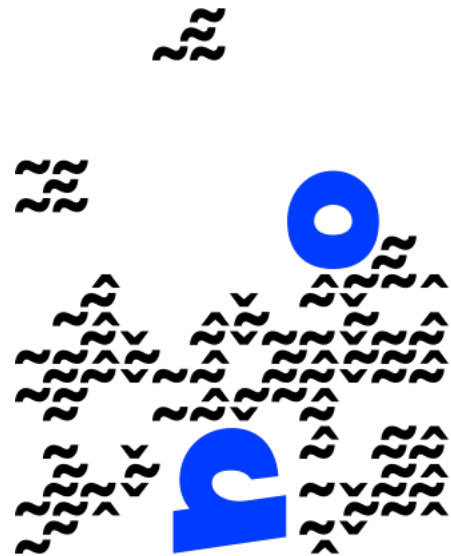| Effective From	AY 2024/25 (Fall term)
Compliance From	AY 2025/26 (Fall term)

EARLY EDUCATION INSTITUTION **POLICY**

on

RISK MANAGEMENT

Purpose

This policy is designed to ensure a safe and secure environment for all individuals, including children and adults, within Early Education Institutions (EEIs). By establishing acceptable standards, the policy guides EEIs in assessing and addressing potential risks that may compromise the safety, health, and overall wellbeing of those in their care. The policy emphasizes the importance of a proactive approach to risk management, aiming to either eliminate or minimize risks through effective mitigation strategies. It also highlights the significance of regular reviews and updates to ensure ongoing compliance with the highest safety standards and best practices in the field.

1

Definitions

Accepted Level of Risk/Acceptable Risk	Risk that does not/no longer require(s) any control measure or mitigation because its likelihood of occurrence is unlikely or, if realized, is unlikely to cause any significant damage or harm.
Child	A person under the age of 4 years, as per Federal Decree Law No. (51) of 2022 Regulating Nurseries.
Children at Risk	Children who show lack of engagement in any aspect of learning, interaction, or socialization, due to low attendance or any other factor.
Control Measures	The steps taken to eliminate, reduce, and control the risk associated with a hazard.
Early Education Institutions (EEIs)	All ADEK-licensed institutions that offer early years service (e.g., nurseries).
Hazard	A hazard is anything with the potential to cause harm, for example, chemical substances, dangerous moving machinery, or threats of violence from others.
Health and Safety Officer	An appointed qualified member of staff who is responsible for overseeing the implementation of risk management processes at the EEI, including the coordination of daily risk checks, and conducting risk assessments on an ad hoc basis as per the provisions of this policy.
High Risk	Where the severity of the risk, if realized, is particularly damaging or harmful or the likelihood of occurrence of the risk is high (e.g., it is frequent or likely to be frequent).
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.
Individual Risk Assessment	Individual risk assessment is an assessment of the potential risks that might occur in relation to a child and their individual needs. It is completed if the individual needs of a child warrant it, for example, a child with allergies, medication requirements, or difficulties relating to their behavior.
Key Group	Known as a "class" in more formal educational settings, comprises a group of children, an EE Educator, and any other members of the key team.
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.
Key Team	The team of staff in a child's key group, whom they interact with daily and who take care of their physical, emotional, and educational needs, typically including the EE Educator, EE Assistant, and EE Aide.

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.
Parent	The person legally liable for a child or entrusted with their care, defined as the custodian of the child as per Federal Decree Law No. (3) of 2016 Concerning Child Rights (Wadeema).
Physical Environment	All visible and tangible aspects of the early education environment, regardless of location on the premises.
Risk	Risk is the probability that a hazard can cause harm. It also takes into account the severity of the harm, and the scope/scale of its impact (e.g., how many people could be affected).
Risk Assessment	A systemic identification of health hazards in the workplace and subsequent evaluation of health risks. This process takes existing control measures into account and identifies and recommends further preventive or control actions where appropriate (ADPHC, 2019).
Risk Check	A standardized screening of the physical environment of the EEI conducted daily to identify and mitigate any risks.
Risky Play	A physical, expressive, and exciting form of play, which involves an element of risk, challenge, and adventure.
Severity	Severity is a measure of how harmful a hazard could be. The severity can be influenced by the environment, the number of people at risk, and the steps already taken to control the hazard.

