring a lockdown or shelter-in-place response shall follow the planned communication procedures for an emergency to be declared.

b) Emergency services shall be contacted as soon as is reasonably possible.

c) If needed and possible, the First Aider(s), Assistant Fire Warden, and/or Fire Warden shall collect and distribute the emergency kit(s) to prepare for an extended lockdown and/or shelter-in-place.

d) Each member of staff is responsible for the children in their care, regardless of if they are the child's key person. As such, staff shall gather children, usher them into the closest room, and instruct them to do the following:
- Assume safe positions for the event (e.g., drop, cover, and hold on in the case of an earthquake).
- Stay away from doors, windows, and vents.
- Stay quiet (e.g., in case of intruders and/or terrorist threats).

e) Staff shall take attendance periodically to ensure no one goes missing.

f) Staff shall lock all doors and windows from the inside in case of a lockdown. If located in a room that does not lock, staff shall stay in the room and remain out of sight.

g) Staff shall wait for the "all clear" from the emergency service personnel and/or the Fire Warden before resuming daily activities.

### 3.5 Procedures for Emergencies Onboard Vehicles

EEIs offering transportation services shall include, at a minimum, the following actions in their emergency procedures onboard vehicles:

Table 1: Procedures for Emergencies Onboard Vehicles

| Function | Actions |
|---|---|
| Bus Supervisor | <ul><li>Declare an emergency.</li><li>Identify a suitable assembly point outside the vehicle in case of evacuation.</li><li>Explain to children what they need to do and keep them calm and quiet.</li><li>Release/cut safety belts for children to allow for their movement (e.g., either outside the vehicle in cases of evacuation or away from windows in case of lockdowns).</li><li>Administer first aid in cases of medical emergencies, maintain the injured passenger's position, and keep children a reasonable distance away.</li><li>Conduct regular headcounts.</li><li>Inform EEI Management of the situation and communicate updates.</li></ul> |
| Function | Actions |
| Driver | <ul><li>Park the vehicle safely and manage entry to and exit from the vehicle (e.g., if an evacuation is needed all doors and emergency exits shall be open, but the opposite is needed in case of a lockdown/shelter-in-place).</li><li>Contact emergency services and liaise with them upon arrival.</li><li>Support in evacuation, lockdown, or first aid procedures.</li><li>Address the source of the emergency if deemed safe (e.g., using an extinguisher in case of a fire).</li></ul> |

Additionally, EEIs shall incorporate other required actions as part of their action plans in line with the requirements of ADEK, Integrated Transport Center (ITC), and the Abu Dhabi Quality and Conformity Council (QCC).

## 3.6    Reporting Emergencies

EEIs shall report the emergency in line with the requirements of the *ADEK EEI Incident Management Policy* to ADEK after the threat from the emergency has passed.

## 3.7    Death

In the unfortunate event that an individual dies while in the care of the EEI or onsite, EEIs shall have a protocol in place that includes the following actions:

a) Keeping the scene of death cordoned, with access limited to essential staff determined by the nurse and/or EEI management.

b) Notifying police immediately and following instructions given by emergency responders.

c) Preventing any disturbance to the scene to preserve evidence needed for investigations.

d) Reserving any conversation around the incident until all police interviews have been completed.

e) Informing ADEK the same day the death occurs.

f) Refraining from sharing any information with the media.

g) Providing (age-)appropriate, supportive, and reassuring messages to children and adults directly affected.

# 4. Reunification and Recovery

## 4.1 Reunifying Children with Parents

EEIs shall ensure they are prepared to efficiently reunite children with parents by incorporating and implementing the following measures as part of their Emergency Management Policy:

a) Maintaining a constant channel of communication with parents through the information-sharing mechanism implemented.

b) Sharing critical information with parents regarding a missing or injured child as soon as it is made available, directly (e.g., via phone call), and only after the initial emergency has been contained.

c) Using the established communication channel to share the location of reunification once the EEI receives the "all clear" from emergency service personnel.

d) Using the established communication channel to urge parents to remain patient while the process takes its course and providing them with a waiting time estimate.

e) Ensuring that children are only released to parents, or a verified pick-up authority (see *ADEK EEI Child Pick-Up Authority Policy*).

f) Conducting headcounts throughout the reunification process to ensure that no child goes missing or is left behind.

EEIs shall also take all necessary measures to ensure that visitors at the time of an emergency can safely leave the premises after receiving the "all clear" if they are unable to do so on their own.

## 4.2 Recovery

EEIs shall ensure that the following requirements are met before resuming day-to-day operations:

a) Conducting a thorough investigation of the situation, as well as completing any corrective actions needed in line with the *ADEK EEI Incident Management Policy*.

b) Conducting damage and needs assessment to identify challenges and issues that need to be addressed.

c) Ensuring that all damage to the EEI's physical environment has been contained or repaired and that it poses a minimum risk to children, staff, or visitors.

d) Conducting a debriefing session with parents to openly discuss the emergency, the EEI's response, and any feedback from parents.

e) Receiving the "all clear" from ADEK and other involved authorities before resuming operations.

f) Reviewing and updating the emergency action plan to capture any feedback, issues, or challenges that arose during the emergency response.

## 5. Compliance

**5.1** This policy shall be effective as of the start of the Academic Year 2024/25 (Fall term). EEIs are expected to be fully compliant with this policy by the start of the Academic Year 2025/26 (Fall term).

**5.2** Failure to comply with this policy shall be subject to legal accountability and the penalties stipulated in accordance with the ADEK's regulations, policies, and requirements, notwithstanding any other penalties imposed by Federal Decree Law No. (31) of 2021 Promulgating the Crimes and Penalties Law and its amendments or any other relevant law. ADEK reserves the right to intervene if the EEI is found to be in violation of its obligations.

## References

- Abu Dhabi Public Health Center (ADPHC). (n.d.). Abu Dhabi Occupational Safety and Health System Framework (OSHAD-SF).
- Federal Law No. (3) of 2016 on Child Rights (Wadeema)
- Federal Decree Law No. (31) of 2021 Promulgating the Crimes and Penalties and its amendments
- Ministry of Interior (MoI) (2018). *UAE Fire and Life Safety Code of Practice.*
- Ministry of Education (MoE) (2020). *Regulatory Compliance Manual for Early Childhood Institutions.*