Policy

EEIs shall develop and implement a Risk Management Policy, fulfilling ADPHC requirements that address the following areas, at a minimum:

1. Roles and responsibilities of staff
2. Risk management methods
3. Mandatory risk assessments

1. Roles and Responsibilities of Staff

In line with the *Regulatory Compliance Manual for Early Childhood Institutions* (MOE, 2020), ADEK Nursery Inspection Checklist-HSE (ECE), and the relevant requirements from the Abu Dhabi Occupational Safety and Health System Framework (OSHAD-SF), EEIs shall:

a) Appoint a Health and Safety officer who holds the minimum qualifications as per the ADPHC/OSHAD risk classification notification (see *ADEK EEI Staffing Policy*).

b) Ensure that the responsibilities of the Health and Safety Officer are outlined and executed as per the OSHAD-SF risk classification, requirements, and as mentioned in the *ADEK EEI Staffing Policy*.

c) Ensure that the Health and Safety Officer is responsible for overseeing risk checks, coordinating tasks and training related to EEI risk management, following up on planned mitigations/corrective actions, and conducting risk assessments in line with the provisions of this policy.

2. Risk Management Methods

a) The Risk management policy of EEIs shall explicitly state and specify the roles and responsibilities of their staff regarding assessing and addressing risk factors.

b) EEIs shall ensure that all staff receive the necessary training that equips them to assess risk and use the risk management methods outlined within their Risk Management Policy.

2.1 Daily Risk Checks of the Physical Environment

EEIs are expected to set up a physical environment that protects children against risks to their health and safety. As such, EEIs shall:

a) Establish a comprehensive daily risk check process to cover all areas accessed by children on the EEI premises and maintain an updated risk register.

b) Periodically review and update the risk assessment checklist to ensure that it remains relevant and effective in identifying potential risks.

c) Have a maintenance schedule in place that is in line with local HSE regulators and relevant authorities, such as Abu Dhabi Civil Defense Authority (CDA), Department of Health – Abu Dhabi (DoH), and any regulations such as building codes.

d) Contract a licensed and specialized agency or company to perform the maintenance and upkeep of all health and safety equipment and services including fire safety equipment, surveillance (CCTV) systems, pest control, disinfection, water tank cleaning, and water testing.

2.2   Risk Assessments

EEIs shall incorporate risk assessments in their Risk Management Policy and implement them as per the below guidelines:

a) Assessing risk for aspects of regular EEI operations considered "high risk" on a regular (periodic) basis and/or following an incident to prevent further damage/harm. The frequency and scope of these risk assessments will depend on the type of operation(s) being assessed.

b) Assessing risk for any one-off activity, event, or intervention that has the potential to significantly alter the physical environment of the EEI or how it functions (even if temporarily).

3. Mandatory Risk Assessments

EEIs shall include the following mandatory risk assessments in their Risk Management Policy:

a) Drop-off and pick-up times
b) Risky play
c) Off-site activities
d) Individual risk assessments for children with additional learning needs

3.1   Risk Assessments During Drop-Off and Pick-Up

EEIs shall conduct an initial safety and risk assessment of the daily drop-off and pick-up process, which also shall be reviewed periodically.

3.2   Assessment for 'Risky Play'

EEIs shall include the following risk assessment areas in their policy:

a) Assessment of indoor playtime and learning sessions.

b) Assessment of water play opportunities in terms of the size of the water tray, the depth of water in the water tray, and the temperature of the water.

c) Assessment of swimming and paddling sessions in terms of the swimming pool's cleanliness, safety gates, depth and temperature of the water, and safety of the pool floor and walls (e.g., tiles or inflatable rubber), see *ADEK EEI Physical Environment Policy*).

d) Daily assessment of the entire outdoor play environment and outdoor play.

e) Regular assessment of age-appropriate heights, as well as safe functioning of play equipment, steepness of stairs leading to slides, slide slope angle, swing seat width, etc.

3.3 Risk Assessments for Off-Site Activities

EEIs shall conduct a comprehensive risk assessment for all off-site activities as part of their Risk Management Policy to evaluate the suitability of the proposed activity, as well as plan for any additional safety or security measures required for any group and/or individual needs.

3.4 Conducting Individual Risk Assessments

EEIs shall ensure that all enrolled children are given the opportunity to participate in off-site activities and therefore conduct individual risk assessments for children at potentially heightened risks (e.g., children with any medical conditions or children with additional learning needs that may impact their own safety or those of others) in consultation with their parents. Following individual risk assessments, EEIs shall implement the required accommodations and modifications.

4. Compliance

4.1 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).

4.2 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 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 Decree Law No. (3) of 2016 Concerning Child Rights (Wadeema)
- Federal Decree Law No. (31) of 2021 Promulgating the Crimes and Penalties and its amendments
- Ministry of Education (MoE). (2020). *Regulatory Compliance Manual for Early Childhood Institutions.*